

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
April 8, 2015 – 7:30PM

Present

Commissioners – Rodia, Whitig, Adler, Pomerantz, Hatton and Lees. Also present were Township Planning Director Chris Patriarca, Township Manager Rob Pingar, Township Engineer Kevin Matson and those mentioned below.

Call to Order

Mr. Pomerantz called the meeting to order at 7:30 and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was approved as presented unanimously as amended (JL/BW).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Planning Commission (PC) and meeting of March 18, 2015, were unanimously approved as amended (RH/BW).

Reports

Mr. Pomerantz presented the April 6 Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting. At their workshop the BOS discussed several items. He first spoke about the meeting between the BOS and the chairperson of the Parks & Recreation Committee (P&R). Mr. Pomerantz noted the conversation was very casual and the chair talked about upcoming events and the BOS encouraged the commission to not be afraid to try new things. Next discussed was how to more formalize the role of P&R and the implementation of the Open Space Plan as well as amend the existing ordinance to expand their role. Mr. Pomerantz stated that when he and Mr. Hatton meet with the BOS, they will be prepared to discuss previous concerns as identified by the PC.

He next spoke to the wireless facilities ordinance and stated the BOS much appreciated the PCs work on it, but that they tabled the advertising for it due to several concerns that arose at the meeting. However, the BOS recognized the need to have the ordinance adopted in a timely manner due to the technologies approaching the region. There was a discussion on how to better incorporate language from the PA constitution into Westtown ordinances. Finally, discussion was had on comprehensive updates to Township ordinances. An approach on how to handle these updates was had at the workshop. Mr. Pomerantz indicated the result of the discussion was to reach out to consultants to see if zoning, subdivision and the comprehensive plan can be undertaken simultaneously.

Prior to the regular meeting, the BOS continued the SUO public hearing to their May 4 meeting. Mr. Pomerantz stated the applicant indicated the delay was requested in part to allow for further analysis of the economics of the project. At their regular meeting, several reports were presented with a longer conversation had potholes and the delay with the PennDOT roads being repaired. Further discussion was had on the status of this Historic Resources Listing. He also stated three applications have been submitted for the planning commission vacancy.

Announcements

Mr. Patriarca provided an update on the status of the previously approved wireless facilities ordinance.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

There were no non-agenda public comments.

Old Business

Rustin residential SALDO

Ross Unruh, the attorney for the school district (WCASD) initially described the proposed change of the entrance area was done in order to address the sight-distance issue that was of concern of the PC. He described the challenge with complying with this due to a sag in the existing roadbed. The initial solution proposed was for the installation of a four-way stop, but this was unfavorably received by the Township. As such, the entrance was relocated in order to satisfactorily address the sight-distance issue. Mr. Unruh indicated fully engineered plans have been submitted to Kevin for his review, and stated that after review the plans will fully comply with Township code.

Denny Howell, the project engineer for the WCASD, first went through the revised grading plan. He noted the southerly shift of the entrance and stated the overall road geometry was the same as well as indicated the previously proposed stormwater management still will work with the change at the entrance. Further, Mr. Howell provided an illustration that only the entrance area, 12 of the 50 proposed lots and the orientation of the athletic fields were impacted by the proposed realignment.

Next Mr. Howell described how the sight-distance issue has been corrected with this proposed alignment. He indicated that unlike the previous entrance area, the new alignment connects into Shiloh Road along a flat portion of the roadbed. This in turn allows for sight-distance greatly in excess of the minimums required by PennDOT. Further, the sight-distance provides for vehicles traveling at 45 mph instead of the posted speed limit of 30 mph based on a speed study conducted by the applicant. Mr. Matson next provided an overview of the changes to this point for the proposed revision, and that a full engineering review of the changes have not occurred yet.

Mr. Pomerantz asked if the revised plan is feasible for the applicant to construct. Mr. Matson stated the revision is a slight improvement from what was previously submitted in several regards. In addition to the sight-distance improvement, it also relocates the emergency access away from the proposed home sites. He also stated the lot geometry appears to be fully compliant with the conditional use order. Mr. Howell indicated the proposed open space is just a fraction less than what was previously proposed, but that the lots could be adjusted to make the acreage equal to what was previously proposed.

Next discussed were lots and proximity to Shiloh Road. Mr. Howell stated none of the lots in the revised plan are located any closer to Shiloh than those lots proposed in the initial plan. The berming along Shiloh Road would be extended further to the south and constructed in a manner consistent with the conditional use order. Mr. Matson stated that none of the proposed basins have changed, and that he expects the stormwater calculations to verify this upon his full review. Mr. Pomerantz asked if the proposed lot relocation impacts the approved conditional use order. Mr. Matson deferred to the Township Solicitor for the final determination, but that in his

engineering opinion the proposed revision is consistent with the conditional use order.

Mr. Hatton questioned the lots closest to Shiloh Road. Mr. Howell stated in the previous plan there was one lot in the immediate vicinity of Shiloh, and that in the proposed revision there are now three lots but that none encroach closer to Shiloh than what was proposed in the initial plan. The revised lots also result in the berming being revised appropriately and the athletic field will be lower than the existing grade of Shiloh Road.

Next Mr. Hatton discussed the overall access to the perimeter trail. He questioned why the proposed stormwater easement on the western side could not also be utilized as an access to the perimeter trail. Mr. Howell indicated a trail could be placed there, but that he did not feel it was an appropriate location due to its nearness to the building envelopes for the proposed homes. Mr. Hatton stated he believes people will try to access the trail by going through private property if the access is not provided. Ms. Adler stated she did agree with Mr. Hatton that an access should be considered for this location.

Mr. Pomerantz asked when the Township determined the specifications for the trail as required in the conditional use order. Mr. Patriarca stated this was handled between the applicant and Township staff in the preliminary phase of the process as part of the review of their compliant plan. He next asked about future subdivision of the property, and Mr. Unruh indicated there are no further subdivisions proposed for the Rustin property after this application is completed. Finally Mr. Pomerantz asked why sight-distance issue was not caught earlier on in the process. Mr. Matson stated he felt this issue should have been evaluated in greater detail during the conditional use process. He further stated this issue was always viewed as "marginal" at best by McCormick Taylor, but that greater consideration will be given to all turning movements during the application process of all future projects. Mr. Pingar then spoke about his history in the area and indicated he recognized the issue as he is a long-time resident of the area.

Mr. Hatton next asked if an acceleration lane is proposed as a result of the revised plan having the access located closer to the Rustin High School access. Mr. Howell indicated an acceleration lane is not proposed and further stated these lanes have fallen out of favor by PennDOT on lower speed roads as they are used at times for vehicles to pass turning vehicles. Mr. Matson stated he would look into the warrants for an acceleration lane as well as the possibility of a trail connection between lots 35 and 36 as the geometry of the plan is being altered from what was previously approved with this proposed revision. Mr. Unruh questioned the need for an acceleration lane and noted the Rustin entrance has been functioning properly for many years. Mr. Unruh further indicated the WCASD was not inclined to include an additional trail access on the western side of the development.

Public comment

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

8:30 pm (BW/JL)

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Patriarca
Planning Commission Secretary