

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

VIRTUAL MEETING (via Zoom Platform)
Wednesday, December 9, 2020 – 7:30PM

Present

Commissioners – Planning Commission (PC) members Russ Hatton (RH), Jack Embick (JE), Jim Lees (JL), Steve Rodia (SR), Kevin Flynn (KF), Elaine Adler (EA), and Tom Sennett (TS) were present. Also, present was Township Manager Jon Altshul, Township Planner and Interim Zoning Officer Mila Robinson, and Township Planning Consultant John Snook, Township traffic consultant, Al Federico, and Township engineer, Bob Flinchbaugh.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Hatton called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

Adoption of Agenda (EA/JE) 7-0

Mr. Hatton added an item under New Business – contract for services for the PC solicitor, Kristin Camp.

Approval of Minutes

11/17/20 meeting minutes were approved with the following corrections: **(JE/KF) 7-0**

- Change “proved” to “provide” on page 1, second line from the bottom
- Add “enforcement” after “criminal” and before “mechanisms” on page 3, in the middle of the second full paragraph
- Change of “setbacks” into “building separations” on page 3, paragraph before Public Comment

Announcements

- Mila Robinson announced upcoming Crebilly Hearing #7
- Mila Robinson announced the special meeting for the Historical Commission

Public Comment – Non Agenda Items

None

New Business

1. Contract for Services with BUCKLEY BRION McGUIRE & MORRIS, LLP

Motion to approve the contract with Kristin Camp as a PC solicitor. (JE/JL) 7-0

2. West Chester Area School District (WCASD) Westtown-Thornbury Elementary (WTE) School Building Expansion Application

Mr. Brewer, consultant engineer for the WCASD, reiterated that they were present in front of the PC before and the ZHB for a special exception for the primary school use. He presented the rendering of the proposed building expansion noting that the layout had not been changed.

Mr. Embick pointed out that there was a significant amount of traffic during the election as the site served as a precinct for election and wondered if the addition of proposed parking spaces would alleviate that at some extent. Kevin Campbell, Director of Facilities and Operations, acknowledged that it has been an atypical year due to COVID-19. He said that the District changed dismissal procedure because they could not gather the kids in one location such as a

gym, and dismissed them from their homerooms. He pointed out that they were redistricting, which would result in fewer students at WTE. He noted that the additional classrooms were for programmatic needs for their special education students, but they left some spare capacity, at both Starkweather Elementary and Westtown-Thornbury Elementary in the districting model, in anticipation of development of Crebilly Farm.

Mr. Embick asked whether there was a strategy to address the pick-up car line extending onto Westbourne Road. Mr. Campbell responded that there was not; however, he admitted that they could apply an approach similar to Hillsdale Elementary, requiring the parents to come to the office and sign their kids out. Mr. Campbell noted that the parents were not pleased with that approach. He indicated that the district was trying its best with this plan to be a great improvement over the troubles that have been in the past.

Mr. Embick asked whether the WCASD had a traffic officer or someone else on staff for managing that traffic. Mr. Campbell confirmed that they increased the adult presence at dismissal, and have bus monitors who are typically teachers who handle the pickup lines. They know parents and the kids, helping the carline to move more quickly. He also noted that they added two additional people to move the traffic at the end of the day.

Mr. Flynn asked how the district manages bus traffic flow. Mr. Campbell noted that buses were in a separate lane. At WTE they let parents pick up first, and then the buses.

Mr. Rodia asked whether there was a way to manage bus flow and parent pickups to improve the traffic flow at the school. Mr. Campbell reiterated that they were able to move the kids through efficiently, and the proposed plan will provide additional parking. He noted that they had strategies in place to improve the situation.

Al Federico, Township traffic consultant, acknowledged the physical constraints of the site and the limitations to improve traffic flow. He suggested that there might be some technology-based improvements like a cell phone parking lot, but overall, there was not a lot of room to maneuver.

Bob Flinchbaugh, Township stormwater management consultant, said he noted in his review letter that there are stormwater management and water quality control issues that need to be addressed for the parking expansion, based upon ordinance and ADA requirements.

