

WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Minutes of the first March meeting

March 3, 2026

Members Present
Keith Choper, Chair
Dan Cote
Priyanka Gupta
Denise Jones
Virginia Kerlake
Todd Rouse

Township Personnel Present
John Weller, Planning Director
Patrick Gorman, Township Planner
Pam Gural-Bear, Township Manager

Supervisors Present
Rajesh Kumbhardare

I. CALL TO ORDER

Keith Choper called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and asked all to rise for the pledge to the flag and for a moment of silence for our first responders and service members.

II. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Choper asked for clarifications regarding draft minutes of February 17, 2026. It was agreed that edits to three passages in the discussion about the data center stormwater basins were warranted.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 17, 2026, including the clarifications referenced by Mr. Choper.
(Rouse/Jones)

ACTION: Passed, 4-0-1, with Ms. Kerlake abstaining as she was present for only a portion of that meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

IV. PLANS

1. **Weston Way Partners II, Inc. (Weston Tract)**
Site Address: 1400 Weston Way
First Review: Concept Plan
Request: Revised plan with a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment for the redevelopment of the Weston Solutions office campus for residential use with single-family homes using the cluster development option.

John Weller provided an overview of a new concept plan for the 53.55-acre Weston Solutions office campus along King Rd. The Applicant had previously submitted a conditional use application for the development of the tract, which the Planning Commission reviewed on October 14, 2025. That plan used the cluster design option, which is allowed in the R-1 district on tracts of 25 acres or more. The conditional use plan proposed 49 lots for development with single-family detached homes, one lot to accommodate the historic Morstein mansion, and about 15

acres of open space. While the proposed lots met the minimum size requirement, there was a question whether the proposed open space met the standards; in addition, Staff determined that the plan did not meet eight of the twelve conditional use criteria. The Commission took no action that night. Since that meeting, the Applicant has paused the conditional use process by granting the Township an extension to the deadline to begin the hearing and prepared a concept plan for our consideration. Implementing the concept will require an amendment to the existing cluster development regulations.

Mr. Weller stated that the new concept plan is similar in many ways to the conditional use plan reviewed in October: the lot and street configurations are essentially the same, and both plans propose 50 lots: 49 for new homes and one for the historic mansion. The differences respond to the Commission's comments and include an increase in open space (now almost 45% of the tract), preservation of more woodlands, a buffer along King Road, and a more prominent location for the historic train station, which will now serve as an entrance feature. Some of these changes are possible due to the individual lots being smaller. Mr. Weller advised that a concept plan requires no motion but is meant to be a topic for discussion and feedback.

The Applicant was represented by attorney Alyson Zarro of Riley, Riper, Hollin & Colagrecio; Denny Howell and Denny Howell III of Howell Engineering; and Tom Kessler for the developer.

Mr. Rouse asked how the open space was calculated and asked if it included the stormwater management basins. Mr. Howell responded that it does include the basins. He then explained that by reducing the minimum lot size from 22,000 sq.ft. to 19,000 sq.ft., they were able to increase open space from 30% to 45% and preserve much more of the woodlands without increasing overall density. Mr. Howell noted that home buyers today prefer smaller lots with less maintenance.

Mr. Weller explained that the draft amendment proposes limits on building and impervious cover in square feet rather than as percentages of the lot size, which is more typical. This approach would minimize the impact upon existing cluster developments such as Ryerss Hunt and Swedesford Chase; that is, those residents would not suddenly be able to add significantly to the impervious coverage of their lots.

Mr. Choper asked if the Zoning Hearing Board would have authority to grant a variance should someone with a larger lot seek relief from the square footage limits. Mr. Weller said they would, but the property owner could be required to manage stormwater as a condition of approval, as this is what the ZHB has been requiring lately as a condition of such relief. Mr. Weller further noted that it would be unlikely that a cluster development would have any unusually large residential lots, as the whole point of a cluster project is to keep the new residential lots close to the minimum required size. Mr. Weller added that he looked at a couple lots in Swedesford Chase and found that their building and impervious cover are fairly close to the areas proposed in the amendment. Mr. Howell added that bigger lots mean less open space and noted that Easttown Twp. requires anyone seeking a variance to exceed the limits must infiltrate stormwater from all storms, adding that this is not easily done.

Mr. Cote noted that on page 5 of his memorandum dated February 27, 2026, Mr. Weller states that one purpose of the cluster option is to reduce impervious surface, resulting in less stormwater runoff. Mr. Cote asked if this is still relevant. Mr. Weller said it is: cluster designs tend to have less impervious cover since less roads are needed. Mr. Howell said the road system in the concept plan is 200 feet less than the previous plan.

Mr. Rouse asked what percentage of the site is currently open space. Mr. Howell said he did not know; Staff showed a view of the site using ChescoViews. Mr. Weller explained the Township's compensatory tree requirements for any wooded areas removed.

Mr. Howell confirmed that there would be a Homeowners' Association (HOA) to maintain the common areas and stormwater management facilities, but maintenance of the individual lots would be the responsibility of the property owner.

Mr. Choper asked about the stormwater basins bordering some of the residential lots. Mr. Howell said the top of the berms would be fenced, separating them from the lots. He added that the basins will hold water only temporarily and will fully drain within 72 hours. In contrast to the stormwater basins proposed along Valley Creek Blvd. (to serve the data center project in East Whiteland), Mr. Weller advised that this property is not in the carbonate district.

