

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Minutes of the first October meeting

October 5, 2021

This was a hybrid meeting with participants attending both in person at the Township Building and on-line via Zoom. Individuals attending via Zoom are marked with an asterisk.

Members Present

Mark Gordon, Chairman
Dan Cote
Jeff Glisson
MaryFrances McGarrity
Ray McKeeman
Brian Dunn

Township Personnel Present

Justin Smiley, Township Planner
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Pam Gural-Bear*, Asst. Township Manager

Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mark Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission observed a moment of silence for Emergency Services workers.

II. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the meeting of September 7, 2021.
(McKeeman/McGarrity)

ACTION: Passed, 6-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Valley Creek Homes, LLC (PH)

Address: Swedesford Rd. and Valley Creek Blvd.

First Review: Zoning Amendment

Request: Amendment to the Institutional Overlay District to allow for "Active Adult Communities"

In attendance on behalf of the Applicant were Attorney Lou Colagreco and Kevin McLaughlin.

Mr. Smiley provided background on the request. The subject property is currently owned by Rubenstein Partners and is located along the north side of Swedesford Road, between Church Farm Lane and Exton Park to the west and the Malvern Hunt community in East Whiteland Township to the east. In August of 2000, a conditional use approval was granted for the construction of eleven office buildings and over 4,800 parking spaces. The demand for office space has been decreasing over the last twenty years. McKee Builders came before the Planning Commission last year (September 15, 2020) and presented two development options for the property: a life-care facility and an active-adult community. The life-care facility option is allowed under the current Zoning Ordinance, but an active-adult community would require an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. After discussing both options and comparing them to the previously approved office park, the Commission expressed a preference for the active adult community.

Mr. Colagreco said the Applicant has included in its present proposal the five modifications recommended by the Commission last year and has already incorporated some of the County's comments. He added that the proposed plan would be the first "active adult" community in West Whiteland Township and recommended an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to reflect this type of use.

Mr. Gordon asked how many other tracts of 75 acres (the minimum required for the use) currently exist in the Township that could be impacted by the proposed amendment to the IN overlay district. Mr. Smiley pointed out Mr. Weller's October 1, 2021, Memorandum stating that a developer would need to consolidate numerous properties in order for the use to be accommodated elsewhere in the Township. For comparison, the Weston tract along King Road is approximately 54 acres.

Mr. Gordon asked about stormwater facilities shown on Township property. Ms. Gleason explained that this was part of the many agreements approved with the office park plan in 2000. The Township acquired the land and offered an easement.

Mr. Gordon then called for public comment:

William Scutter, resident of Sylvania Road and member of Friends of the Parks Board asked that the now vacant homes that previously served as faculty housing for Church Farm School be preserved and restored. The homes would provide a visual representation of Church Farm School history. He said Neal Davis is interested in restoring these homes as well as the Pennypacker House. The proposed plan currently shows only one of the homes to remain. Mr. Colagreco said a decision is premature at this time but acknowledged that the matter has been discussed with the Applicant, and there will be follow-up conversations regarding the matter. Mr. Kumbhardare said the issue needs to be reviewed by the Historical Commission. More information on the number and condition of the homes is needed.

Mr. Gordon said the Commission believes the proposed active-adult use is the best use for the area and will have less impact on the area than townhomes or apartments and recommended following through with an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as mentioned by Mr. Colagreco.

MOTION: To forward the Ordinance amending the IN - Institutional Overlay District requirements in Chapter 325 to the Township Solicitor. (McGarrity/Glisson)

The motion was then amended after discussion with applicant regarding the Solicitor's review. Ms. McGarrity agreed to amend her motion.

AMENDED MOTION: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors to initiate the process to adopt the Ordinance attached to Mr. Weller's Memorandum dated October 1, 2021, to amend the Zoning Ordinance if there are no substantive changes by the Solicitor. (McGarrity/Glisson)

ACTION: Passed 6-0

2. Review Plan Submission Requirements SD/LD & Zoning Ordinances: SD/LD Articles - II, II, IV & V and Zoning Articles - IX, XVI & XX

On February 16, 2021, the Planning Commission began the process of reviewing the provisions in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance regarding plan review and approval process as well as the requirements for plan content. The purpose was to review what information is really necessary for a meaningful review and to make the regulations more user-friendly. Also, changes were needed to address changing technology and practices. The Commission concluded its review of the draft language on June 15, 2021, and the draft was sent to the Solicitor and the County for review. The Solicitor had no substantive changes, but only minor grammatical revisions. The County recommended including design standards for trails and walkways. Mr. Smiley pointed out that this

information is included in the Township's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which is cited in the amendment. The Commission agreed that citing the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was sufficient.

The County also suggested adding conceptual stormwater management facilities to the requirements of things to be shown on sketch plans. Mr. Smiley pointed out that this puts a greater burden on the Applicant at such an early stage in the process. The Commission agreed.

MOTION: To recommend that the Board of Supervisors initiate the process to adopt the Ordinance attached to the Staff memorandum dated October 1, 2021, to amend the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance.
(McKeeman/Cote)

ACTION: Passed 6-0

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Members reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2022. The Commission will continue to meet at 7:00 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of every month with the exception of May and June when it will meet three times in May (May 3, 17 and 31) and one time in June on June 21 due to holiday and conflicts with Board meetings.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Members praised the 2021 Development by Design - Crossroads Newsletter and thanked everyone who worked on the publication. It presented great information to residents and answered many of their questions regarding development. A survey was included at the end to gather public feedback and concerns. Members noted the importance of good communication with residents and consistency in the message.

Mr. Gordon said PREIT presented a draft master plan of the Exton Mall site to Staff, and that the Township is asking them to present the Master Plan at a Public meeting in the future.

There was discussion about the Township's real estate tax rate- the lowest in the West Chester area.

Mr. Smiley shared occupancy numbers for the various apartment and housing developments recently approved and constructed in the Township. Many are 80 - 90% sold/occupied.

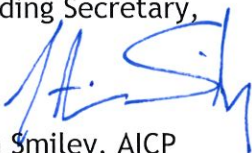
Ms. Gleason said a public open house will be scheduled in November to gather public feedback on the Exton Crossroads and the recommendations made by the Urban Land Institute study. The business community will also be included.

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for October 19 and will review the conditional use plan for the Township's Public Works facility.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:27 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner