

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission
Agenda
Tuesday, March 3, 2020
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: February 4, 2020

PUBLIC COMMENT/CONCERNS/QUESTIONS

PLANS

OLD BUSINESS

1. Town Center District Discussion

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: March 17, 2020



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 28, 2020

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: John R. Weller, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning

SUBJECT: Exton Crossroads discussion

The Exton Crossroads is not only the center of West Whiteland Township, but is the literal Crossroads of Chester County, where the County's most important north-south arterial - PA Route 100 - intersects its most important east-west arterial - US Business Route 30, also known as Lincoln Hwy. It is a natural focus for economic development in the wealthiest and best educated County in Pennsylvania, so the current surge of development should not surprise us.

We first discussed ideas for the Exton Crossroads at our meetings of May 7 and May 23, 2019. Principal points from those discussions were:

- We want the crossroads area to function as a Town Center.
- We do NOT want warehouses or distribution centers moving in to occupy vacant "big box" spaces.
- We want pedestrian scale with green spaces and a mix of uses.
- Facilitate bicycle and pedestrian movement, including:
 - Enhance/improve pedestrian crossings for US Business Route 30 (Lincoln Hwy.) and PA Route 100 (Pottstown Pk.).
 - Provide a bicycle/pedestrian circle around the 30/100 crossroads (as shown on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan) rather than promote such crossings right at the crossroads.
- The scale of Main Street at Exton was cited as a positive example: we like the mix of large and smaller stores in a pedestrian-friendly environment with lots of green space.
- Eagleview in Uwchlan Township was also mentioned as a positive example.
- We DO NOT want to be another King of Prussia: it's too busy, too intense, too big.
- Environmental constraints south of Lincoln Hwy. limit what can be done there.
- It's important to include green/common space and public amenities.
- Re-assess whether our parking requirements are appropriate.
- Streetscapes are critical: do we want professional or some other outside assistance to develop a streetscape plan?
- What about implementing a Business Improvement District ("BID")?

While we are still at the beginning of our conversations on this matter - and it's tempting to say that "no idea is a bad idea" - we DO need to keep some things in mind. Perhaps the most important to remember is that while the Township has significant power through regulations like the Zoning Ordinance, the great majority of the land here is privately owned, and Township acquisition of large properties in the Town Center is out of the question. Uses we consider should be reasonable and appropriate for this location: we are not proposing to change the Comprehensive Plan, and the crossroads area remains our preferred location for development in the Township. If we agree that we do not want any more apartment buildings for a while, what DO we want to have here?

Some other things to think about as you prepare for the meeting:

- Last year we provided all of you with a copy of "Retrofitting Suburbia" by Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson. Take a look through it and see what strikes you. Note that chapter six specifically addresses regional malls (like Exton Square) and is followed by some case studies. While the book doesn't specifically address large strip centers (like Fairfield Place and Whiteland Towne Center), there are still some good concepts. Is there anything here you especially like - or don't like?
- This is a great opportunity to promote the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that the Township adopted last year as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. How can we build on the framework of that plan to promote a bike- and pedestrian-friendly environment?
- Although the two main roads are both under PennDOT control, we can still promote streetscape improvements and the provision of side streets to disperse traffic. Recall that our Official Map specifically calls for enhanced streetscapes along this central part of the Lincoln Hwy. and Pottstown Pk. corridors.
- What public amenities do we want to see?
- How do we promote/encourage development that respects the character of this place?

We expect that tonight's meeting will be well attended. Staff will prepare a brief presentation to get things started. The meeting room will be set up with multiple stations where those attending can express their opinions about what they would like to see around Exton Crossroads. After the opening comments, we will provide the public with opportunity to document their desires and concerns at those stations. Following that, we will come together again to discuss what was noted, topics of greatest concerns, and next steps.

Attachments:

None.

PC MMO's - Miscellaneous\2020\200228 - Town Center