

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
March 11, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joshua Anderson, Roberta Eckman, John Kabli,  
Jon Martin, Joe McCormick, Frank King, Matthew Morley

**TOWNSHIP STAFF:** Justin Smiley, Township Planner  
Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group

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

**II. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**III. New Business**

**A. Applicant: King Industrial**  
**Historic Site: Site 022, Class 3 Site**  
**Address: 1420 Phoenixville Pike**  
**Request: Recommendation for approval of the proposed land  
development to build a 36,000 square foot flex building**

Adam Brower, of E.B. Walsh & Associates, reviewed the plan. The project was previously before the Historical Commission for conditional use in 2018. Mr. Brower confirmed that the height of the proposed building will not exceed 20 feet. Referencing the Commonwealth Heritage letter dated February 14, 2019, Mr. Brower explained that an enhanced buffer with a mix of evergreens and deciduous trees has been added on two tract boundaries to buffer the historic resource (Site #22 Stone Farmhouse) and general viewshed. The new landscaping will serve as a supplement to the existing buffers on the site. Mr. Yocum and the Commission members indicated that they were satisfied with the proposed buffering.

The Commission made the following motion with conditions.

**King Industrial Motion:** The Commission recommends approval of the proposed land development to build a 36,000 square foot flex building to a height of no more than 20 feet, and with the updated landscaping buffer.

**Approved 7-0 McCormick/Eckman**

**IV. Old Business**

**A. Waterloo Reserve Interpretive Marker Text Discussion**

The Commission discussed the draft text and layout of the Waterloo Interpretive Marker. After extended discussion concerning the size of the concrete pad, the walkway, and proposed layout of the sign, there was a need to clarify whether the Commission was merely supplying the text for the sign or the actual graphic design of the marker. Mr. Smiley will check with the developer to clarify what is needed. This led to discussion regarding the need to devise standards for future interpretive markers so that all developers are held to the same standard and expectations are clearly laid out. A time will be scheduled for the

Commission to address this matter. Ms. Eckman suggested the future standard be that the developer design the marker for the Commission's approval.

After discussion regarding the best way to proceed so as not violate the Sunshine law, it was decided that Ms. Eckman will send the draft to all Commission members via e-mail, and they are to submit their comments to her by March 22. Ms. Eckman will then incorporate the comments and edit the text as she deems appropriate.

#### **B. Thomas Mill Condition Discussion**

Mr. Anderson and Mr. McCormick showed pictures and reported on their site visit to the Thomas Mill. There was evidence of large feral cats or racoons inside the Mill, but no evidence of water leaking into the structure. Mr. Smiley had provided the members with copies of the Declaration of Easement for Access and Deed of Façade Easement Agreements which indicate that Exton Nissan is responsible for the façade maintenance, stabilization, and basically the exterior of the Mill, and the Township is responsible for the interior. A draft Settlement Agreement called for the Township to periodically treat the mill for termites and pest control and periodically clean and maintain the equipment. Ms. Eckman indicated that this has not been done.

Noting that the Mill was not safe in its present condition, a suggestion was made to sell the equipment and seal up the structure. There was then discussion on the cost factors involved noting that the Township cannot spend taxpayer dollars on the Mill. There was also a question whether selling the equipment was the best thing to do. Mr. Kabli noted that the Historical Commission, as an advisory committee, needs to advise the Board of Supervisors on the situation. Noting that the previous situation with the Pennypacker House was similar, it was suggested that the procedure followed with that structure be utilized for the Thomas Mill.

The Commission decided to create a subcommittee to evaluate the condition of the Mill and review the pertinent documents. Noting that the interior of the Mill was not safe, it was suggested that a minimum of three people be named (one of which will remain outside the entire time) and an alternate, should one person be unavailable the day of the visit to the Mill. Joe McCormick, Joshua Anderson, Roberta Eckman, and Frank King will serve on the subcommittee. Mr. Yocum indicated that he would like to accompany the subcommittee to the Mill and offered to do so on his own time.

#### **V. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of February 11, 2019, as amended by Roberta Eckman (Eckman/McCormick)

**Vote:** Passed, 5-0-2 (Morley abd King abstained)

Referencing the portion of the minutes dealing with the Thomas Mill, Ms. Eckman stated that others consultants familiar with the Mill should be consulted in addition to Mr. Yocum.

#### **VI. Historical Commission Concerns**

##### **A. Township update – Justin Smiley**

- **Commission Vacancies**

Julie Bauer's application has been forwarded to Ms. Gleason for the Board of Supervisors' consideration. Mr. Kabli said he has not seen anything in recent Township Newsletters

regarding the need for volunteers on various Commissions and felt this should be done. Mr. Smiley confirmed that the vacancies are listed on the Township's website.

- **SharePoint Historical Commission Files**

Mr. Smiley reported that the transfer of files to the new SharePoint platform continues to move slowly. Staff is still experiencing permission errors both internally and externally which the Spring House consultants are working to resolve. The site is expected to go live at the end of the month, and all Commission members will then have access to the Historic Resource files.

Mr. Smiley reported that a Sketch Plan for the Weston property was recently reviewed by the Planning Commission. The plan proposes a mix of residential townhomes and single-family dwellings and demolition of three of the historic structures on the site. The Planning Commission provided feedback to the Applicant that they did not support demolition of the historic resources and encouraged the Applicant to consider adaptive re-use.

Mr. Smiley provided an update on the hiring process for the part-time administrative position. Final interviews will be held this week with onboarding by the end of this month.

Mr. McCormick said there will be a workshop in Schwenksville the week of April 3 about evaluating a timber frame mill. The tuition is \$575, but a scholarship could be applied for. He thought this workshop may be helpful for the Thomas Mill. The workshop is hosted by the Timber Framers' Guild and documents methods for evaluating older structures and different types of software.

Mr. Smiley said the Chester County Planning Commission has not yet updated its Vision Partnership Grant process. He also announced that the Township will host a Public Open House on April 9 from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. to update residents on various development projects within the Township. Applications for Commission vacancies will be made available at the Open House for those interested in volunteering.

Jeff Devlin is opening a traditional wood-working teaching studio in the Exton Mall.

Referencing the recent story of the Lloyd Farmhouse, it was suggested that the Township needs to be proactive in developing an outreach program to save historic resources before they reach a crisis stage.

## **B. Update on consideration of clarifications for HC Ordinances – Matthew Morley**

This matter was tabled.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting. (Morley/Anderson)**

**Vote: Passed, 7-0**

Recording Secretary,

Justin Smiley, AICP  
Township Planner

