

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
September 8, 2004 - 7:30PM

Present: Commissioners Adler, Verdiani, Flynn, and Huberty. Also present were Township Manager Bob Layman, Township Engineer Angelo M. Capuzzi, four 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 with the addition of Tract 2000-14, Riley/Mears under Old Business.

Approval of Minutes. The Minutes of the meeting of August 18, 2004, were approved as submitted (KF/PH).

Announcements. Literature concerning the "Master Planners" seminars was distributed to the PC members. Those interested should contact Elaine Adler.

Reports. Kevin Flynn reported on the Board meeting of September 7th. The meeting was routine except for the Public Comment section which included remarks on the West Chester Area School District/YMCA decision, the condition of the Bayard Rustin construction site, and traffic issues on Shiloh Road.

Non Agenda Public Comment. None at this time.

Tract 2004-3, Sharon Bank. PC received Chester Valley Engineers memo dated 8/23/2004, a revised sketch plan and memo from Jordon Architects dated 9/3/2004. Present for the applicant were Stephanie Sarin from Phillip Jordan Architects and Joseph Brion, Attorney. Mr. Brion noted that the plan is based on an anticipated Ordinance amendment relating to the Conditional Use and the setback from perennial streams. He asked the Planning Commission's opinion of the layout as shown on the revised plan submitted in response to the CVE memo dated 8/23/2004.

Mr. Capuzzi noted that the dumpster location and the location of the entrance drive immediately adjacent to the wetlands may pose problems. He also commented that the four parking spaces on the south side of the parking area could result in traffic conflicts and might best be designated as employee parking. Mr. Capuzzi also suggested URS review for possible pump station issues. The entrance on West Chester Pike is right in/right out.

PC finds this sketch more acceptable. Sharon will prepare a plan once the expected Zoning Amendments are adopted.

Tract 2001-5, Jefferson Office and Bank. Present was Joseph McCawley and David Geise, Landscape Architect. Mr. McCawley submitted a revised sketch of the bank area landscaping on Friday, September 2nd. This sketch replaced white pines with spruce and used a large number of sand cherries to provide a quick screen for the parking lot. According to Mr. Geise these are quick growing and will provide significant screening within a year or so. No additional planting under the already placed deciduous trees is proposed.

The original plan used seven types of trees and seven types of shrubs planted on the 2-3 foot berm in order to provide attractive all-season landscape screening of the parking area. Mr. Geise argued that the proposed plan provides the same degree of interest, color and effectiveness. The Commission does not

consider that the revised plan accomplishes the objectives set forth in Mr. McCawley's engineer's original landscape design.

Mr. Capuzzi said that the approved plan retained the landscaping in place at the intersection of 202 and Skiles and placed the new plant material on a two to three foot berm. The intersection landscaping and berm has been removed. The 2-3 foot berm was not constructed prior to installation of the landscaping.

Chairman Verdiani indicated that somehow re-creating the original concept is the Commission's concern – a visually interesting, diversified landscape screen. Mr. McCawley will submit another plan at the next PC meeting.

Gaudenzia House – Zoning Issues. Present were Christopher Shubert, Attorney; Vicky Moyle of Gaudenzia, and Joe Sherrick, consultant. Mr. Shubert explained that the present R-1 zoning for the Gaudenzia site does not actually provide for the existing use which has been in place for many years. The Zoning Hearing Board had identified the use as “educational” in the course of a Special Exception Hearing, but Mr. Shubert argues that Gaudenzia is really more of an institutional use. The re-zoning question has been discussed with the Township staff and consultants, and it has been suggested that the Gaudenzia tract be re-zoned “Township” since it is totally surrounded by the Township District. An amendment to the Township District could permit the institutional use and provide some appropriate area and bulk regulations. Mr. Shubert also indicated that Gaudenzia would prepare a Master Plan of the site which would identify the present improvements and make it easier to assess the impact any future development plans.

The Commission was appreciative of the offer of a Master Plan and agreed that some adjustment of the zoning to provide a better use description would be useful.

Public Comment.

Tom Foster, 734 Westbourne Rd, asked where a “correctional facility” was permitted in the Township and argued that Gaudenzia was such a facility. He urged the Township to reconsider the proposal and attempt to keep tighter controls since there have been problems with the Gaudenzia residents.

Bill Chester, 1025 S. Concord Rd., also indicated there have been problems, and asked what proportion of the Gaudenzia residents were from Chester County rather than Philadelphia or elsewhere. He argued against allowing any expansion of the Gaudenzia facilities.

Chairman Verdiani explained that the end result of the proposed rezoning would be the establishment of regulations which would control future development by providing area and bulk and density standards which do not now exist.

Mr. Foster indicated his belief that the present situation requiring a Special Exception for anything done on this property was preferable to allowing a use by right. He also noted that the Gaudenzia website calls it a “Criminal Justice Rehabilitation Center”.

Walter Pavelchek, 1049 S. New St., asked for clarification of the “SCH” designation on one of the Township maps posted in the meeting room. Apparently this is an error.

Eva Foster, 734 Westbourne Rd., objected to Mr. Shubert's citing John Snook's recommendations as Mr. Snook is not a Westtown resident. She further commented that if the present R-1 Zoning was not considered appropriate for Gaudenzia, perhaps the problem was that the use which she characterized as a “correctional facility” was not appropriate in its current setting surrounded by residential uses and the Township Park.

Mr. Shubert responded that Gaudenzia is not a correctional facility, it is a supportive facility for drug and alcohol rehabilitation which is an institutional use.

Tract 2003-10, TAG Builders/Orvis. The PC received a landscaping plan, Engineer DellaPenna's review letter dated 8/30/2004, Chester Valley Engineer response dated 9/1/2004, and a memo from the Township Road Master dated 8/26/2004 relating to existing trees along West Pleasant Grove Road. Discussion postponed to the September 22nd meeting.

Tract 2000-14, Riley/Mears. The applicant has offered a number of extensions on this project over the past four years as the issue of providing sewer for this three lot subdivision has not been resolved. The current extension expires on September 30, 2004.

Motion (KF/EA), the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors deny approval of the Preliminary/Final plan for Tract 2000-14 Riley/Mears three-lot subdivision as it does not comply with the comments in the Chester Valley Engineers letter of July 16, 2002. If a letter of an extension is received, the Commission recommends that it not be accepted.

Public Comment. None at this time.

Unanimously approved.

Public Comment

Robert Layman, Township Manager, reported that Mr. Tehrani asked the status of the meeting on 926 traffic situation agreed to by the PC Chairman. Mr. Tehrani will be told to contact Mr. Verdiani directly.

Adjournment. 9:10PM (KF/EA).

Elaine L. Adler
Planning Commission Secretary