



TOWNSHIP of WESTWHITELAND
DEPARTMENT of PLANNING & ZONING

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2022 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY of ACTIVITY

The Township granted final approval to only one plan during 2022: a subdivision creating two new lots for single-family homes. No commercial, industrial, or institutional space was approved, nor were any multi-family residential units. No development related ordinances were amended or adopted in 2022.

The tiny amount of approved development in 2022 stands in sharp contrast to what we have experienced in recent years. Staff is of the opinion that this is not the beginning of a trend, but simply an anomaly. Consider:

- We anticipated that we would see the effect of COVID-related disruptions before now. However, even when we were forced to meet virtually, development activity continued briskly, perhaps due to commitments that developers entered into prior to COVID. It is likely that the current lull is due at least in part to lack of projects entering the development pipeline during the time the COVID restrictions were most severe.
- Development nationwide has been affected by supply-chain bottlenecks, wide swings in the cost of construction materials, rising inflation, and - more recently - the increasing cost of financing as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates to combat inflation.
- In contrast to these negative influences, we note that demand for housing in our area is still high. New for-sale units sell quickly, and the new rental communities (Ashbridge, J. Creekside, Keva, and Hanover - now called The Point) are all more than 90% leased.
- While the Board gave final approval to just one development plan, five projects received conditional use approval in 2022. Such approval is the first step in the review of larger projects, suggesting that we can expect more development plans in 2023 and perhaps 2024.
- We anticipate that the McKee Group will submit their conditional use application in 2023 for an active adult community with over 300 dwelling units on the land once approved for office development along the East Whiteland Township line.
- There is still strong interest in the former Weston Solutions campus, and the Exton Square site will inevitably attract more attention as economic conditions improve.

As described below in further detail, 2022 was a time of transition for the Department as Township Planner Justin Smiley left to become Manager of Capital and Special Projects and Caroline O'Connor came to us from the Public Works Department to be the new Assistant Planner. We

were also able to continue our relationship with West Chester University as we hosted a studio project that considered options for enhancing our gateways.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission met sixteen times during 2022. At their reorganization meeting on January 4, they elected Mark Gordon to be Chair and Ray McKeeman to be Vice-Chair; Mr. Gordon and Mr. McKeeman served in these offices for the full year. Commission members Dan Cote, Jeff Glisson, MaryFrances McGarrity, and Andy Wright also served for the entire year. There was one vacancy on the Commission throughout the year.

In the course of the year, the Planning Commission reviewed five conditional use applications, two subdivision plans, five land development plans, and five sketch plans. The Commission also reviewed a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that would define “data centers” as a use and allow them and ancillary uses in the O/L Office/Laboratory district. The Commission recommended approval of the amendment, subject to the addition of a definition for “power generating facility,” which would be allowed solely as an accessory use, at their meeting on December 6. The Board hearing on the amendment was scheduled for January 2023.

The following chart lists in alphabetic order all plans and applications considered by the Planning Commission during 2022. In the “Status” column, “Approved” indicates the date when the Commission passed a motion to recommend approval by the Board of Supervisors, not the final approval by the Board. The Commission did not recommend denial of any plans. Note that sketch plans are neither approved nor denied, so the chart shows only dates of review.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	296 Boot Rd. (Troupe)	Subdivision	Subdivision of an existing residential lot into three lots to accommodate construction of two additional single-family dwellings.	Approved 10/12/22
2	301 S. Pottstown Associates	Sketch Plan	Construction of a 5,240 sq.ft. financial building at the southeast corner of Bartlett Ave. and S. Pottstown Pk.	Reviewed 4/5/22
3	430 Valley Hill Rd. (Roussey)	Subdivision	Subdivision of an existing residential lot into three lots to accommodate construction of two additional single-family dwellings.	Under Review
4	Bank of America	Sketch Plan	Construction of a +/- 4,200 sq.ft. retail bank branch in the parking lot of Raymour and Flanigan at 201 S. Pottstown Pk.	Reviewed 8/16/22
5	Bank of America	Land Development	See above; final building size as approved was 4,274 sq.ft.	Approved 12/6/22
6	Chic Studios	Subdivision & Land Development	Construction of a 3,774 sq.ft. retail building at the southeast corner of Coeway Ln. and N. Pottstown Pk., including consolidation of two lots.	Under Review
7	Columbia Cottage	Conditional Use	Construction of a 72-bed personal care facility at 930-936 E. Boot Rd.	Approved 5/25/22
8	CPC Westrum	Sketch Plan	Construction of a 150-unit personal care facility at 50-70 W. Boot Rd.	Reviewed 2/15/22
9	CPC Westrum	Conditional Use	See above.	Approved 9/14/22
10	CPC Westrum	Land Development	See above.	Under Review
11	Cross Gables Estate	Conditional Use	Adaptive re-use of historic resources at 701-703 Old Valley Rd. for a wedding and special events venue.	Approved 9/14/22

12	Keva Flats, Phase II	Sketch Plan	Construction of 96 apartment units in two buildings, including restoration of Lionville Run floodway and floodplain.	Reviewed 5/3/22
13	Keva Flats, Phase II	Conditional Use	See above.	Approved 9/14/22
14	West Whiteland Public Works Facility	Conditional Use & Land Development	Construction of a 39,200 sq.ft. facility (office, garages, storage) for Twp Public Works Dept. at 121 Valley Creek Blvd.	Under Review
15	Weston Property	Sketch Plan	Partial demolition of existing structures and construction of 96 single-family homes at 1400 Weston Way.	Reviewed 9/20/22
16	Whitford Property Inc.	Conditional Use	Construction of a 5,585 sq.ft. Wawa convenience store and gas station at 401-403 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 4/27/22
17	Whitford Property Inc.	Subdivision & Land Development	See above.	Under Review

The preceding section is provided in part to satisfy the reporting requirement of §207(a) of Pennsylvania Act 247, the Municipalities Planning Code.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Historical Commission met ten times in 2022. At the reorganization meeting on January 11, Julie Bauer was elected to be Chair and Joe McCormick to be Vice-Chair. Ms. Bauer served as Chair until her resignation from the Commission in August, leaving the position vacant through the end of the year; Mr. McCormick served as the Vice-Chair for the entire year. Members Joshua Anderson, John Kabli, Jonathan Martin, and John Prendergast served on the Commission for the entire year; member Roberta Eckman resigned in April. The Board of Supervisors appointed Lee Ann Embrey and Brad Roeder to the Commission in October. There are two vacancies on the Commission.

As provided by the Zoning Ordinance, the Commission advises the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board regarding subdivisions, land developments, conditional use applications, and variance applications involving properties that include or are within 300 feet of an identified historic resource. The Commission also reviews applications for building permits, demolition permits, sign permits, and zoning permits for historic resources. Other Commission activity in 2022 included the following:

- On February 18, the Board of Supervisors approved the update to the 1982 Historical Resources Survey that had been a multi-year project by the Commission. Major funding was provided by the Chester County Planning Commission as a Vision Partnership Program grant. The update identified over 400 historical resources, including 106 new resources, on 115 properties, which were all shown on a new historic resource map. The project included revising the historic resource survey form, developing a new classification system for resources consistent with current standards, and updating the text of “A History of West Whiteland.” These resources are all now available to the public on the Township website.
- The Commission provided expert assistance to owners and applicants affecting the following historic sites: Benjamin Pennypacker House, Colfelt House/John Bell Farm & Tenant House, Exton Hotel/Exton House/Ship Station, Fairview/Charles Thomas House, Fairview Farm Tenant House, Greenway Cottage, Grove Historic District, Hannah White Log House, House at Turnpike Station, Ivy Cottage, John Fisher House, Oaklands, Richard Hance House/Meadow House, Ship Inn, SS. Philip & James Rectory, St. Mary’s Chapel, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Tenant House, and Whitford Lodge.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - PLANNING ACTIVITY

The authority to approve subdivision and land development plans and conditional use applications rests with the Board of Supervisors, which is advised by the Planning and Historical Commissions, a variety of consultants, and Township staff. In 2022, the Board approved five conditional use applications and one subdivision plan.

The following chart lists in alphabetic order all plans and applications considered by the Board during 2022. The “type” column indicates how the project was approved.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	296 Boot Rd. (Troupe)	Final Subdivision	Subdivision of an existing residential lot into three lots to accommodate construction of two additional single-family dwellings.	Approved 10/12/22
2	Columbia Cottage	Conditional Use	Construction of a 72-bed personal care facility at 930-936 E. Boot Rd.	Approved 5/25/22
3	CPC Westrum	Conditional Use	Construction of a 150-unit personal care facility at 50-70 W. Boot Rd.	Approved 9/14/22
4	Cross Gables Estate	Conditional Use	Adaptive re-use of historic resources at 701-703 Old Valley Rd. for a wedding and special events venue.	Approved 9/14/22
5	Keva Flats, Phase II	Conditional Use	Construction of 96 apartment units in two buildings, including restoration of Lionville Run floodway and floodplain.	Approved 9/14/22
6	Whitford Property Inc.	Conditional Use	Construction of a 5,585 sq.ft. Wawa convenience store and gas station at 401-403 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 4/27/22

ZONING

The Zoning Hearing Board met eight times in 2022. At their reorganization meeting on January 27, they elected Paul Clery to be Chair, and he served for the full year. Members Jo Ann Kelton and Guy McCandless also served on the board for the full year. On January 12, Mr. Chris Pettia was appointed as an alternate member of the Board but submitted his resignation shortly thereafter. The alternate position then remained vacant through the end of 2022.

