

# WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Stokes Assembly Hall  
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township  
Wednesday, August 21, 2019 – 7:30PM

## **Present**

Commissioners – all Planning Commission (PC) members were present. Also present was Planning Technician, Mila Robinson.

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

Mr. Pomerantz called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM, Lowe Perrish and John Woodcock led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Adoption of Agenda (DP/EA) 7-0**

No changes were made.

## **Approval of Minutes (KF/SR) 5-0**

Two corrections were made to the PC meeting minutes for 08/05/2019. Jack Embick requested to include that he was opposed to changing the 75-foot setback. Mr. Pomerantz requested to assure that the comments presented in the minutes by other members would be emphasized as well.

## **Announcements**

- Gaudenzia ZHB application will be heard Thursday, 8/22, 6:30pm, Twp Bldg
- WCASD, Rustin HS ZHB application will be heard Thursday, 8/29, 6:30pm, Twp Bldg

## **Public Comment – Non Agenda Items**

None

## **New Business**

1. **2019-08 Bournelyf Special Camp – ZHB (Special Exception) application** – Lowe Perrish, President of the Board of the Bournelyf Special Camp (BSC), and John Woodcock, an ex officio member of the Board and pastor of the Church of the Loving Shepherd (CLS), were present to answer PC members questions related to the application. The BSC applied for a Special Exception to permit use of a property, noted as a separate parcel owned by the CLS located in the R-1 zoning district, to allow for a use of the property as the Day Camp that it has operated as since 1980. This use is permitted by special exception according to the Township Code Article VI Chapter 170 Zoning.

Mrs. Adler expressed her concern about creating a parcel that was completely landlocked, was used in common with all three other parcels belonging to the CLS, and had no street access. Jack Embick questioned if that could be resolved by obtaining easements. Mrs. Adler noted that the parcel was never subject to a complete review because it had been there for a while, and she questioned adequacy of easements for emergency response. John Woodcock remarked that the church purchased the properties in three separate transactions, and when more was subdivided, the Township granted an easement to the parcel under discussion, which happened in 1970/1971.

Mr. Embick raised a question regarding the use and management of the swimming pool located at the BSC. Mr. Perrish recapped that the camp operated during summer months, did not have any overnight facilities, offered monthly programs, and the pool was used during that time. The pool varied in size between 3 and 7 feet and was an L-shaped with a ramp for people with disabilities; it had a section with only 3 to 3.5 feet depth and six swim lanes of about 50 feet in length and 3.5 to 7 feet in depth. He explained that the day camp had a paid staff, including lifeguards, nurses and camp counselors, and volunteers who worked at the camp. The BSC utilized a pool contractor for maintenance of the pool, and to their knowledge, pool filters were backwashed several times throughout the summer. Mr. Woodcock emphasized that the pool and the camp were subject to inspection by the county and the state. He explained that the Chester County Health Department had standards for chemicals used in the pool, and the camp tested pool water several times per day. He also pointed out that chlorine evaporates, and when it was time to close the pool, the water was discharged onto the ground, on the south side of the pool. Mr. Embick emphasized that according to the rules and regulations of the Department of Environmental protection (EPA) and rules pertaining to swimming pool operations promulgated by the Department of Health, one had to very cautious with the chemicals when draining the pool water onto the ground or backwashing the filters. He further pointed that one shall not discharge pool water to the place where it would flow into a storm drain and eventually to a stream. Mr. Woodcock commented that the closest stream was at least three to four acres away from the pool and did not originate on the property. Mr. Embick also asked about the location of the septic system's absorption field (drainfield) in regards to the pool. Mr. Woodcock noted that it was located about 150 feet from the south of the pool, and it was not drained onto the field.

Mr. Rodia raised a question regarding the distance of the pool from the main building and access to it in case of emergency. Mr. Perrish noted that the access road was made out of stone, and he assured that it was very easy to get to the pool with all type of vehicles.

Mr. Hatton questioned the reason for special exception for the property considering the church was granted one back in 2000 and was successfully leasing the property to the camp for many years. Mr. Perrish confirmed that the special exception was granted to the church, and the BSC was a nonprofit that rented that parcel to operate. The church made a decision to sell that property to the camp, which had been around for 40 years, so that the church could have funds for repairs and other things. He stressed that the parties had symbiotic relationship that they expected to continue. Mr. Woodcock added that the camp that started as a mission project for the church was now in a better financial state to have a title to the property of its own.

Mr. Pomerantz asked whether families paid to utilize the day camp. Mr. Perrish recapped that about 50% funds came from tuition and the other 50% from grants and donors and fundraising events.

Mr. Flynn raised a question about the future of existing access easements through church's property after the transaction. Mr. Woodcock confirmed that the church would continue having an access easement to the future camp's property. Mrs. Adler asked to confirm the width of an easement. Mr. Woodcock believed it was a minimum of 25 feet with some areas being wider.

Mr. Hatton asked about the lighting around the pool, to which Mr. Perrish responded that the neighbors were opposed to having standard pool lights, therefore, considering that the pool was not used at night, there were no lights around it. He noted that the camp had portable lights that were utilized during annual camp show event.

PC members had a discussion about the future of the property in case there were plans for additional buildings for office space and other facilities. Mr. Perrish confirmed that the camp would like to add on to the existing bathrooms, but there were no certain plans in the works for anything else. He noted that it would be nice to have some somewhat more permanent storage and offices, and the camp was currently utilizing the church's facilities.

Mr. Pomerantz asked if the camp had any negative reaction from the neighbors. Mr. Woodcock explained that he was surprised that some neighbors were not even aware that there was a camp on the property. Mr. Embick asked if the neighbors were notified about the special exception application. Mr. Perrish responded that there were not.

Mr. Lees raised a question about the camp's tax-exempt status. Mr. Embick suggested that they should check on that before moving forward. Mr. Woodcock responded that he believed that the camp was granted that status. He elaborated that the church had been paying tax on that property, because it was not used for worship, and then the assessment office pointed out that mistake and granted a tax-exempt status based on a charitable organization using property of another charitable organization.

After a discussion, PC strongly suggested the applicant verifying its tax-exempt status, and contacting the adjacent property owners for their support and including their feedback as an exhibit for the ZHB.

**Motion to recommend to the ZHB to consider favorably the special exception application to permit use of a property, noted as tax parcel 67-4-3 located in the R-1 zoning district as the Day Camp with considerations given to the following items: formalization of existing access easements (including their width), management of the swimming pool, future plans for additional building(s) and parking, and a need of a separate street address for emergency response.**

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **Public Comment**

None

#### **Reports**

#### **Adjournment (SR/RH) 7-0**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Next PC Meeting – August 21, 2019, 7:30 pm – Township Building

PC Representative at next Board of Supervisors Meeting: September 3, 2019 (Tuesday) – Russ Hatton/Jack Embick

Respectfully submitted,  
William Ethridge, Planning Commission Secretary