

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
April 9, 2008 - 7:30PM

Present

Commissioners – Walter, Adler, Lees, and Flynn. Also present were Township Manager Bob Layman, Lighting Consultant Stan Stubbe, 25 guests and those mentioned below.

Call to Order

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

Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted with the removal of the discussion of Tract 2008-1, the Rustin Pump Station Subdivision plan.

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting of March 19, 2008, were approved as submitted (DW/KF).

Reports.

Bob Layman reported on the April 7th meeting of the Board of Supervisors. He advised that the Board decided not to accept the Rustin Pump Station plan because the sewer easements proposed were not adequate. Mr. Layman also said the Crebilly and Presby Homes Conditional Use Hearings had been continued to Tuesday, May 6th. Crebilly is proposing a plan modification which will probably be presented that night. The Board has resolved most of the issues, but expects to conduct another workshop to discuss traffic issues once PennDOT's response is received.

Non-agenda Public Comment.

None at this time.

Zoning Amendment – Lighting.

Present were Chris Lunardi, Athletic Director for Bayard Rustin High School, Gary Bevilacqua representing the WCUS, and a number of area residents. The Commission received the latest draft of the proposed amendment as revised by Stan Stubbe dated April 4, 2008. Mr. Stubbe itemized the changes. Several of the changes were simply formatting. The wording of the restriction to use by school events was changed. Three options for possible use of lights more than twice a week were listed for the Commission's consideration.

Gary Bevilacqua, stated he felt there had been agreement on three events per week during two weeks of the year and that this agreement was not reflected in the new draft. Ms. Adler said that this particular point was discussed several times during the meeting, but the Commission did not vote on the issue. Mr. Lunardi confirmed that three events per week would facilitate scheduling of the school program. The number of permitted lighted events per week was not voted on by the Commission.

Mr. Bevilacqua also asked about the 30 foot candle lighting for lacrosse. Mr. Stubbe asked about the possibility of adjustable lighting where 30 would be the standard for football and soccer, 50 for lacrosse and baseball. Mr. Stubbe also noted the regulations refer to "maintained" levels of lighting. Since the candle power of the lamp changes over a period of time this means that initially the lighting is above the permitted rating.

Mr. Flynn asked about the regulations relating to temporary lights. Mr. Stubbe said that temporary lights potentially have a greater impact than permanent lights. PC suggests expanding the regulations pertaining to temporary lighting.

The wording of the limitation to use of lights by school groups only will be re-examined.

George Wood, Westtown-Thornton Road. suggested limiting the number of hours rather than the number of events and commented on the traffic issues. He also said the Township should regulate the use of lights as the school district would not.

Russ Hatton, Kilduff Circle. Mr. Hatton believes permanent lighting fosters a profit oriented situation in what should be a residential district. He also feels "temporary lighting" needs a more specific definition. Mr. Hatton asked if unused "nights" could be carried over to the next year, and if there was a limit on "after 10pm". He believes that the WCASD is assuming that lights will be permitted as the District wants and commented that the District has been a difficult neighbor. Mr. Hatton further commented that while the Rustin School is nicely landscaped to preserve the Township's "natural beauty", but questions if the view of 80 foot lights is in keeping with this intent.

Lee Hartwig, Russell Lane. Mr. Hartwig commented on the issue of equal facilities for all schools. He observed that the residents adjacent to Henderson HS knew the school was there when they purchased. As East HS was built 35 years ago, most of the adjacent residents would be aware of the school when they purchased their homes. This is not the case with Rustin, however, as the residents were there before the school was proposed, so this is not equal treatment.

Charles Anton, St. Maximilian Kolbe. Mr. Anton said that the St. Max sports program needed to use the temporary lights at least three nights per week for the program. He also said restricting light use to a total of 40 per year would not be a problem. He would like clarification of whatever other restrictions may be applied to the use of temporary lights.

Walter Pavelchek, S. New St. Mr. Pavelchek cautioned that specifying a permit requires standards for the permit. He further noted that the Township had worked long and hard to create the existing Zoning Ordinance, including its lighting provisions, and questioned the advisability of making changes in a document which had been so painstakingly drafted.

Robert Dunion, Westwood Dr. Mr. Dunion said he is looking forward to having lights at the school. He believes it is an embarrassment that local students should have to go to another school to play because there are no lights. He urged the PC to continue its efforts on this ordinance amendment.

Jeff Watkin, Ashley Road. Mr. Watkin said he has had problems with the school, but they have been resolved. He thinks the campus is excellent, and is looking forward to the lights.

Frank Stearns, Shiloh Road. Mr. Stearns indicated he had been supportive of the high school feeling it was better than the proposed housing development, but he had become less supportive since the school was built. He commented that some of the trees that were part of the required landscaping are dead and need to be replaced.

PC asked Mr. Stubbe to make further revisions to the temporary lights standards. PC will also refer the draft to the Township Solicitor. Mr. Lees indicated the remaining issues were the number of events, the light levels for specific sports, and the temporary lights. PC is also concerned with the enforcement procedures. PC suggests requirements for permits and permit fees. Administration of these permits would be determined by the Township Manager and staff. The PC will continue this discussion at a future meeting when a revised draft is available. The draft will be posted on the website in advance of the meeting.

Public Comment. None at this time.

Adjournment. 9:00PM (EA/KF)

Elaine L. Adler
Planning Commission Secretary