

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
March 9, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Kabli, Joe McCormick, John Pendergast, Julie Bauer, Jonathan Martin, Roberta Eckman, Frank King

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner
Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Joshua Anderson, Board Liaison

I. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Old Business

- 1. Applicant: UK Jung
Address: 1460 Spackman Ln. (Formerly 519 Spackman Ln.)
Historic Site: 141 Leven Acres (Class II)
Request: Recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for approval to subdivide the existing property and construct two single-family residential units**

Mr. Smiley introduced the plan for a 3-lot subdivision at 1460 Spackman Lane. One lot will retain the existing historic home, and two new homes are proposed for the two newly-created lots. A variance from steep slope requirements is being sought from the Zoning Hearing Board later this month. Should the Zoning Hearing Board grant the variance, the plan will return to the Historical Commission during the land development process.

Mr. Jung presented site sections and photographs of the site. Being an architect by training, Mr. Jung said he hopes to design the new homes himself once he knows the subdivision is approved. He did say that one of the homes will be two-stories but will appear one story from the road. The first level would have everything needed for parents aging in place, with extra bedrooms on the lower level should the home be marketed to a larger family. Mr. Jung proposes stone and neutral colors for the exterior of the homes. He said he also spoke with the adjacent neighbors and will design the home with their input so as not to affect their lifestyle and viewshed.

Mr. Yocum said from a historic impact point, he felt the house across the street would be impacted more than 141 Leven Acres, but considered the impact to be minor. He suggested the new home be cut into the hill to lower the profile and lessen the visual impact. He encouraged minimizing the impact on existing trees, suggested a little more room between the houses, and perhaps a single/shared driveway to lessen impervious cover and impact on the slopes. Mr. Smiley said the Zoning Hearing Board will also be considering a single driveway to minimize the impact on the slopes.

Motion: To recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board approval to subdivide the existing property and construct two single-family residential units, with the condition that the Applicant retain as much tree cover as possible to limit impact on adjacent residences.
(Eckman/McCormick)

Vote: Passed, 7-0

IV. Approval of Minutes for February 10, 2020

Ms. Eckman advised that the balance in the Historic Commission Fund at the end of January was approximately \$37,000. There was also discussion regarding the numerous historic sites in the Township that have undergone great preservation/renovation projects. Suggestions for recognizing these properties included establishing a Stewardship Award for smaller projects, recognizing the projects at the annual Preservation Awards, and/or sending a letter of acknowledgement and/or appreciation for the effort.

Motion: To approve the minutes of February 10, 2020.
(McCormick/Bauer)

Vote: Passed, 7-0

V. Historical Commission Concerns

None.

Township Update/Announcements

1. Historic Resource Survey update

Mr. Smiley reported that he has received calls from property owners asking questions about the upcoming historic survey. None to date have been negative. A few letters have been returned by the Post Office, and Mr. Smiley will provide that list to Ms. Strawley before she begins surveying the properties. He added that Ms. Strawley will provide a demonstration of the survey at the April meeting.

2. Development by Design

Mr. Smiley showed members the Development by Design presentation, prepared by Staff and posted on the Township's website. The presentation shows ways the Township has been planning for development for several years and how the most intense development occurs in the Town Center District with lesser density in the outlying four corners. The Township has adopted numerous tools such as zoning amendments, a Capital Improvement Plan, and Official Map, all of which allow the Township to gain amenities such as open space and transportation improvements from developers when plans are approved.

In the last five years, the Township has received \$750,000 for transportation improvements such as the Waterloo Boulevard extension, Keva Drive, and a number of traffic signal updates. These improvements are either constructed by developers or paid for by developers – not tax-payer dollars. Mr. Smiley explained how developers are also required to either provide open space or pay a fee-in-lieu of. Over 20% of the Township is now open space, and fees paid in-lieu-of can be used to match state and federal grants and support the park system. Development also contributes to adaptive reuse of historic structures and brings strong economic growth.

3. Land Development Process

Mr. Smiley provided an overview of the land development process in the Township noting that developers must go through a rigorous process appearing before various boards and commissions and navigating the permitting process before building can begin. An outline of this process can be found on the Township's website as well as the State of the Township 2019, a snapshot of goals and accomplishments.

There was discussion regarding who will be renting the many recently-constructed apartment dwellings within the Township. Mr. Smiley talked about the changing housing market nation-wide and the trend toward apartment living from empty nesters who no longer want the maintenance responsibilities that come with single-family housing. Mr. McCormick added that people wish to remain in the area but want something smaller. He further explained the financial difference between buying vs. renting, noting that due to the costs associated with purchasing a home, a buyer would need to remain in the home for at least 7 years to financially break even.

Mr. Smiley provided an update on the Route 100 road project to add an additional northbound lane in the vicinity of the Exton Train Station. The survey is now complete and meetings with PennDOT will begin.

Mr. McCormick advised that the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills would like to tour the Thomas Mill (exterior only) on May 15th. This group facilitates preservation of old mills. Specific details of the tour will follow.

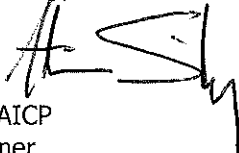
A site visit to the Arrandale Barn has yet to be scheduled but is hoped for late March.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. (Eckman/King)

Vote: Passed, 7-0

Recording Secretary,



Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner