



TOWNSHIP of WESTWHITELAND
DEPARTMENT of PLANNING & ZONING

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2023 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY of ACTIVITY

The Township granted final approval to seven plans in 2023, as more fully described on page 4. The total approved development consists of:

- 9,859 sq.ft. of new commercial space;
- lots for 2 single-family homes;
- 96 apartment units; and
- 3 institutional projects, including the Township's new Public Works Facility and additions to the Collegium Charter School and Mary C. Howse Elementary School.

As we anticipated in the 2022 Report, the amount of approved development in 2023 is more than the historically low level of activity in 2022, but it is still below what we experienced in the years immediately prior to the COVID pandemic. Based upon the projects under review at this time, it seem likely that development activity will continue to increase through 2024. Major activities in 2023 included the following:

- We began the conditional use review process for the Valley Creek Homes project by the McKee Group. The plan proposes over 300 dwelling units of various types along with a community center as an active adult community on a 100-acre tract previously approved for 1.2 million sq.ft. of office space in 11 buildings to be built by Rubenstein Partners.
- Staff and the Planning Commission spent significant time reviewing a proposal by Willow Hill Development Group for the re-development of the Weston Solutions property along King Rd. at the southeast corner of the Township. The final version of their plan proposed about 100 new single-family homes and the adaptive re-use of five historic structures for residential use. The project required amendments to both the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. The Planning Commission recommended approval of these amendments, but the Board of Supervisors did not approve them.
- The future of the Exton Square shopping center continues to be a critical concern. After several months of silence from the mall owner, we resumed communication in mid-2023, making clear our position that new projects on the property must be part of an overall master plan for the site. We are hopeful for positive activity here in 2024.
- Staff, at the direction of the Board, began exploration of how the Township could support attainable housing. While we have had a lot of residential development recently, most of it is priced and marketed as luxury housing.

- The Department began work with Justin Smiley, Director of Capital and Special Projects, on preparing for a full update to the Township’s Comprehensive Plan. While there have been numerous updates and amendments to the Plan over the years - the most recent being the 2022 update to the Future Land Use element - the base document dates to 1994. We expect this work will begin in earnest in 2024 and continue into 2025.

Assistant Planner Caroline O’Connor resigned as of August 30 to take a position with Willistown Township. The Township hired Patrick Gorman, AICP, formerly with Lower Merion Township, to fill the position. Patrick’s first day was October 9.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission met seventeen times in 2023. At their January 4 meeting, they elected Ray McKeeman as Chair and Andy Wright as Vice-Chair. Mr. McKeeman resigned from the Commission as of December 11, shortly after the last Commission meeting of the year. Commission members Dan Cote, Jeff Glisson, Mark Gordon, and MaryFrances McGarrity served for the entire year, and there was one vacancy for the entire year. Ms McGarrity’s term expired at the end of 2023, and she declined to be re-appointed.

The Planning Commission reviewed twenty applications in 2023: four conditional use applications, three subdivision plans (no development proposed), nine land development plans, and four sketch plans.

The following chart lists all plans and applications considered by the Planning Commission during 2023 in alphabetic order. In the “Status” column, “Approved” indicates the date when the Commission passed a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the application or plan be approved, not the final approval by the Board. The Commission did not recommend the denial of any plans. Note that sketch plans are neither approved nor denied, so the chart shows only dates of review. Three of these applications are special circumstances:

- 690 East Lincoln Associates (#4) received final plan approval on December 8, 2021 to build a Wawa convenience store at the corner of Ship Rd. and Lincoln Hwy. One of the conditions of approval was that the development comply with our lighting standards. As the project progressed, it became clear that this could not be done, so they returned to the Township with a request to amend this condition and grant various waivers. Thus, this project was not a full review but only an amendment, as noted in the “Type” column.
- The Commission did not actually review the CPC Westrum project (#10) during 2023. It is included below to document the official withdrawal of the project by the Applicant.
- For the West Whiteland Public Works Facility (#18), the Board authorized concurrent review of the conditional use and land development applications, so there is only one entry for this project instead of a separate entry for each application type, as typically done.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	1354 Pottstown Partners	Subdivision	Subdivision of vacant lot at 1354 Old Pottstown Pk. into 7 lots, each to accommodate a single-family dwelling.	Approved 8/1/23
2	1430 Grove Ave.	Subdivision	Subdivision of a residential lot into 4 lots: 1 for the existing house, 1 for conveyance to an adjacent property, and 2 to accommodate a new single-family dwelling each.	Approved 10/31/23
3	430 Valley Hill Rd. (Roussey)	Subdivision	Subdivision of a residential lot into 3 lots: 1 for the existing house and 2 to accommodate a new single-family dwelling each.	Approved 2/14/23