Mr. Embick expressed concern regarding erosion and sediment prevention during the construction. He stated that Goose Creek is already an impaired waterway under the federal clean water act and Pennsylvania EPS stream standards. Mr. Brewer responded that as per PADEP NPDES requirements, they would install compost filter socks, which have been found to provide better reduction of any kind of sedimentation runoff, to prevent anything from entering into the Creek. Mr. Flinchbaugh added that in addition to his review, the Chester County Conservation District would review the proposal. He also pointed out that the applicant would increase the size of the facilities that were currently shown on the plan to meet requirements that are more stringent. As per Mr. Embick's request, Mr. Brewer described the stormwater management facilities, including an infiltration bed underneath the proposed parking lot that would primarily control the runoff from the parking lot itself, and an above ground rain garden that would control the runoff from the building addition. He also noted that to meet water quality requirements, the inlets in the infiltration bed would be equipped with BMP snouts to prevent any floatables from entering the infiltration bed.

Mr. Rodia raised a question regarding the impact of additional outdoor lighting for the proposed parking lot and building expansion on adjacent property owners. Mr. Brewer confirmed that there would be additional pole lights on the parking lot, but they will have shielding to prevent any bleed over from the light outside of the lot. Mr. Snook asked whether the lights normally were turned off at night. Mr. Campbell explained that they cycle off at 9PM, except where the

custodian parks, which goes out at 11PM.

Mr. Embick raised a concern regarding the use of level spreaders on the slope where he believed they might not work properly. Mr. Brewer noted that they would be installed at the flatter part and outside any slopes from the parking area.

Mr. Brewer noted that they hoped to break the ground in late spring/early summer and complete the project within 12 months.

Old Business

1. Dog Ordinance

John Snook summarized the edits to the draft made in response to the PC comments at the last meeting. He included several definitions and exceptions. During the discussion, the additional changes were proposed:

- Replace “public service training” with “public service animals”
- Include reference to K-9 to the definition of public service animals
- Replace “voice command” with “effective command”
- Amending the definition of “fence dog park or exercise area” to include “in a securely fenced or otherwise specifically designated dog park or dog exercise area”

The PC suggested sending the draft ordinance to Chief Bernot, WEGO PD, for review and comment.

Motion for John Snook to amend the draft ordinance with the changes discussed, and submit the revised draft to WEGO for comment. (JE/EA) 7-0

2. Flexible Development Ordinance

John Snook summarized the information he provided to the PC regarding proposed ordinance amendments. He noted that there were several issues in relevance to setback requirements. He explained that the existing flexible standards only provided separation distances between the buildings and did not relate to lot lines, which created hardship for small lot developments. Mr. Snook provided several examples of those situations in relevance to patio and pool proposals submitted to the Township. He went through the proposed ordinance changes that were aimed to provide opportunities for small lots.

Mr. Snook reiterated that he added a requirement for a developer to indicate how much impervious was allocated to each specific lot as opposed to having overall impervious cover limitation. He noted that it could be a condition for conditional use approval for builders to provide some sort of a disclosure to inform potential buyers of those restrictions.

Mr. Embick raised a question about several terms being defined in the Code. Mr. Snook noted that they need to be further examined to appropriately revise existing regulations.

Mr. Snook reminded the PC that there were several amendments to the flexible development standards that need to move forward. The PC agreed for Mr. Snook to put them into one document to present at the next meeting for review and approval.

Public Comment

Tom Foster, 734 Westbourne Road, raised a concern regarding stormwater runoff from the WTE property. He noted that the significant amount of water was coming off that property now, and questioned whether the proposed stormwater facilities would be designed to improve the current situation. Mr. Brewer responded that he was not fully aware of current issues; however, he reassured that the proposed design would mitigate any runoff from additional impervious surfaces. Mr. Hatton suggested for the PC to make recommendation for the applicant to make every effort to

improve stormwater runoff issues currently present on the site.

Charles Hall, American Kennel Club (AKC), in response to the PC comment regarding the meaning of “humane”, responded that generally, an animal control officer would determine if the situation was inhumane. He noted that there might be something in the Pennsylvania Dog Law regarding that.

Reports

Elaine Adler provided the report of Board of Supervisors Meeting 12/07/20.

Adjournment (JE/JL) 7-0

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mila Robinson,
Planner II/Interim Zoning Officer

DRAFT