

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 11, 2020**

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

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner
Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Ali Cleveland, Community Development Coordinator
Joshua Anderson, Board Liaison

I. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held virtually, via Zoom. Mr. Smiley asked that anyone from the public wishing to speak use the “raise hand” feature and all members mute their microphones when not speaking.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Old Business

- 1. Applicant: Jack Bond, K2B Enterprises**
Address: 949 Swedesford Rd.
Historic Site: #327 (Pickwick, John Kent Kane, Jr. House – Class II
Request: Recommendation to the Codes Department for the approval to replace the exterior cedar-shake roof with asphalt shingles

Jack Bond, Steve Kraegel, and Salvatore Dragone were in virtual attendance on behalf of the Applicant. Mr. Yocum provided a brief history of the property originally built in 1932 as a country retreat. Acknowledging that a wood roof would be a large expense, Mr. Yocum advised that asphalt would be appropriate. He pointed out that the stable behind the house was not part of the application but noted that it too was in need of repair. Mr. Bond said he was not aware of the condition of the stable roof.

Mr. Bond said while the home is currently unoccupied, it is used as a disaster/recovery office and is checked on a weekly basis. Ms. Eckman thanked the Applicant for a thorough and complete application.

Motion: To recommend to the Codes Department approval to replace the exterior cedar-shake roof on Historic Site #327 with asphalt shingles and also approve replacement of the stable roof with asphalt shingles should the Applicant decide to do so. (Eckman/Bauer)

Vote: Passed, 6-0

- 2. Applicant: Weston Tract**
Address: 1400 Weston Way
Historic Sites: #001 (Morstein Manor House – Class II); #002 (Twelve Oaks Farmhouse – Class II); #003 (Morstein Station – Class I NR); and #004 (Morstein Gatehouse – Class II)
Request: Discussion and provide feedback to Applicant regarding the proposed Sketch Plan of a 104 single-family unit subdivision

Mr. Smiley introduced the Sketch Plan proposing 104 single-family units. He noted that the plan will require a zoning change and will be reviewed by the Planning Commission at its June 16 meeting.

Alyson Zarro, attorney for the Applicant, introduced Sam Carlo and Matt Caffrey of the Lennar Corporation. The Applicant plans to retain the Morstein Station, but not actively use it in an effort to keep maintenance costs down. Twelve Oaks will be retained as open space and the building will remain. The existing Morstein Manor House (Mansion) is in good shape and will either be converted into apartments or a single-family residence. While the Gatehouse was originally planned for demolition, the Applicant will retain this possibly converting it to a larger single-family home. The existing Stable is not on the historic inventory and is scheduled for demolition.

Mr. Yocum provided his review of the historic structures. He agreed with removal of the modern additions to the Mansion (Manor House) and Gatehouse but urged the Applicant to find a way to use the structures which will make it easier to justify repairs and ongoing maintenance. He strongly encouraged the Applicant to keep the Stable as its removal would adversely impact the other historic structures. He suggested the Stable with its courtyard be developed as one or two residential units. He noted that the historic structures together are a great architectural feature of the entire site.

Ms. Eckman, citing the purpose of the Historical Commission to protect the integrity of historic resources, mitigation of negative affect from development, and discouragement of unnecessary demolition, among others, she felt that the plan does not take much of this into consideration. She maintained that the historic structures need open space and landscaped buffers around them and expressed concern for impact on the existing large Copper Beech tree. She also expressed concern with increased traffic in the area.

Mr. Carlo responded that as a Sketch Plan, all of the details have not yet been worked out but is interested in hearing Commission members' feedback on the plan. He maintained that the plan will keep as many trees as possible and a traffic impact study will be required during the land development process. As the developer of the neighboring Lochiel Farm project, Mr. Carlo said the Applicant can work with trade partners it has for that site to rehabilitate the historic structures on the Weston property and will continue to investigate ideas for the Stable. He stressed that the plan is in the early stages and will continue to evolve as it works with the Township through the process. Ms. Eckman provided examples of other developments within the Township that have integrated historic structures into their projects.

Mr. Carlo suggested that the Applicant may be willing to dedicate the historic structures and/or open space to the Township, but Mr. Martin pointed out that this is not something the Township is interested in due to maintenance costs. Mr. McCormick echoed Mr. Yocum's feeling that removal of the Stable would destroy the overall feel of the Victorian-era country estate designed by local architects Furness and Evans and urged to Applicant to integrate the Stable into the project. Ms. Bauer added that the historic structures offer an opportunity for the Applicant to create a truly unique development by incorporating them into the plan. Mr. Yocum agreed that the historic structures present an already-existing unique infrastructure and encouraged some open space be kept around the structures to maintain historical integrity.

When asked about the size and cost of the proposed homes, Mr. Carlo said they will range in size from 2,500-3,000 square feet and sell for mid-\$500,000 to upper \$500,000. All units will be 2-story, 4 bedroom homes.

Raymond McKeeman, member of the Planning Commission and resident of nearby property asked that the buffer between the properties be enhanced.

Ms. Eckman felt that 104 units was too dense. Mr. Smiley advised that the Planning Commission will take up the density issue during its review of the plan.

Being a Sketch Plan review, no formal action was required by the Historical Commission and none was taken.

IV. Approval of Minutes for March 9, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 9, 2020. (McCormick/Eckman)

Vote: Passed, 6-0

V. Historical Commission Concerns

Mr. McCormick reported that the scheduled Thomas Mill tour has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic, but he will stay in touch and reschedule when allowed. He further noted that historic site #134, a log building at 1556 S. Whitford Road, appears to be sagging and in need of repair. After much discussion about what should and could be done, it was decided to send a letter to the property owner advising that the condition of the structure has been noticed.

Township Update/Announcements

Mr. Smiley advised that the June 8 agenda will have a review of the Conditional Use application for the Wawa and NVR Homes project.

Mr. Yocum reported that Ms. Strawley is populating data for the Historical Survey project and completing the GIS mapping portion. He will check and see when the actual surveying of properties in the field can begin. He further reported that there has been no activity on the Arrandale Barn but will reach out to Mr. Knauer to set up a meeting.

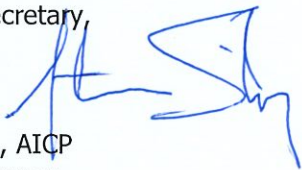
Mr. Kabli asked about status of the Exton Mall. Mr. Smiley said PREIT has submitted plans for another apartment complex which represents a "piecemeal approach" to redevelopment. However, the Board of Supervisors recently passed a zoning amendment requiring a Master Plan be submitted for tracts of 10 acres or more within the Town Center District.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. (Bauer/McCormick)

Vote: Passed, 6-0

Recording Secretary,



Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner