

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
July 18, 2012 - 7:30PM

Call to Order

Chairman Lees led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and called the meeting to order.

Present

Commissioners – Hatton, Whitig, Adler, Lees, Walter, and Rohrbach. Dick Pomerantz arrived at 7:50pm. Also present were Township Manager Robert Layman, former Supervisor Tom Foster, six guests and those mentioned below.

Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted with one correction. Russ Hatton attended the Board meeting on July 2nd as the PC representative. (BW/RH)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of June 6, 2012, were approved as submitted (DW/RH).

Reports

Dick Pomerantz was not present at this time to report on the June 18th Board meeting.

Russ Hatton reported on the July 2nd Board meeting. The Workshop involved the ongoing sewer issue and the police situation. At the regular meeting it was reported that the road program has been completed and was under budget. There were a large group of residents present because of the sewer issue. Most of them seemed pleased with the on-site management program under development. Westtown has received a grant to be used for the wetlands project at Tyson Park.

Jim Lees reported on the July 16th Board meeting. The two main items were once again the on-site sewer program and the police department status. It is not known at this time if Thornbury Township will continue to contract for service from the Westtown East Goshen Police Department. The Board updated those present on the development of the on-site septic management program. A representative of the Clean Water Action group presented the results of a survey relating to control of storm water runoff. The Board also discussed a proposal to improve the sound system in Stokes Hall.

Announcements

The former *Planning Commission Journal* has ceased publication, but a website with similar material will be available starting in August. Westtown has purchased a subscription for the Planning Commission members.

Elaine Adler also advised the Commission of several other Zoning Ordinance issues to be considered along with the Alternative Energy amendment. The Clean Water organization has commented that Westtown's parking requirements create unnecessary impervious cover. There is also a problem with the wording of the requirements for Certificates of Occupancy particularly as it pertains to vacant lots and fences. The third main issue involves cell towers and their possible location within rights of way.

Zoning Amendment

The Planning Commission members briefly discussed the Certificate of Occupancy/vacant lot issue and decided to proceed with a recommendation for an amendment of the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion (BW/ER), the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt an amendment to 170-2004.A(4) of the Zoning Ordinance which currently requires a Certificate of

Occupancy whenever there is a change or transfer of ownership. The new wording would be “Change or transfer of ownership if any structure is located on the property.” Unanimously approved.

Non-agenda Public Comment

Joe Kelleher, 1002 Martone Road. Requested that the Planning Commission endorse the On-Site Management program currently being developed.

Helen Kelleher, 1002 Martone Road. Asked how the Commission will review the On-site Management program and urged the PC members to support the On-site Management program.

Richard Kley, 1534 Johnnys Way. Asked that the Commission assess the On-site Management Program from the point of view of the residents who will be affected.

Alternative Energy Amendment

The Commission discussed the five topics listed by John Snook and commented as follows:

1. Scope of Ordinance – Probably include only wind, solar and geothermal.
2. Type of Use. – PC wants to know more about the experience of other municipalities. Generally, permit as Accessory Use for single family residential in all zoning districts and Conditional Use or Special Exception for all other. Perhaps consider size of lot.
3. Scale – Larger installations should require Conditional Use or Special Exception.
4. Accessory Use vs Principal Use – Permit as principal use, but with restrictions as to location.
5. Placement of System – Use regulations developed by others. Require screening as necessary.

PC would like John Snook to prepare a draft ordinance based on the Kennett model with the Westtown preferences listed above.

Future Agendas

If the Planning Commission is expected to discuss and review the revised Act 537 Plan at the August 8th meeting, the planned discussion of the draft Alternative Energy Amendment will be postponed to the August 22nd meeting.

Rain Gardens.

The Commission reviewed several manuals and brochures on rain garden construction and maintenance. The Commission members felt that permits should not be required and that ordinance regulations were not necessary. Tom Foster, Westbourne Road, commented that rain gardens were a very useful storm water management tool, and that there were several sources of information available.

Motion (DW/RH), the Planning Commission recommends that the next issue of the township newsletter features an article on rain gardens and includes relevant websites where residents can locate further information. Unanimously approved.

Zoning Hearing Board Application – Special Exception 1630 West Chester Pike

Construction Services was granted a Conditional Use to use an existing building as a business office. The building is non-confirming; it is located entirely within the required setbacks from West Chester Pike and the adjacent property. The applicant wishes to construct a small addition to accommodate a handicapped accessible restroom.

Motion (BW/RH), the Planning Commission recommends that the Zoning Hearing Board approve the application for the building expansion. A letter will be sent to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Zoning Hearing Board Application – Multiple variances – Tract 2012-3, Rite Aid/Pineville

The plan submitted to the Zoning Hearing Board is the same as that reviewed by the Planning Commission except for the signage. The Commission noted that plan reduces many of the existing non-

conformities on the two parcels and that the project would result in an overall improvement in the appearance of the site. The Commission also noted that the Township Engineer's review suggested reducing what appears to be over-abundant parking to further reduce the excess impervious cover and allow greater design flexibility. The Engineers also suggested the western entrance from West Chester Pike was unnecessary. It also appears that there are more directional signs than necessary for such a small site.

Motion (EA/ER), the Commission acknowledges that the proposed re-development would reduce the existing non-conformities and improve the appearance of the site. The Commission believes that additional improvement would be realized by a reduction in the parking which would further reduce the non-conforming impervious cover. The Commission also believes that the recommendation by the Chester County Planning Commission and the Township's traffic consultant that the western access on West Chester Pike should be eliminated has merit. The Commission further suggests that the proposed signage be reviewed as it appears excessive for a small site. Unanimously approved. A letter will be sent to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Public Comment

None at this time.

Adjournment (ER/BW) 9:40pm.

Elaine L. Adler
Planning Commission Secretary