

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
March 3, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Public Services Commission regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m. Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom. The meeting was open to the public, and the link to join the meeting was listed on the agenda posted on the Township's website.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Brian Dakin  
John Ceschan  
Joe Roscioli  
Tim Hubbard  
James Duffy  
Rob Hall  
Janice Gottesfeld  
Kevin Moore  
LeeAnn Embrey

**TOWNSHIP STAFF**

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager  
Pam Gural-Bear, Assistant Township Manager  
Ed Culp, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Caroline O'Connor, Public Works Coordinator  
Justin Smiley, Township Planner  
Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisors Liaison

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Members thanked the Public Works crew for a great job during the recent snow storms.

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Mr. Roscioli, seconded by Mr. Hall, to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2021 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ms. Gottesfeld announced that the Friends of the Parks is currently working on a virtual Egg Hunt scheduled for the end of March. She will keep the Commission posted.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

**1. Harris Miniature Golf**

Resident Bill Palmer shared with the Commission a video on Harris Miniature Golf, as a possible recreational activity for the Township to pursue. Being an outdoor event, the activity could provide safer recreational options for residents. Harris has been a builder of mini golf courses for 50 years. Actual construction time is about 4 weeks at a cost of approximately \$300,000 with a 3-4 year payback. The course requires about 10,000 square feet of space and a parking lot. Mr. Palmer received an Investor's kit from Harris which he offered to share with the Commission.

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Mr. Roscioli asked various questions about ongoing operation and maintenance and the need for utilities. Ms. Gleason said that because the Township received grant money for its various parks, it is not legally allowed to have a for-profit business in any of its parks. She agreed that mini golf would be a great outdoor activity that would draw people to the area but said it would need to be built by a private entity as opposed to the Township. Ms. Gottesfeld suggested presenting the idea to PREIT for construction in one of its currently underused parking lots at the Exton Mall. There was a general consensus among Commission members that the idea has merit for the right private partner and thanked Mr. Palmer for bringing the idea to them. Ms. Gleason suggested Mr. Palmer contact the Chamber of Commerce.

## **2. Urban Land Institute (ULI) Review**

Mr. Dakin thanked everyone who participated in the live ULI event, noting that it is important to talk to residents about the report and seek feedback from everyone.

Justin Smiley, Township Planner, presented a Power Point presentation focusing on the recommendations of the ULI report of Placemaking, Identity & Wayfinding, and Governance as tools for developing the Exton Crossroads (Town Center District). Placemaking involves recruiting businesses desired by the Township and showcasing historic resources and other assets such as the Chester Valley Trail and Miller Park. Identity & Wayfinding pertains to establishing an identity and more wayfinding signage to help people better navigate various connections via the Chester Valley Trail, the Township's Bike & Pedestrian Plan, community trails, and shared roadways.

Governance involves transit goals and organizing unlike groups within the Crossroads area. Mr. Smiley said the first step is to educate the residents and businesses on the development process (Development by Design) emphasizing that planning plus development equals improvements. Township staff will soon be conducting town hall meetings with businesses and various HOAs to discuss development and determine through visioning sessions what people would like to see in the Crossroads area; what things will bring people to the area on a regular basis. The next step will be to discuss implementation and funding, but Mr. Smiley emphasized that the first step is to get residents and businesses to buy into the idea.

Ms. Gottesfeld brought up the difficulties cyclists currently face in trying to bike around the Township and asked if connections could be made that would allow cyclists to avoid dangerous roads such as Whitford and Route 30. Mr. Smiley said this needs further study as it can involve obtaining easements over private property, and PennDOT issues for State roads. Mr. Smiley did show a connection behind the Township building to the historic Thomas Mill and said a safe crossing of Route 30 to the Whiteland Town Center shopping area is currently in the works, but he cautioned that not every roadway is connectible due to various grades, lack of shoulder areas, etc. "Share the road" designations have been made.

Mr. Hall asked about extending the Chester Valley Trail through to Whitford Road. Mr. Smiley advised that the County is in the process of building this connection with a pedestrian overpass leading into the Oaklands Corporate Center, however there would be no access from Whitford Road due to land constraints for the required ADA ramping.

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Mr. Duffy expressed concern for developing more mixed use space when there is already much of it that is currently vacant. Mr. Smiley said there are more stores going in at Main Street at Exton. He stressed however the need for a clear vision for the mall area. He said that some have expressed the hope for a park, but the tax revenue generated as a result of the assessed value of the mall property makes a park improbable. The ULI report suggests more services here such as restaurants, fitness centers, and businesses that require a public presence. Mr. Duffy said something to incentivize minority businesses to come to the area would be desirable.

Services that some Commission members felt were missing in the Exton area included: self-care services such as yoga and massage studios, cultural events/art galleries/museums, and live theatre.

It was pointed out that the clock square area behind Bed Bath & Beyond at Main Street at Exton was a nice public space that is never used but could be a perfect site for some type of music event. In a comparison to King of Prussia, Mr. Duffy pointed out that restaurants at King of Prussia are more all season areas with water fountains in the summer and outdoor heated areas in the colder months.

Mr. Dakin asked if the four quadrants of the Crossroads area should be maintained as separate areas with each having its own identity. Mr. Kumbhardare said he felt the four quadrants should be integrated with each other to produce a feeling of one community in all quadrants. A trolley of some type that travels between the quadrants was suggested. Mr. Smiley pointed out that the Chester Valley Trail currently touches all four quadrants, but final completion of gaps is needed.

Mr. Roscioli said the focus should be on "what we need", not "what we want". Ms. Gottesfeld suggested surveying the apartment dwellers in the area to see what they need, as they may be a stabilizing force in the area as they walk to various services and recreate locally.

Mr. Smiley said Township staff will begin town hall style meetings with the community soon.

### **3. Public Works Update**

Mr. Culp advised that the Exton Park project is out for bid with groundbreaking expected to begin in May. He thanked the Public Works crew and Caroline O'Connor for their great efforts during the recent snowstorms.

Mr. Dakin reported that the Sunshade Grant project at the Boot Road Park dugouts was completed in January. A dedication ceremony will be scheduled when the weather warms up.

Ms. Gottesfeld said the benches that Friends of the Parks donated have been installed at Boot Road Park and look great.


Mr. Dakin encouraged Commission members to talk to residents when the opportunity presents itself to make them aware of the ULI report and get their feedback. Ms. Gleason added that the project is in the beginning phase where public input can really influence what happens.

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**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Hall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hubbard, to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Kevin Moore, Secretary