The Zoning Hearing Board heard the following variance applications in 2022.

#	Applicant Name	Zoning District	Description	Status
1	Lori Martin & Robert Williams, Jr.	R-1 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct a single-family dwelling on a non-conforming lot at 1411 Burke Rd.	Granted 1/27/22
2	West Chester Gun Club	R-3 Residential	Relief from various common regulations to construct a 1,200 sq.ft. accessory building at 200 E. Boot Rd.	Granted 4/28/22
3	301 S Pottstown Pike Assoc.	R-4 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct a 5,240 sq.ft. financial building at 301 S. Pottstown Pk.	Granted 4/28/22
4	CPC Westrum, LP	NC Neighborhood Commercial	Relief from area and bulk and other standards to construct a 57,616 sq.ft. personal care facility at 50-70 W. Boot Rd.	Granted 5/26/22
5	Bruce Jones	R-2 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct a swimming pool and patio on a non-conforming residential lot at 1298 Country Ln.	Granted 5/26/22

6	Mihai Cojan & Alysha Martinelli	R-2 Residential	Relief from area and bulk and other standards to construct various additions and a swimming pool on a residential lot at 1356 Old Pottstown Pk.	Granted 6/30/22
7	Deanna Brunner	R-1 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct an addition to an existing non-conforming structure at 480 Scott Dr.	Granted 6/30/22
8	Gravers Rd Advertising	I-2 Industrial	Relief from various regulations to allow construction of a billboard at 601 Clover Mill Rd.	Denied 9/29/22* *appeal has been filed
9	West Whiteland Fire Company	R-4 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct an addition to an existing non-conforming structure at 227 Crest Ave.	Granted 10/27/22
10	Jeffrey Scanes	R-2 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct an attached garage on an existing non-conforming home at 946 Elmwood Ave.	Granted 11/17/22
11	Deseree Taylor	R-1 Residential	Relief from various supplementary regulations to allow a family day care as a home occupation in an existing single-family home at 1505 Grovenor Ct.	Granted 12/15/22
12	Meghan Blair	R-1 Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to construct a deck on an existing home at 537 W. Boot Rd.	Granted 12/15/22

There were no applications for special exceptions or appeals from the determination of the Zoning Officer in 2022.

STAFF and TRAINING

In July, Justin Smiley was promoted from Township Planner to Manager of Capital and Special Projects and Caroline O'Connor transitioned from the Public Works Department to become the new Assistant Township Planner. Michelle Jones was hired in May as an administrative assistant for both the Planning and Public Works Departments, but had transitioned to working solely with the Public Works Department by the end of the year.

Staff participated in a variety of conferences, webinars, and workshops during 2022, some of which provided Mr. Smiley and Mr. Weller with credits needed to maintain AICP certification.

- All Department staff attended training on productive conflict resolution. (Township Building / January 13, February 3, and March 24)
- Mr. Weller attended the annual lunch of the Exton Region Chamber of Commerce. (Malvern / January 27)
- Mr. Smiley and Mr. Weller assisted with organization for, attended, and facilitated a breakfast meeting of the Exton business community for an “Exton Crossroads Community Conversation” to gauge interest in various planning initiatives. (Township Building / February 17)
- Mr. Weller attended the Spring Planners Forum hosted by the Chester County Planning Commission. (West Goshen / March 31)
- Mr. Weller virtually attended a FEMA webinar on “Future Conditions and Hazard Mitigation Planning.” (on-line / May 18)
- Mr. Smiley and Mr. Weller virtually presented a webinar called “Telling Your Story” to the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Planning Association (APAPA) about our public outreach and communication strategy. Public Information Officer Katie Pusey assisted with the development of the presentation. (on-line / August 3)
- All Department staff attended the annual APAPA conference. (Lancaster / October 2 - 4)

- Mr. Smiley and Mr. Weller presented a session at the APAPA conference on the history of planning in the suburbs, called “Jumbo Shrimp and the Suburban Center.” (Lancaster / October 3)
- Mr. Smiley and Mr. Weller gave a presentation to the Executive Board of the Chester County Planning Commission on recent planning in West Whiteland. (West Goshen / October 12)
- Mr. Weller attended the Fall Planners Forum hosted by the Chester County Planning Commission. (Coatesville / October 18)
- Mr. Weller attended the breakfast meeting of the Housing Partnership of Chester County. (Downingtown / November 1)
- All Department staff assisted with organization for and attended a Township Open House. (Township Building / November 2)
- Ms. O’Connor attended the EV (Electric Vehicle) Summit hosted by the Transportation Management Association of Chester County. (Malvern / November 17)
- Mr. Weller attended the Active Transportation Summit hosted by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. (Lancaster / November 12)