

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
March 18, 2009 - 7:30PM

Call to Order

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

Present

Commissioners – Whittig, Walter, Adler, Lees. and Rohrbach. Also present were Township Manager Bob Layman, Township Engineer Rob Pingar, five guests and those mentioned below.

Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted as submitted.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Planning Commission meetings of February 18, 2009 were approved as submitted.
(BW/DW)

Reports.

Dave Walter reported on the Board of Supervisors meeting of March 2nd. The Board adopted the Sidewalk Maintenance Ordinance, announced the Public Meeting on the Zoning Ordinance Lighting Amendment, and approved the Conditional Use Decision for Tract 2008-5, Loew Associates Office Building. He indicated the Board was now aware of the potential issue of necessary work on West Pleasant Grove Road in order to interconnect the two sections of road to be constructed by Presby Homes and Fair Share Properties. Rob Pingar will be attending a Board Workshop Meeting to discuss this topic.

Elaine Adler reported briefly on the Board's March 4th Lighting Amendment meeting which was attended by all members of the Planning Commission. Eric Rohrbach expressed concern that the WCASD has not completely met the obligations assumed as part of the construction of Bayard Rustin High School.

Brent Whitig reported on the meeting of March 16th. The Officer of the Year Award was presented to Officer Armbruster. Pleasant Grove residents were present to discuss control of Canada geese which have become a serious nuisance. They would like the Township to participate in a plan to install solar powered lights to disturb the flock and prevent nesting. The Board will consider the request. The Board's draft of the Lighting Amendment will be sent to the Chester County Planning Commission for review and advertized for adoption. He also reported that the Dunning Drive residents asked the Board to establish Parking Permits to control event parking on their street.

Announcements

Elaine Adler announced the Brandywine Conservancy meeting on March 31st. There is Review of Landscapes II at the Chester County Planning Commission on March 23rd. Jim Lees will attend.

Non-agenda Public Comment. None at this time.

Tract 2008-4, Rossiter Sketch Plan.

The PC received a sketch plan dated December 16, 2008, showing a three lot subdivision of the 2.4 acre R-2 tract. The property presently has the Rossiter's house and two other buildings. The sketch shows a common driveway for the three lots. Public sewer and public water are available. Present were Mr. and Mrs. Rossiter and their engineer, Adam Brower of E. B. Walsh.

Mr. Brower explained the sight distance requirements made the placement of a common driveway for the three lots at approximately the location of the present drive. Sight lines to the east are limited by the curve and slope of East Pleasant Grove Road. The lot lines were also placed to avoid as much as possible the existing mature trees on the property.

Mr. Brower indicated there were two sketch plans, one showing the existing "Creamery" building being retained and enlarged on lot 1. The second sketch assumes an entirely new dwelling is constructed. According to the Rossiters, the Creamery is presented used as a guest house.

Mr. Lees asked if there was adequate area on Lot 2 for a turnaround and garage. Mr. Brower said there was space, but he did not know what the impervious coverage would be.

Mr. Pingar noted that the Township generally uses actual speed, in this case probably 45 mph, rather than speed limit to calculate the requirement for sight distances. He also asked about the apparent flag lot configuration of Lot 3. Mr. Brower indicated they would seek a waiver. Mr. Pingar noted the required 75 foot setback from the stream which crosses the property and questioned if Lot 1 would have a proper building envelope. He also indicated that impervious coverage regulations and storm water requirements might preclude further improvements on these lots. As the Rossiters are not sure where the existing sewer lateral is located, Mr. Pingar indicated this might further limit finding a building envelope on Lot 1 as shown.

Tract 2008-10, J & A Construction/Shiloh Road.

PC received CCPC review letter dated March 5, 2009, McCormick Taylor review letter dated March 13, 2009, and URS review letter date March 3, 2009. Westtown Township has also received a copy of the Component 1 Sewer Module. Present for the developer were Fred Tordone, and Engineer Steve Sauselein of E. B. Walsh.

