

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
June 8, 2020**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Kabli, Joe McCormick, John Prendergast, Jonathan Martin, Roberta Eckman

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

**I. Call to Order** – the meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held virtually, via Zoom. The meeting was open to the public with the Zoom link listed on the agenda posted on the Township’s website.

**II. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**III. New Business**

1. **Applicant:** Ship Run Developers, LLC  
**Address:** 500 E. Lincoln Hwy.  
**Historic Site:** #032 (St. Mary’s Chapel – Class IE), #038 (Springdale Farms Tenant House – Class III, #307 (Turnpike Station Tenant House – Class III), #308 (House at Turnpike Station – Class IE), #309 (Exton Hotel – Class IL), #311 (Ship Inn – Class IL), #3487 (Williams Deluxe Cabins – Class IL)  
**Request:** Recommendation for Conditional Use Approval for the construction of 149 residential units (54 townhomes and 95 single-family units)

Alyson Zarro, attorney for the Applicant, Dave Gibbons, project engineer, Matt Adams and Adam Loew of 690 E. Lincoln Associates, developers of the townhomes and commercial site, Joseph Burhle, developer of the single-family homes, were in virtual attendance on behalf of the Applicant.

Mr. Smiley provided a brief background of the project noting that Ship Run Developers (residential development) and 690 E. Lincoln Associates (Wawa commercial development) are two separate applications for purposes of conditional use approval, but the Applicants have been working cooperatively.

Mr. Yocum’s review of the residential project found no serious negative impact on the Williams Deluxe Cabins and the Exton Hotel, noting that they are across the street from the proposed development and only a few units are proposed near the entrance to the project. He recommended some additional vegetative screening at this entrance (Road A and Route 30).

Citing the historical village nature of the area, Mr. Kabli urged the Applicant to develop architectural renderings that will be sympathetic to the historic structures and thereby minimize the visual impact of the development on the historic structures.

Ms. Eckman expressed concerns over the impact of additional traffic on the historic structures and the proposed density of the units. Ms. Zarro advised that a Traffic Impact Study was completed. The proposed Ship Road Couplet and Road A will provide some relief from traffic congestion in the area. Both roads will be dedicated to the Township. Full movement is proposed at the intersection of Road A and Route 30. Ms. Eckman agreed with Mr. Yocum's recommendation for more vegetative screening at this intersection.

Mr. Prendergast also expressed concerns with increased traffic.

Mr. McCormick felt the construction of the Couplet would help with traffic flow and alleviate some of the congestion in this area. He noted that the Couplet would not be built without this development and believed that no other development has contributed in this way. He pointed out that Keva Flats brought the Waterloo Boulevard extension and loop road but felt the Couplet would provide even more positive relief to traffic congestion.

**Motion:** To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the Conditional Use application for the construction of 149 residential units consisting of 54 townhomes and 95 single-family units.  
(McCormick/Martin)

**Vote:** Passed, 3-2 (Eckman and Prendergast opposed)

2. **Applicant:** 690 East Lincoln Associates, LLC  
**Address:** 690 E. Lincoln Hwy.  
**Historic Sites:** #032 (St. Mary's Chapel – Class IE), #311 (Ship Inn – Class II), #343 (Rectory: Sts. Philip & James – Class III)  
**Request:** Recommendation for Conditional Use Approval for the construction of Wawa convenience store and gas station and two additional retail stores.

Mr. Smiley introduced the project. Mr. Yocum provided his review acknowledging that Wawa poses a large visual footprint but noted that the Chapel is buffered more in the proposed plan than it is today and added that the existing buildings (Entennmann's) do not complement the historic structures at all. He would prefer that the gas pumps be in the rear of the store. The location of the townhomes behind the commercial building (Wawa) adds to the village concept that this historic area is known for. While the Chapel and the Ship Inn will be impacted by the proposed development, Mr. Yocum felt that the Applicant did take action to mitigate this impact, noting extensive landscaping in the basin area. He would like to see subdued lighting.

Mr. McCormick pointed out that the impact of the gas canopy may be mitigated somewhat by the slope of the land on the eastern edge of the Chapel. He suggested flipping the Wawa building and gas pump canopy 90 degrees so that the gas canopy is on the west side facing the Couplet.

Mr. Brion, attorney for the Applicant, advised that Wawa must abide by State regulations that require that the front of the building face the gas pumps so that employees can see if a problem should arise. Having gas pumps in the rear would also create delivery issues. He advised that Wawa does have some different design concepts other than the traditional style, as well as two different gas canopy designs that may be more appropriate for this historic area.

Mr. Adams noted that the buffer between the Chapel and the proposed project was the result of discussions with representatives of the Chapel. The existing retaining wall and tree scape will remain.

The two retail buildings to the rear of the site are generic at this time, but anticipate a medical office, pharmacy, or daycare facility.

Mr. Kabli asked about the look and placement of signage. Mr. Brion responded that they do not have elevations yet, but any proposed signage will meet the Township's sign ordinance. He added that the State requires the price of gas to be posted and advised that there will be one such sign on Route 30 and another at the Couplet driveway entrance to the site. A signage plan will be submitted with the land development application. Mr. Brion added that the proposed Wawa building will be 5700 square feet (the smallest of all Wawa designs) with 8 fueling pumps.

Eli Kahn said the garages for the townhomes will be in the rear of the homes with the home fronts facing the back of the retail buildings following the village theme. The retail buildings are "placeholders" at this time but could be modified to fit the final tenants. Should a daycare facility occupy one of the spaces, the building would be made smaller to allow for a play area.

Parking for the Chapel will be increased, and the existing buffer will be increased from the current 70 feet to 165 feet to the edge of the gas canopy and 220 feet from the proposed Wawa building. The Chapel will be better isolated and have more green space provided by the proposed basin. The view from the Ship Inn will be trees and vegetation around the basin rather than the existing run down Entennmann's building. Mr. Kahn said he has a letter of full support for the project from the Chapel.

Mr. Brion noted that Wawa has a history of being a "good neighbor" to its communities, making donations to the community, turning lighting down after hours, and maintaining the landscaping and physical appearance of its buildings.

In response to Mr. Martin's question, Mr. Kahn confirmed that the cost of the Couplet is so great that it will not happen without approval of both the residential and commercial plans.

Mr. McCormick suggested a story board be erected similar to those at Waterloo Reserve and Lochiel Farm to tell some of the history of the Chapel and village area.

Mr. Smiley said the Township is actively seeking funding the for northern portion of the Couplet.

**Motion:** To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the Conditional Use application for the construction of Wawa convenience store and gas station and two additional retail stores with the condition that architectural renderings and materials that show respect for the historic area's character with minimal impacts and suggestions for signage and plans for subdued lighting be submitted with the land development application.  
(Eckman/McCormick)

**Vote:** Passed, 5-0

#### IV. Approval of Minutes for May 11, 2020

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of May 11, 2020 with edits made by Mr. Martin. (McCormick/Martin)

**Vote:** