

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
December 7, 2011 - 7:30PM

Call to Order

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

Mr. Walker asked for a moment of silence in honor of the soldiers and sailors who lost their lives in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Present

Commissioners – Hatton, Whitig, Adler, Walker, and Rohrbach. Commissioner Lees arrived at 7:35PM. Also present were Township Manager Robert Layman and retired Supervisor Pierson Sill.

Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted as presented (BW/RH).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of November 9, 2011, were approved as submitted (BW/RH).

Reports

Russ Hatton reported on the Board meeting of November 21st. At the Work Session the Board continued the discussion of sewer for the Crebilly tract and possible playing fields as part of the Crebilly development. At the Township Meeting the Board discussed refinancing the Township debt and the 2012 Budget. There was discussion of the leasing of township land for farming.

Eric Rohrbach reported on the Board meeting of December 5th. The Work Session was primarily preparation for the expected discussion of the playing field issue at the regular meeting. A large number of residents, both those favoring the use of township land for playing fields and those opposing it, at the Township meeting. It was announced that the 10 year leases for the farm use of the Cope and Stanton tracts would be signed. Mr. Layman advised that the land was leased for \$60 per acre per year. He further commented that the Township did not consider either of these tracts very suitable for playing field use because of topography and access in the case of the Stanton tract. The Board also discussed the Police Budget and the sewer plant.

Russ Hatton asked about the placement of the "School Zone" signs on Shiloh Road which he feels are in the wrong location. Bob Layman reported that they were as required by the approved plan. He suggested that Mr. Hatton contact the police department as a first step towards revising the sign placement which must be approved by PennDOT.

Announcements

Mrs. Adler reminded the PC members of the Brandywine Conservancy's Membership meeting on December 8th, and the Township Holiday Reception on December 14th.

Non-agenda Public Comment

Pierson Sill, 1004 Goodwin Lane, a former Westtown Supervisor, commented on the Township's acquisition of the Cope tract and said it was his opinion, as an engineer, that it was feasible to create ball fields on this tract.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments-Revisions to the Parking Regulations

Elaine Adler explained the complaints received by the Township Office relating to the parking of commercial vehicles, trailers, and other equipment on residential lots. There are many instances where contractors or landscapers store this equipment on their residential properties. The present regulations do not specifically cover all of the situations involving these and are difficult to enforce. The second source of complaints is the proliferation of canvas or open structures used as carports or garages. These are structures according to the Zoning Ordinance definition as they are affixed to the ground, but are not considered buildings by the Uniform Construction Code. Most of them appear to have been erected without permits of any kind.

PC discussed implications of changing parking regulations, possibility of requiring screening for non-passenger vehicles and equipment, and the adoption of an addendum to the Uniform Construction Code to require permits for carport/garage structures. It was decided to recommend action on the carport issue.

Motion (ER/JL) the Planning Commission suggests that the Board of Supervisors adopt an addendum to the Uniform Construction Code to require a permit for canvas or open structures used as carports or garages. Unanimously approved. A memo will be sent to the Board.

There was some concern that changing the regulations relating to commercial vehicles would be unfair. There was also discussion of the Zoning Ordinance specifications relating to paving of parking areas. PC members were asked to watch for the instances of equipment storage around the Township. The topic will be placed on a future agenda.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Fences and Walls – Accessory Dwellings

The Chester County Planning Commission has reviewed these two amendments and made several suggested modifications. Bob Adams, Township Solicitor, has made revisions to the amendments based on these suggestions. A copy of the revised amendments was distributed to the Planning Commission. The Commission discussed the proposed changes.

Motion (JL/ER), the Planning Commission has reviewed the Chester County Planning Commission recommendations and the revised amendments prepared by the Township Solicitor. The Commission recommends that the Board approved the changes and adopt the amendments in the revised form. Unanimously approved. A memo will be sent to the Board of Supervisors.

Public Comment

Pierson Sill, 1004 Goodwin Lane, distributed his proposal that Westtown should again consider sale of the Chester Creek Sewer Plant to Aqua of Pennsylvania, citing the potential financial advantage to the Township.

Adjournment (EA/ER) 9:05pm.

Elaine L. Adler
Planning Commission Secretary