

# WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Stokes Assembly Hall  
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township  
October 22, 2003 - 7:30PM

**Present:** Chairman Don Verdiani noted the following members present; Commissioners Nick Bibbo, Elaine Adler, Kevin Flynn, Carol DeWolf and Mark Purcell. Also present were Township Manager Robert Layman; Township Engineer Angelo M. Capuzzi; six guests and those mentioned below.

## **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.**

Mr. 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 Planning Commission meeting of October 8, 2003, were approved as submitted (KF/MP- For, Adler, Bibbo, Flynn DeWolf, Purcell. Abstain, Verdiani).

## **Announcements.**

Chairman Verdiani reviewed the announcements received from Chester Ridley Creek Association, Chester County Transportation Management Association, and Brandywine and Red Clay Valley Associations.

Mr. Layman indicated that the Township would respond to East Brandywine Township's letter on its plans for a new Comprehensive Plan. The PC may also make suggestions.

Mrs. Adler announced that the Chester County Planning Commission's review of the SS Simon and Jude plan had been received and distributed to the PC. The URS sewer review letter has not yet been received.

## **Reports.**

Mrs. Adler reported on the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 20, 2003. The Board accepted the review period extension offered by the applicant for Tract 2000-14, Riley, until March 31, 2004. The Board has continued the Conditional Use Hearing on Tract 2003-10, Galbally (Orvis). The Supervisors requested comments from the Acting Township Engineer on the open space analysis provided by the applicant and the Traffic Consultant on the design of the parallel road.

## **Old Business:**

### **Tract 2003-11, Donnelly Office Building**

Present for the applicant were Phil Donnelly, Charles Durkin, Engineer and Craig Hough, Architect. The Board of Supervisors has continued the Hearing on this application for a Conditional Use, Professional Office, in the R-3 District pending resolution of buffer issue and Zoning Hearing Board application. The Planning Commission recommended that the Board grant the requested Conditional Use.

The sketch plan for this site does not include the required 100 foot side yard setback. In addition, the applicant claims it is not possible to provide a 50 foot planted buffer strip between the proposed building and the adjacent Willistown Township residential development. Mr. Donnelly has applied to the Zoning Hearing Board for variances on these issues. The PC can amend its recommendation to the Board on the Conditional Use, suggesting additional conditions to be part of the decision, and can make comments to the Zoning Hearing Board on the variance issues.

Mr. Durkin explained the revisions made on the plan dated 10/20/2003 in response to the Board's questions, but said that the landscaping was only conceptual at this point.

PC discussed establishing an escrow as a means of assuring maintenance of the landscaping required to provide an effective buffer. In response to the Commission questions, the applicant displayed an elevation showing the building in relation to the adjacent Willistown residences. The PC also asked for clarification of the circulation pattern expressing some concern about both access for emergency vehicles and the impact of delivery vehicles when most of the on-site parking is in use. The PC suggested consideration of a one-way traffic pattern. Underground parking suggested by the PC at an earlier meeting was considered by the applicant and discarded as not feasible. The applicant is aware that the parking provided is in compliance with Ordinance requirements for a General Office Building, not a Medical Office Building. PC will forward sketch plan to the Fire Marshal for comment. PC members expressed concern with the size of the building and the related parking which result in maximum impervious coverage of the site, and suggested a smaller building might improve circulation, facilitate storm water management, and minimize the variance required. It was observed that unless the footprint of the building is changed, the variance situation remains the same, and it is not possible to provide the 50 foot planted buffer.

Engineer Capuzzi agreed that the retention basin location on the front of the lot was appropriate but also suggested that some recharge would need to be considered. In regards to the 16 foot parking spaces (which are permissible), he noted that the proposed retaining wall would have to be moved to provide the required two-foot overhang space. Mr. Capuzzi also noted that the sewer easement might have to be moved to avoid conflict with retaining walls and other features.

Chairman Verdiani summarized the issues saying that the side yard variance on the west was not an issue for the PC as the adjacent property was commercial. On the east, however, there is a residential development in Willistown Township and the PC believes that if a variance is granted on this point the applicant should be required to provide a significant, effective and permanent buffer. This requirement should also be a part of any Conditional Use approval. The Commission reiterated its opinion that the proposed use was appropriate but will expand that recommendation to include the requirement that the buffer should be permanent.

Motion (MP/EA), the Planning Commission will send the following comments to the Zoning Hearing Board:

The Planning Commission has considerable concerns relating to the buffer along the eastern boundary of this property. If a variance is granted, the Commission believes that a significant, effective and permanent buffer should be required and suggests that this buffer should be increased over what is shown on the sketch plan dated 10/20/2003 reviewed by the Commission. The Commission is less concerned about side yard and buffers adjacent to the car dealership to the west.

The Commission has other concerns with this project as detailed in the minutes of the Commission's 10/22/2003 meeting which are attached for your information.

Public Comment. None at this time.

Unanimously approved.

**Tract 2002-3, Jaguar/Land Rover:** The applicant has filed for a variance to permit two separate free standing ground signs in front of the building, one each for Jaguar and Land Rover. The Zoning Ordinance permits only one. The dealership also proposes to have signs on the building for both dealerships, and has the two "display" areas permitted in the Land Development approval. There may also be a question of the total square feet of signage as the square footage of the Land Rover sign has not been determined.

Motion (KF/MP), the Planning Commission does not recommend granting the variance requested in the applicant's letter dated September 30, 2003, for permission to erect two ground signs and a flat-wall sign on this tract.

Public Comment:

Walter Pavelchek, S. New Street. Commented that the PC is being overly restrictive. If Westtown wants to attract business, it should make it as attractive as possible. Mr. Bibbo agreed.

Motion carried. For – Adler, Verdiani, Flynn, DeWolf, Purcell. Opposed – Bibbo.

**Public Comment.**

Walter Pavelchek, S. New Street. Commenting on the Orvis Property (Tract 2003-10), Mr. Pavelchek feels it would be wrong to put in a only connection from the new development to the Stetson jughandle which would effectively funnel traffic through the new development to Pleasant Grove Road. He believes the parallel road from the jughandle to Pleasant Grove Road should be built now, without waiting for the Crebilly development. Mr. Pavelchek also reported that the Oakbourne Park Phase I project is being put on hold for economic reasons. He also indicated that the Smith Mansion renovations will likely be postponed. Mr. Pavelchek also commented that the PC had not given a sufficiently specific recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board on the Donnelly Office Building project.

**Adjournment.** 9:50PM (KF/MP).

Elaine L. Adler  
Planning Commission Secretary\_