

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Minutes of the second February meeting

February 16, 2021

*This was a virtual meeting; all participants attended on-line via Zoom.*

**Members Virtually Present**

Mark Gordon, Chairman  
Dan Cote  
Jeff Glisson  
MaryFrances McGarrity  
Ray McKeeman

**Township Personnel Virtually Present**

John Weller, Planning Director  
Justin Smiley, Township Planner  
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager  
Pam Gural-Bear, Asst. Township Manager

Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisors Liaison

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mark Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom, and Mr. Gordon asked that everyone observe video etiquette.

A moment of silence was observed for the members of the military that protect our nation and first responders who protect us daily here at home.

**II. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the meeting of February 2, 2021  
(McKeeman/Glisson)

ACTION: Passed, 5-0

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

**IV. PLANS**

There were no plans for review by the Commission.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion on revisions to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (S/LDO)**

Mr. Weller reviewed his February 12, 2021 memorandum and explained that the proposed revisions are designed to make the S/LDO more flexible by removing requirements that can change over time due to changing technology (such as number and format of plan sets) and making them part of the application form, where they can be revised administratively without the costly procedure of amending an Ordinance. The proposed revisions also more accurately reflect current Township procedures and attempt to make it more user-friendly. We expect this discussion to take several sessions; tonight we will focus on Articles II, Procedure, and III, Plan Requirements. The proposed revisions to Article III are to assure that we get all the information we need to do a proper, thorough review and to eliminate items that are superfluous and serve only to add to a developer's costs - which is ultimately passed on to homebuyers and consumers.

## Article II - Procedure

Mr. Weller explained that the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) does not require preliminary and final *plans*, only preliminary and final *approvals*. Noting that current technology allows preliminary plans to be just as accurate as final plans, and given that 90% or more of the plans approved by the Township are submitted as preliminary plans and approved as final plans (as permitted by the current S/LDO), Mr. Weller asked for reactions to the idea of combining the sections on “preliminary” and “final” plans into a single section for “preliminary/final” plans. He noted that this would be unusual since most municipalities in the area still reference “preliminary” and “final” plans separately, but, after some discussion, the members agreed that they favored having a single section for “preliminary/final” plans.

The definition of “land development” was discussed. The MPC allows the Township to exempt certain activities from the process of land development. The Commission was in favor of exceptions for smaller accessory use buildings and building additions less than 250 square feet. Mr. Gordon suggested that with assisted living becoming more and more expensive, more residents may wish to add in-law suits to their properties. Mr. Weller pointed out that a second kitchen is currently prohibited in the R-1 residential district, but this could be discussed further at a future meeting.

The Commission agreed with Mr. Weller’s recommendation to retain the provision that plan approval expires after five years if there has been no progress on the improvements approved for a plan or if the plan has not been recorded.

Regarding paragraph “D” of Article II, Ms. Gleason recommended that the word “utilities” be kept as it relates to sewer system capacity. The word “utilities” could be changed to “other infrastructure”.

New paragraph “E” of Article II describes the process as it is currently followed by the Township.

Ms. McGarrity questioned the proposed deletion of Section 281-8 of Article II “Review by governmental agencies.” Mr. Weller explained that the regulations listed in this Section are not Township regulations, and therefore not within the Township’s control. They are also subject to frequent change. Developers still have to abide by said regulations, but the Township does not control the source. In an effort to help applicants with the land development process, said requirements will be added to the Township’s applications, but removed from the Ordinance where they could possibly create a conflict when changes are made by the agencies with authority to do so.

## Article III - Plan Requirements

Mr. Glisson suggested adding a requirement for both sketch plans and preliminary/final land development submissions to include a Google Earth (or equivalent) view of the plan site and a 500-foot perimeter buffer so the impact on surrounding properties can better be assessed. Members agreed.

Other proposed revisions to Article III include the addition of provisional names for streets and buildings and the deletion of the historic resource categories of “Class I, II and III” (as these categories are currently being revised) and to reference instead all historic resources shown on the Township’s Historic Resources Map.

Mr. Weller will make the revisions agreed upon this evening and present the Commission with a clean version at the March 16 meeting along with additional Articles for review.

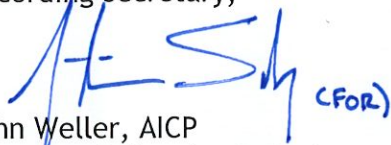
VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Smiley announced that the next meeting will be a discussion of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) study proposals, next steps, and implementation. He encouraged Commission members to consider what priorities from the ULI study they would like to focus on and how West Chester University students working with the ArcGIS Urban software can assist.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



John Weller, AICP  
Director of Planning & Zoning