4	690 East Lincoln Associates	Amendment to Final Land Development	Amendment to conditions of approval for Ship Rd. Wawa to allow lighting not fully compliant with Twp. Standards.	Approved 9/5/23
5	Bush Auto Group	Conditional Use	Construction of satellite location for Exton Nissan at 390 W. Lincoln Hwy.	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.	Approved 7/18/23
7	Church Farm School	Sketch Plan	Concept for re-development of the South Campus, including renovations to the existing residential cottages and new student housing.	Reviewed 2/14/23
8	Collegium Charter School Athletic Fields	Land Development	Improvements to provide outdoor athletic fields, parking areas, and related facilities at 501-559 Clover Mill Rd.	Approved 9/13/23
9	Columbia Cottage	Land Development	Construction of a 75-bed personal care facility at 930-936 E. Boot Rd.	Under Review
10	CPC Westrum	Land Development	Construction of a 150-unit personal care facility at 50-70 W. Boot Rd.	WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT 1/16/23
11	Exton Express Car Wash (McHugh Group)	Sketch Plan	Demolition of an existing office building at 347 N. Pottstown Pk. and construction of car wash facility.	Reviewed 4/18/23
12	Exton Express Car Wash (McHugh Group)	Land Development	See above.	Under Review
13	Keva Flats, Phase II	Land Development	Construction of 96 apartment units in two buildings, including restoration of Lionville Run floodway and floodplain.	Approved 5/2/23
14	Mary C. Howse Elementary School	Land Development	Removal of modular classroom building and construction of 2 additions totalling +/- 8,000 sq.ft.	Approved 10/31/23
15	South Whitford Associates	Sketch Plan	Re-zoning to allow development of 73 townhouses at 360 E. Clover Mill Rd.	Reviewed 5/23/23
16	Valley Creek Homes	Conditional Use	Active adult community with 330 dwelling units and ancillary facilities on portion of former Valley Creek Corporate Center at 301-305 Church Farm La.	Under Review
17	Villas at West Whiteland	Conditional Use	Construction of 32 townhouses and a community center at 112-120 Coeway La.	Approved 11/14/23
18	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.	Approved 1/17/23
19	Weston Property	Sketch Plan	Partial demolition of existing structures and construction of 31 single-family dwellings, 72 townhouses, adaptive reuse of 5 historic structures, and permanent open space at 1400 Weston Way.	Reviewed 6/20/23
20	Whitford Property Inc.	Subdivision & Land Development	Lot consolidation and construction of a 5,585 sq.ft. Wawa convenience store and gas station at 401-403 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 1/5/23

In addition to the conditional use and plan reviews, the Commission also discussed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance addressing the historic preservation provisions in Article XVI, provisions for solar energy systems and electric vehicle charging stations, and a petition to amend both the Ordinance text and Map to accommodate residential development of the Weston Tract.

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 thirteen times in 2023: once every month except in June, when there were two meetings. At the reorganization meeting on January 9, Joe McCormick was elected as Chair and Jonathan Martin as Vice-Chair. They and members Joshua Anderson, Lee Ann Embrey, and John Kabli served on the Commission for the entire year; John Prendergast resigned after the January meeting.

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 historical resource. The Commission also reviews applications for building permits, demolition permits, sign permits, and zoning permits for historic resources. In 2023, the Commission also discussed at several meetings proposed amendments to Article XVI of the Zoning Ordinance, which is the portion that addresses historic preservation.

On March 29, the Commission presented historic preservation awards at a ceremony held at VK Brewing (the former Ship Inn) to the Davis Dairy Barn, Kate’s Gatehouse, the Lochiel Farmhouse, and the Lochiel Manor House.

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 the Planning and Historical Commissions, a variety of consultants, and Township staff advise. In 2023, the Board approved one subdivision plan, one conditional use plan, and six land development plans.

The following chart lists in alphabetic order all plans and applications considered by the Board during 2023. The “type” column indicates how the project was approved.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	430 Valley Hill Rd. (Roussey)	Final Subdivision	Subdivision of an existing residential lot into three lots to accommodate two additional single-family dwellings.	Approved 3/22/23
2	690 East Lincoln Associates	Amendment to Final Land Development	Amendment to conditions of approval for Ship Rd. Wawa to allow lighting not fully compliant with Twp. Standards.	Approved 9/13/23
3	Bank of America	Final Land Development	Construction of a 4,274 sq.ft. retail bank branch in the parking lot of Raymour and Flanigan at 201 S. Pottstown Pk.	Approved 1/25/23
4	Bush Auto Group	Conditional Use	Construction of satellite location for Exton Nissan at 390 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 10/11/23
5	Collegium Charter School Athletic Fields	Final Land Development	Improvements to provide outdoor athletic fields, parking areas, and related facilities at 501-559 Clover Mill Rd.	Approved 10/25/23
6	Keva Flats, Phase II	Final Land Development	Construction of 96 apartment units in two buildings at 350 Waterloo Blvd. Project includes restoration of Lionville Run floodway and floodplain.	Approved 7/12/23
7	Mary C. Howse Elementary School	Final Land Development	Construction of two additions totaling approximately 8,000 sq. ft. to the existing elementary school at 641 W. Boot Rd.	Approved 12/20/23
8	West Whiteland Public Works Facility	Conditional Use & Final Land Development	Construction of a 39,200 sq.ft. facility (office, garages, storage) for Twp Public Works Dept. at 121 Valley Creek Blvd.	Approved 1/25/2023

