

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
September 7, 2005 - 7:30PM

Present: Commissioners House, Adler, Verdiani, and Huberty. Also present were Township Engineer Rob Pingar, two guests, and those mentioned below.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Verdiani 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.

Approval of Minutes. The Minutes of the meeting of July 20th were unanimously approved as submitted (JH/PH). The Minutes of the meeting of August 3rd were unanimously approved with the change of "will" to "with" in the paragraph on the Westtown School Faculty Housing (JH/PH).

Announcements.

Elaine Adler announced the Pennsylvania Rural Development Council conference October 25-26. She also called PC attention to a memo from PSATS relating to the copy of an article on development, sprawl and government organization in Pennsylvania which had been distributed.

Referring to the Chester County Planning Commission letter on Thornbury's Brinton Village, Ms. Adler noted that the County has also commented on the location of the Route 926 access and the desirability of creating an alternate access to this development. Chairman Verdiani asked if CCPC received copies of Westtown's letters commenting on projects in other municipalities. These letters are not routinely sent to CCPC. The PC suggests that in the future the CCPC should receive copies of such comments. Walter Pavelchek asked if West Chester Regional Planning Commission could also receive copies of comment letters. PC concluded that in case of comments relating to traffic such letter should also be sent to WCRPC.

Reports.

Don Verdiani reported on the Board of Supervisors meeting of August 19th. He announced that the Citizens Police Academy would be held again this year, starting on September 13th. The Sharon Bank Conditional Use Hearing was closed but the record was left open for PC comments. The revised plan submitted by Sharon moves the building closer to Route 3 and clear of the riparian buffer and avoids the need for a variance. Sharon is on the PC agenda for September 21st. The shed on Baywood Road in Pleasant Grove is still a matter of concern to adjacent residents. The Board is still considering the restructuring of Friends of Oakbourne into a 501.c.3 entity. The plans for Tract 2003-14, Tordone/Sineath and 2003-11 Donnelly Office Building were signed. The Board also considered Final Approval for Tract 2000-8, the Fountains. The Board accepted the PC's recommendations on the landscape and architectural bonuses, and will further consider the issue of the jughandle fountain which was not reviewed by the PC. Rob Pingar reported that agreement had been reached that Joseph McCawley would design and own the fountain and the jughandle, but that the Township would have architectural approval. The approval of Tract 2005-1, Westtown School Faculty Housing, was tabled pending resolution of the public sewer issue.

Jeff House reported on the Board of Supervisors meeting of September 6th. The Board agreed that Westtown School could have Building permits for the faculty housing, but no Certificates of Occupancy would be issued until the sewer connection questions are resolved. The Board adopted a new fee schedule to cover BOCA code appeals.

Non Agenda Public Comment. None at this time.

Tract 2004-3, Sharon Bank. The PC received the McCormick Taylor review letter dated 8/31/2005. Ms. Adler noted that the applicant had not submitted copies of the revised plan and had requested a postponement to the September 21st meeting. The PC agreed that in most circumstances, it is preferable to have the applicant present to discuss a plan and consultants review letters. However, there are circumstances when the Commission would like to be briefed on particular aspects of a given plan or situation whether or not the applicant is present.

Mr. Pingar observed that the revised plan moved the building away from the stream, but also changed the internal circulation plan and placed the Green Lane entrance closer to Route 3. The Commission would like to discuss this with the applicant.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – A/C District. Chairman Verdiani gave a brief history of this amendment and noted that the Township's consultant, John Snook of the Brandywine Conservancy, and Craig Kalemjian, attorney for one of the property owners were present.

John Snook explained that the 22 page amendment before the Commission was not primarily new material, but included all of the A/C District material that had been reviewed and approved by the PC some time ago. This material, relating to the Corporate park, historical preservation bonuses, and "SPI" was removed from the last Zoning Ordinance amendment adopted by the Township when it became clear that there would be additional changes proposed for the A/C District. These changes include the Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), hospitals, hotels, and their ancillary uses. Hotel and hospital uses have been added to the Corporate Park section as the standards are appropriate. Hotel/motel has also been added as a free standing use as the minimum acreage for a corporate park is 50 acres which is excessive for this use by itself. This use would be subject to the corporate park design standards, however. Chairman Verdiani would like to consider this section further. The PC considers a hotel in conjunction with a hospital as an appropriate use within the corporate park regulations.

Jeff House questioned a number of the proposed new definitions, arguing that use of existing licensure definitions would be preferable. Mr. Snook noted that there was little difference in several of the definitions and suggested combining them. The issue of definitions impacts on parking requirements. The parking requirements must take into account instances where the medical facility serves both a residential and an out patient clientele. John Snook will prepare revisions of these sections.

Don Verdiani asked about the Corporate Park section relating to traffic, specifically the "ten tractor trailer trips per day". PC debated advisability of putting a cap on the total number of trips per day for the entire park, but made no decision on changing this provision.

In the "Light Industrial Uses" sections, Mr. Verdiani questioned prohibiting a list of uses instead of controlling uses by performance standards. Mr. House observed that the potential developer faced a number of uncertainties in determining if a use would be permitted. Mr. Snook explained that the original concept had been to prohibit certain heavier industrial uses in this district which is adjacent to residential uses even if they could meet the performance standards. Mr. Pingar asked about a definition of "light industrial". Mr. Snook argues that the definition is the proposed section 504.B.8. PC suggests adding a statement to the effect that expert testimony, at the applicant's expense, will be required if the Township has any question as to the suitability of the proposed use. Mr. Snook will prepare a revision to this effect.

Change of use in a Corporate Park was briefly discussed. This would be included in the covenants agreed upon during the Conditional Use process. Mr. Snook explained his concept that the Board might approve a range of uses but that any use not originally approved would require a new Conditional Use Hearing.

PC suggested some minor changes to the Historic Preservation section. Mr. Snook recommended getting a copy of the Chester County inventory. A conservation easement might be the means of assuring that the historic assets remain providing that the Township establishes a land trust.

Mr. Snook directed the Commission's attention to the actual new sections of the amendment. One is the

revision of the parking regulations (Sections 16-20) to include the newly proposed uses. Another is density, Section 14. Section 12 is the new CCRC. The draft amendment contains a separation distance between CCRCs designed to prevent two large CCRC projects being constructed on a tract such as Crebilly. PC observed that this would also prevent two smaller and perhaps desirable projects. This section will be re-examined.

Ms. Adler asked if the Commission would consider adding three other sections to the amendment. One would correct the discrepancy in the present Ordinance definition of "Family Day Care" and the regulations for Family Day Care in 1605, the Home Occupation section. The second would eliminate the confusion between the present definitions of "Hotel/Motel" and "Motel". The third is the definition of "Institution" and inclusion of "Institutional Use" in appropriate zoning districts. PC agreed to include the first two and asked John Snook to research the "institution" question.

The PC will discuss further at a future meeting. John Snook indicated he might not be able to get all the material together for the September 21st meeting however.

Westtown-East Goshen Police Accessory Building. Ms. Adler explained that the Police Department has a storage shed on the old station property which they wish to move to the new building. The Board requested that the Planning Commission review the proposal. The only logical position for the shed is on the east side of the lower parking lot, at a reasonable distance from the adjacent residential properties. This location, however, is in the roadbed of the future connector road to South Garden Circle. PC agreed that the shed should be placed here, with appropriate landscaping to buffer the adjacent residential properties, as it could easily be removed at such time as the road was actually constructed.

Public Comment. None at this time.

Adjournment. 10:30PM (EA/PH).

Elaine L. Adler
Planning Commission Secretary