

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, May 9, 2001 - 7:30PM
Oakbourne Park, Dunning Room
1014 South Concord Road, Westtown, PA

Present: Chairman Don. L. Verdiani, Domenico N. Bibbo, Kevin Flynn, Arthur B Holland, Secretary Elaine L. Adler, three 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 (DB/AH).

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting on April 18, 2001, were approved as submitted (AH/DB)

Reports

Board of Supervisors, May 7, 2001. Don Verdiani reported. He informed the Board of the PC concerns relating to the McCawley tract. Mr. Verdiani said the Board indicated it had expressed willingness to consider the senior apartments for this site. The Board said the PC should proceed to develop the necessary zoning standards to permit this use. Mr. Verdiani also passed on to the Board the PC's concurrence with Walter Pavelchek's suggestion that the Growth Management Plan should include a more extensive reference to development rights. During the Growth Management Plan Hearing Mr. Verdiani reported that the Board announced that the Orvis tract will not be rezoned as proposed, and that office and carefully limited light industrial uses will be considered for the Crebilly tract. There was an extended discussion of the merits of one large building vs. several smaller buildings, the total square footage which should be permitted, and requiring unified development plans. URDC was instructed to make these revisions and prepare zoning language. The Board also approved the resolutions relating to the park and recreation grant applications which are on tonight's PC agenda as well.

Announcements: Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Risk Management Association is offering a seminar on "Legal Issues Surrounding Land Development" on Tuesday, June 26th, 7-9PM, at the Best Western, Exton. Those interested in attending should notify Elaine Adler.

Board of Supervisors Meeting Monday, May 21, 2001. Nick Bibbo is scheduled, but will not be available that night. Don Verdiani will attend for the PC.

Zoning Provisions for Agriculture Uses: Present were Eva Foster, Westbourne Road, and John Snook of the Brandywine Conservancy. Chairman Verdiani reviewed Mrs. Foster letters and comments to the Board and the Planning Commission requesting that some of the accessory uses permitted on larger agricultural tracts be allowed on smaller tracts. The intent of allowing expanded uses and home occupations relating to such agricultural uses would be to give the landowners an alternative to subdivision of these parcels. Mr. Verdiani proposed inviting owners of such parcels to a workshop to get their input and ideas on what would be useful.

Mr. Snook commented that the Conservancy was currently working on a similar project for Concord Township and invited a Westtown representative to attend the schedule program. He agreed that retaining the smaller parcels preserves neighborhood character. Commenting that one of the main concerns in allowing agriculture on smaller parcels is the impact on neighbors, he indicated that the Westtown zoning ordinance currently provides controls in the environmental performance standards. There are separate standards for the over 10-acre parcels. Mr. Snook suggested a new category "specialized agriculture" or something similar which allows agricultural uses without restriction on parcels greater than 10 acres but with some limitations on the smaller parcels. Sales could be limited to items produced on the premises

and restricted in scope. This might be melded with the Home Occupation standards or created as a separate category. Mr. Snook suggested excluding livestock breeding and poultry operations. Mrs. Foster objected to excluding poultry operations.

Mrs. Foster explained that her idea was to permit these activities without a lot of restrictions and conditions which would defeat the purpose. Mr. Snook also suggested making "small parcel agriculture" a Special Exception so that the impact could be considered on a case by case basis. Again Mrs. Foster said this would defeat the purpose since it would require an application, payment of fees and a hearing where neighbors would come and object.

Mr. Verdiani said he would like to hear from the landowners. Mr. Holland said there are many innovative concepts being discussed and suggested the PC needs input from the landowners and from other organizations working in the field. PC discussed other financial incentives would help preserve these tracts. Mr. Snook suggested conservation easements could be used as means of lowering assessments since these smaller parcels are not eligible for Act 319 tax relief.

Mr. Snook also suggested that before arranging a meeting Westtown should send out a survey asking for input which would help develop an agenda. PC agreed a survey would be useful prior to scheduling a meeting in the fall. Mr. Snook volunteered to create a map of the township identifying the parcels that might be affected to help the PC visualize the impact of such activities on the surrounding area. Determining the surroundings may simplify the process of determining what parcels are suitable for basically unrestricted agriculture and which would require more stringent standards. When the map is available PC will discuss further.

Zoning Ordinance – Apartments in the POC: At the Board's direction, the PC discussed revision of the Zoning Ordinance to permit age-restricted apartments on the remaining McCawley tract in the POC. The PC concluded that the amendment should be made to the POC overlay which currently only applies to the McCawley tract. Since it is not proposed to extend the POC to other tracts along 202 modification of the POC would be the simplest way to permit senior apartments which both the Board and the PC agreed is a suitable use for this tract.

PC suggests modeling the new provisions on the existing R-3 apartment regulations. These regulations would not permit either the height or density currently proposed by McCawley. The McCawley project is being designed at 1.5 parking spaces per unit. Westtown Township agreed to consider these senior apartments/condos a "retirement community" requiring only 1.5 spaces per unit instead of the usual 3 spaces per unit for a single family dwelling.

Chairman Verdiani suggested that the PC wait for the next meeting to discuss actual zoning provisions when Michael Cotter could report back on the discussion between the Township's Solicitor and the McCawley attorney. PC does not feel that basing these standards on the current ordinance, or on the actual density of existing apartment complexes in Westtown would be useful. Kevin Flynn will locate data from recently constructed apartment complexes in the vicinity.

West Chester Regional Planning Commission: A letter has been received from Bob Woodward, Chairman, asking for the township's suggestions for WCRPC projects. Suggestions were 926/352 zoning, WCASD new high school site selection, streambed restoration and maintenance, a bridge survey.

Oakbourne Park Master Recreation Plan and Master Trail Plan Acquisition Project Grant Applications: The PC has been asked to approve resolutions relating to these two grant applications. **Motion (AH/EA), the Planning Commission supports Westtown Township's applications for matching grants for the Master Recreation Plan and Master Trail Plans. Unanimously approved.**

Public Comment:

W. Pavelchek, S. New St. Asked how the Stetson jughandles would be affected by PennDOT's plans to widen Route 202 and what effect this will have on the McCawley project building setbacks. The Township

doesn't have a copy of PennDOT's current drawing of the possible options, but believes it has been updated to reflect the existing Stetson intersection. It may require modification of these jughandles.

Adjourned: 9:20PM (DB/EA)

Elaine L. Adler, Secretary