9	Whitford Property Inc.	Final Land Development	Construction of a 5,585 sq.ft. Wawa convenience store and gas station at 401-403 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 2/22/2023
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ZONING

The Zoning Hearing Board met five times in 2023. At their reorganization meeting on January 27, they elected Paul Clery Chair. He and members Jo Ann Kelton and Guy McCandless served on the Board for the full year. Ms Kelton resigned after the December meeting as she was no longer eligible to serve, having been elected to the Board of Supervisors in November. Ms Niketa Mishra was the alternate Board member for a portion of the year.

The Zoning Hearing Board heard the following variance applications in 2023.

#	Applicant Name	Zoning District	Description	Status
1	690 E. Lincoln Hwy. (Wawa)	O/R, Office/ Residential	Relief from signage regulations for a Wawa convenience store and gas station.	Granted 1/26/23
2	John & Laura Ovelman	R-2, Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to allow the construction of additions to an existing residence.	Granted 3/30/23
3	Roy & Therese Donze	R-2, Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards for an existing garage.	Granted 9/28/23
4	Brian & Kristin Ann Dunlap	R-1, Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to accommodate a swimming pool and shed.	Granted 9/28/23
5	Kevin Flickinger	R-1, Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to accommodate a swimming pool and equipment pad.	Granted 9/28/23
6	Brad Loveland	R-3, Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to allow an addition to an existing dwelling.	Granted 10/26/23
7	Springdale Properties	O/R, Office/ Residential (IN, Institutional overlay)	Relief from minimum lot size requirement to allow use permitted by IN provisions.	Granted 10/26/23
8	Craft Custom Homes, LLC (Whiteland Crest)	R-4, Residential	Relief from area and bulk standards to allow construction of 1 single-family detached dwelling on each of 3 properties in the Whiteland Crest community.	Granted 10/26/23

There were no applications for special exceptions or appeals from the determination of the Zoning Officer in 2023.

STAFF and TRAINING

Assistant Planner Caroline O'Connor resigned her position as of August 30 and was replaced by Patrick Gorman, AICP, effective October 9.

Staff participated in a variety of conferences, webinars, and workshops during 2023, some of which provided Mr. Weller with credits needed to maintain AICP certification.

- Mr. Weller virtually attended FEMA training webinars for floodplain administration on January 18, February 17, and July 19.
- Mr. Weller attended project management fundamentals training by Springhouse. (Township Building / January 26 and February 14)
- Mr. Weller attended the Exton Region Chamber of Commerce “State of Real Estate” breakfast meeting. (Chester Springs / March 23)

- Mr. Weller attended the Township’s Business Forum. (Township Building / March 29)
- Mr. Weller and Ms O’Connor attended the Spring Planners Forum hosted by the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC). (Tredyffrin Twp. / March 29)
- Mr. Weller attended the National Conference of the American Planning Association. (Philadelphia / April 1 - 4)
- Justin Smiley and Mr. Weller presented a session at the PSATS conference, a repeat of their presentation at the 2022 APAPA conference, on the history of planning in the suburbs, called “Jumbo Shrimp and the Suburban Center.” (Hershey / April 23)
- Mr. Weller attended the annual breakfast and awards meeting of the Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC). (Downingtown / May 11)
- Mr. Weller attended the Chester County Housing Panel discussion and presentation. (Malvern / June 20)
- Mr. Weller attended the TMACC breakfast meeting. (Malvern / June 23)
- Mr. Weller attended the Chester County Association of Township Officials (CCATO) Spring Conference and gave an abbreviated version of the “Jumbo Shrimp” presentation. (Malvern / June 26)
- Mr. Weller attended the CCPC Fall Planners Forum. (Chadds Ford / October 4)
- Mr. Weller and other Township staff virtually attended a webinar on cybersecurity training. (Township Building / October 19)
- Mr. Gorman and Mr. Weller attended the TMACC Fall Luncheon. (Downingtown / October 25)
- Mr. Weller attended the TMACC Transportation Breakfast Briefing. (Malvern / November 30)
- Mr. Weller attended the CCPC update on trails and public transportation. (Downingtown / December 12)