Mr. Sauselein stated he had met with the Township Engineer. Mr. Pingar said that most issues were resolved although there are still some questions relating to Storm Water Management and Chester County Health Department approval of the sewage modules.

Mrs. Adler said that CCHD has approved the module although suggesting that the Township might consider requiring a replacement area for on-site systems.

Mr. Sauselein explained the proposed storm water management which, due to the contours of the tract, is located primarily on Lot 1. Mrs. Adler advised the applicant that Westtown would require an extension of the review period as it appears this project will not be ready for Planning Commission action at the next meeting. Mr. Lees indicated that the PC might make a conditional recommendation of approval providing the Township Engineer was satisfied.

Tract 2009-2, Hurd, Oakbourne Road.

This is a 4.5 acre tract with one existing dwelling located on the north side of Oakbourne Road. Mrs. Adler explained that there have been prior sketch plans for subdivision of this property which did not proceed because of access issues. Access to the present dwelling is a driveway across Township open space which is limited to use by three specific properties. Although the property has extensive frontage on Oakbourne Road, there is an area of steep slopes along the road which present some difficulties as does the issue of adequate sight distance. The property is zoned R-2 which permits 22,000 square foot lots with public sewer and public water. The current owners propose public sewer, specifically a low pressure grinder pump system which the Hurds discussed with the Board at the last Township meeting. Mr. Layman stated that the Board has questions concerning this type of installation but was not completely opposed to the concept. Public water is available. The sketch plan before the Township shows six lots with a cul-de-sac accessing Oakbourne Road. The Planning Commission and the Township Engineer commented on the problems resulting from the steep slopes, and the difficult access and storm water management

Dave Walter said that his property is in close proximity to this tract and asked if it would be advisable for him to recuse himself from PC discussion. He will consult the Township Solicitor on this point.

James Hurd, owner of the property, arrived at this time. He stated his family was planning to move to the Oakbourne property and wanted to subdivide to provide building lots for his family. He understands that sewer and road access are the two major issues. He asked his engineer to draw up a plan showing what was possible and asked for comments from the Planning Commission on the sketch. Mr. Hurd says his engineer is confident that the road can be engineered as shown. The Planning Commission indicated it had serious concerns about the slope issues. The Township Engineer commented that he did not believe there was adequate area shown for storm water management based on the requirements of the Chester County

Conservation District. He also commented that dealing with the grades and the necessary retaining walls, grading, and terracing would be challenging and very expensive. Mr. Pingar also questions if it will be possible to achieve six lots.

Mr. Hurd said his Engineer believed that the proposed road location was the safest. Mr. Pingar asked for additional information on sight distances. Mr. Hurd asked for PC input on the sewer question. The PC suggested further investigation of a gravity system.

Public Comment.

Wayne Thompson, 717 Oakbourne Road, commented on the limited visibility, at the proposed cul-de-sac. He also mentioned the existing mature trees on this tract, indicated he had reservations about putting a public road where the existing drive is located, and stated that his lot has an easement over what is shown on the sketch as part of Lot 2. PC believes this is a legal question. Mr. Pingar explained that the owner can remove trees, but is required to plant new trees per the Subdivision Ordinance.

Thomas Fikse, 705 Oakbourne Road, adjacent to the tract on the Westside, indicated concern about storm water management. Mr. Pingar said he, as the Township Engineer, would review the plan, as would the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, and the Chester County Conservation District.

David McGoldrick, 929 Thorne Drive, asked if condominiums could be developed on this tract as Mr. Hurd had mentioned. Mrs. Adler said that since it is zoned R-2, no multifamily dwellings are permitted, nor can it be developed under the Flexible Development regulations.

Cathy Thompson, 717 Oakbourne Road, asked what rights existing residents have when someone wants to develop neighboring property. She is concerned about the impact of this project on the quality of life.

Public Comment None at this time.

Adjournment. – (ER/DW) 9:40PM

Elaine L. Adler
Planning Commission Secretary