Ms. Jones said she was glad to see three additional stormwater basins and asked where the former train line ran. Mr. Weller showed the path of the rail line using ChescoViews. Ms. Jones asked if the lot size of the mansion could be increased by taking space from lot 41 and others. Mr. Howell said he would look at this. Ms. Jones asked if any of the other historic resources were being preserved. Mr. Howell said there are six resources on the property. The train station and mansion will be preserved, but the stables and the Whiteman House are in poor condition and would cost too much to preserve. The gateposts will be relocated to be an entrance feature, but the Gatehouse is in poor condition and would be an attractive nuisance. Mr. Kessler suggested that the train station could be secured and given to the HOA. Ms. Jones responded that the cost of maintaining the building would increase HOA fees for an already small number of property owners. Mr. Kessler said the HOA could decide. Mr. Choper expressed concern that the HOA would decide to demolish the resource in the future if maintenance costs became too high. Mr. Howell said that once the initial restoration was done, the annual maintenance cost would be low. Mr. Weller suggested that the building could be used as a gallery space or similar cultural feature, thereby generating some revenue for the HOA.

Ms. Kerslake asked why the Applicant was proposing a zoning ordinance amendment as opposed to seeking a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Weller explained that an Applicant must show a hardship when going before the Zoning Hearing Board, and this Applicant does not have a hardship.

Mr. Weller said the question before the Planning Commission is whether the increase in open space is worth the reduction in lot size; that is, is the Applicant's plan an overall improvement to the Township's cluster regulations. Mr. Kessler said that the concept plan not only increases open space by 50% but saves about 30% of the woodlands.

Mr. Choper asked if the concept plan could be approved with waivers as opposed to needing a zoning amendment. Mr. Weller said waivers could not be granted because the 22,000 sq ft. lot requirement is in the Zoning Ordinance and cannot be waived. It would require a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board, and the Applicant cannot show a hardship.

Ms. Kerslake said the draft amendment does not reference open space requirements, and she would like the specifics to be included in the amendment. Ms. Zarro said this will be added should the Commission indicate a desire to proceed with the concept plan.

Mr. Weller calculated that the current open space requirements in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance would require about 2.25 acres of permanent open space for a standard

(i.e., non-cluster) development with 49 new homes. The concept plan shows about 16 acres of open space.

Mr. Rouse said he likes the preservation of the wooded areas. Mr. Howell confirmed that the woodlands would be preserved in perpetuity.

Mr. Choper expressed concern about the unintended consequences of the zoning amendment. Mr. Weller advised that stating the limits in square feet as opposed to percentages mitigates this concern, noting that lots in Ryerss Hunt and Swedesford Chase are already very close to the proposed limits, but added that these property owners could seek relief from the Zoning Hearing Board.

Responding to a question from Ms. Gupta, Mr. Howell said the historic mansion could be used as offices or as a meeting space or adaptively reused as a residential duplex. Mr. Weller noted the success of the residential conversion of the historic Ivy Cottage in the Keva Flats community.

Mr. Gorman asked about access to the stormwater basins. Mr. Howell responded there is an access strip of open space along King Road and also behind the mansion. He also stated that there will be no on-street parking. Mr. Kumbhardare asked about school bus access. Mr. Howell said the bus will be able to circulate through the site, exiting on to Old Phoenixville Pk., where there is already a traffic signal. He added that there will not be enough traffic to warrant a new signal at the Weston Way entrance.

Responding to Mr. Gorman, Mr. Howell said the Applicant is aware of the signage requirements to mark the pipelines that cross the tract; the design assures that there will be no digging or other construction activity within the pipeline easements. Mr. Kessler added that future residents will be notified of the pipeline in their agreements of sale as well as on their deeds.

Ms. Jones asked about mail delivery. Mr. Howell said the post office will not allow individual mailboxes at each lot, but there will be two locations within the development where residents can pick up their mail.

Mr. Gorman asked if there would be an additional emergency access to the site. Mr. Howell said there would not, adding that there are two access points to the site. He noted that the neighbors have made it clear that they do not want a road connection via Whiteman Way.

Regarding connecting to public sewer, Mr. Howell said there are sewer manholes in Phoenixville Pk. and Whiteman Way, but they may lead to two different treatment plants.

Mr. Rouse liked the plan and believed it was a good alternative.

Ms. Kerlake asked if there would be two separate hearings: one for the amendment and one for the conditional use application. Mr. Weller and Ms. Zarro agreed that two separate hearings were legally required, but they could be scheduled for the same night.

Mr. Choper said he had no objections to the concept plan but needs to be more comfortable with the zoning ordinance amendment and its impact on existing properties. Mr. Weller said this can be looked at in more detail.

Mr. Kumbhardare agreed that the concept plan suits this site.

It was noted that the Township Solicitor would review the proposed amendment from a legal standpoint, but not for its impact on existing cluster developments.

Mr. Choper asked if there were any public comments on the concept plan, and there were none.

The Commission took no action on the plan. Mr. Howell said he will revise the conditional use plan to reflect changes in the concept plan and return to the Commission.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

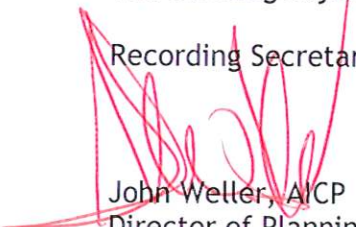
Data Center draft ordinance update.

Mr. Weller advised that there are no plans for review at the March 17 meeting, so rather than schedule a separate workshop to review the amendment regarding data center regulations, this item will be the only item of business on the March 17 agenda for review and discussion.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



John Weller, AICP
Director of Planning & Zoning

