

**WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING**

Wednesday, July 11 2001 - 7:30PM  
Oakbourne Park, Dunning Room  
1014 South Concord Road, Westtown  
PA

Present: Chairman Don. L. Verdiani, Secretary Elaine L. Adler, Domenico N. Bibbo, Carol DeWolf, Mary E. Paumen, Township Manager Michael A. Cotter, 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 as presented (MP/EA)

**Approval of Minutes:** The Minutes of the Planning Commission meetings of June 6, 2001 and June 20, 2001, were approved as submitted (MP/CD).

**Reports Staff.** Michael Cotter advised that the Act 537 is scheduled for adoption at the Board meeting on Monday, July 16, 2001.

The codified ordinances have been received. The codification will be formally adopted at the Board 's August 20th meeting. Copies will be available for all PC members. It will also be available on CD and on the Township's website. (DV, CD and MP want CD's).

Mr. Cotter reported that the Common Pleas Court has rendered an opinion in favor of Westtown Township and has dismissed both the Thornbury Township and the citizens' cases. The Preliminary Plan for the Westrum project has been received and will be submitted to the Board on August 6th. Copies were distributed to the PC members for review. There are issues relating to the "Significant Public Improvements" since the plan has units in excess of the base amount cited in the Conditional Use Approval.

The Brandolini Townhouse plan is expected this week and will be on the PC Agenda for August Stn. Westtown School has completed a Master Plan which the Board will see on August 6", A plan for the expansion of the Lower School is expected shortly.

**Board of Supervisors, July 2, 2001.** Don Verdiani reported that the Board shared the Commission's concerns relating to the size and bulk of the proposed buildings on the McCawley tract and encourage the PC to continue its work on developing ordinance language for the POC as well as cluster use in R-1. The Growth Management Plan was adopted by the Board.

Bids for the traffic signals at 926 and Shady Grove and 926 and Shiloh are out. Installation of the lights is expected early this fall.

**Board of Supervisors Meeting Monday July 16 2001** Don Verdiani will represent the Commission. Adoption of the Act 527 Plan is scheduled that evening. The schedule of PC assignment for the rest of the year was distributed.

**Zoning Revision - R-1 Cluster/Flexible:** URDC Memo dated June 19, 2001, Revised July 6, 2001 was distributed to the PC members in advance. Mr. Cotter explained that Westtown's present "Flexible Development" was basically the PRD language from the MPC which has not been attractive to developers and has not produced the results anticipated by the Township. The memo is an attempt to re-write the Flexible Develop Article to allow cluster developments in R-1 on smaller lots with large amounts of open space as has been discussed in the Growth Management Plan development. The memo proposes a

base density of 1.25 units per acre with a density bonus (up to 2.25 units) for open space in excess of 40% and for Significant Public Improvements.

PC members suggested there should be a requirement for public sewer and public water. Further consideration should be given to the existing bulk and area requirements once the density is determined. PC discussed advantages of Use by Right, Conditional Use and Special Exception and concluded Conditional Use was most suitable for the Cluster. Mr. Cotter commented on the advantages of making the type of development preferred by the Township as simple as possible in order to encourage developers.

PC agreed with the memo's suggested cap on the bonus for Significant Public Improvements, but suggested that it was not necessary to put a cap on the open space bonus particularly as Westtown is very interested in increasing the open space. This would promote greater creativity in design. While there were concerns expressed as to the final appearance of such a project, the Commission sees proper area and bulk regulations as a means of control. The definition of Significant Public Improvements needs to be revised.

The requirement for a 300 foot buffer and larger lots against existing single family dwellings was questioned by several PC members. It was acknowledged that this is primarily a political issue, neighbors not wanting to see townhouses and smaller lots adjacent to their properties. The effect of the 300-foot provision would likely be a ring of open space against the existing homes. It would be a major limitation on the flexibility and creativity of the project design. The effect on the Orvis tract might be minimal, but this provision would have a major impact on some of the other tracts where this option might be used. Mr. Cotter suggested if the PC felt strongly on this subject the Commission should re-open the issue with the Board of Supervisors. He further suggested the PC consider using performance standards rather than arbitrary dimensional regulations. Mr. Cotter will provide additional information on this topic.

PC agrees with the Minor Home Occupation limitation and also wants to clarify "customary" accessory uses provision. The landscaping provisions would also be revised to compliment the performance standard criteria.

**Public Comment.** Jim Lees, speaking for the Orvis group, commented that the nature of their site would preclude densities requiring more than perhaps 60% open space. He also indicated the Orvis's engineer was preparing some sketches which they would share with the Township

**Zoning Revision - POC District:** URDC also submitted a July 6th revision to the June 19th memo relating to the POC. Present for the developer were Joseph McCawley and his attorney, Steven Marshall. Mr. Cotter identified the two major issues as building length and Floor Area Ratio. .

Mr. Marshall presented a new sketch with buildings 200-feet long (and 72 foot wide), the dimension suggested in the URDC memo. He indicated that certain amenities planned for these buildings were eliminated by this reduction in length. The Floor Area Ratio achieved by this plan is .37, considerably less than the .4 proposed by the URDC draft. The Commission advised Mr. Marshall that the URDC memo was a suggestion from the consultant and had not been adopted by the Commission. Mr. Marshall responded that his client has spent a great deal of time and money preparing sketches. He believes it is time for the Township to make a decision. Mr. Marshall also displayed some elevations showing a corner of the proposed buildings. The Planning Commission still believes the bulk of the buildings is an issue and is not ready to recommend adoption of the URDC suggestions. The Commission does not find the density an issue, but the bulk of the buildings is a major concern. Three smaller buildings, which would be preferable, will not fit on the site according to the engineers.

Mr. Cotter suggested that PC might consider some type of performance standards that would allow the Township to discuss certain additional landscape and architectural controls. The PC would recommend a maximum building length of 165 feet, the length of the Jefferson Apartments, and if the developer proposed a building length in excess of this, there would be further discussion of landscape standards and the appearance of the buildings.

Mr. Capuzzi suggested using the Conditional Use process to provide the Township with the opportunity to give a bonus for upgraded landscaping and demonstrated improved architectural features.

Chairman Verdiani expressed the Commission continuing dissatisfaction with the bulk of the buildings. It seems that the Commission finds the length of the buildings a bigger issue than the height. Two buildings of a length comparable to the JPI apartments might be acceptable on this site. PC would consider conditions which might make a greater length acceptable Mr. Cotter will investigate such standards for the PC meeting on August 8th.

**Public Comment:** None at this time.

**Adjourned:** 10:20PM  
(EA/CD)