

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

**Present**

Commissioners – Whittig, Walter, Adler, Purcell, Lees, and Pomerantz. Also present were two guests and those mentioned below.

**Call to Order**

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

**Adoption of Agenda**

The Agenda was adopted as presented (MP/JL)

**Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting of June 18, 2008, were approved as submitted (RP/BW). Unanimously approved.

**Reports.**

Mark Purcell reported on the Board's July 7<sup>th</sup> Work Session which he and Elaine Adler attended at the Board's request to expand on the Commission's latest recommendation relating to the Zoning Amendment. This topic was on the Board's agenda for the regular meeting.

Jim Lees reported on the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Supervisors. The Board approved the Swiss Farms escrow account. Mr. Lees advised the Board of the Market Place Shopping Center management's objection to the driveway connection to the Swiss Farms site. He also reported unauthorized parking of cars on lawn areas at the car agencies along West Chester Pike. Mr. Lees also reported that the final draft of the Zoning Ordinance SUO Amendment, with some minor revisions from the PC draft, was to be forwarded to Chester County Planning Commission for review. One revision related to the section on trails which was modified by removing the requirement of compliance with the Growth Management Plan. The second revision altered the section on Open Space to give the Board greater flexibility during the Conditional Use proceedings.

**Announcements**

None at this time.

**Non-agenda Public Comment.**

None at this time.

**Tract 2006-6, Presby Homes- Makemie Ridge**

Present was Attorney Michael Shirring, Engineer Keith Lieberman of CMX, Architect Eric Kroll, Project Manager Sean Kelly, Michelle Ferrante, and Crebilly Attorney Craig Kalemjian. John Snook, Brandywine Conservancy Planner, was present as Westtown's consultant.

Mr. Kroll announced that the design for Makemie Ridge had won an award for "Over 50" projects. He displayed drawings of the buildings and interiors and explained that the layout of buildings and facilities was intended to promote socialization among the residents. The materials chosen for Makemie Ridge are intended to promote a warm, non-institutional feeling.

He discussed the elevations in detail explaining how the buildings were fit into the contours in order to diminish the effect of the five stories. All buildings have varying roof heights and articulated facades. The building end elements are turned in order to further diminish the perceived mass. While the length of the connected buildings exceeds the ordinance limitations, no single building element exceeds the specifications. The breezeway connections required for this type of project are elevated with room for fire equipment to pass beneath to reach the interior courtyards. The interior courtyards will be designed with reinforced areas for fire equipment as well.

The draft Ordinance requires the building separation to be 25 feet or the height of the adjacent buildings. The buildings have the 25 foot separation between facades, however, the height issue is complicated by the numerous different roof lines on the buildings and the varying elevations. Mr. Kroll noted that the building ends are not parallel which makes them appear further away.

Mr. Snook asked if further consideration could be given to lowering the building height by revising the interior layout of the apartment building putting some smaller units in the roof story. Mr. Kroll enumerated the design problems and cost factors involved. Sean Kelly explained that this is a marketing issue, roof story units with their non-standard ceiling heights and wall angles are not considered desirable by the prospective residents who prefer larger, "high end" units on the top floor with its spectacular views. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Kroll indicated that the Makemie group was continuing to look for ways to diminish the apparent height.

Other issues raised by the Planning Commission were:

Food Service – There will be centralized food preparation areas serving several different dining venues within the social center and the Assisted Living facility.

Interior Transportation – Makemie will have some type of jitney service to the central buildings and medical facilities for the carriage homes, villas, and outlying buildings.

Contingency Planning – Makemie will have emergency evacuation and disaster plans

The Planning Commission will send a letter to the Board discussing the height, separation, and length issues. The PC would prefer lower height buildings but does not favor lowering the roof pitch to achieve this. The variations in the roof line are effective in diminishing the impact of the buildings and in enhancing the overall appearance of the apartment buildings. The monolithic nature of the roof will be apparent from certain viewpoints. The creative articulation of the buildings mitigates perception of mass from close up, but not from a distance. Overall height will be more noticeable from the connector road than from 202 and the perimeter. Individual Commission members stated they found the building height acceptable because of the overall design excellence of the project.

The breezeways connecting the apartment buildings with the social center are essential to the function of this development. If the building length is calculated including these elements the overall building lengths exceed the draft Ordinance specification. The individual building elements, however, are in line with the ordinance specification. The articulation mitigates the overall effect of the length. The Commission finds the building length acceptable.

According to the draft Ordinance, the minimum separation of the buildings should not be at least 2 feet, but not less than the height of the building. The façade of the building adjacent to the separation can be considered separately from the overall roofline. At least one instance of building separation is less than required distance calculated by this method. In this case, however, the building ends are not parallel but "point to point" which mitigates the perception of separation distance. Therefore, unless this is an issue for the Fire Marshal, the Planning Commission finds the separation generally acceptable.

There was a discussion of "green" certification for this project including "green roofs" and innovative storm water management techniques. Mr. Snook suggested consideration of porous paving for the low volume roads. Mr. Lieberman commented on use of one storm water pond as part of the fire protection

for the project. Mr. Kroll said the “green” certification had been considered but economic restraints precluded pursuing this certification.

Letter will be distributed to the PC members for review and sent to the Board with copies to the applicants prior to the next Conditional Use Hearing on July 21, 2008

**Public Comment.**

None at this time.

**Adjournment.** 9:40PM (JL/DW)

Elaine L. Adler  
Planning Commission Secretary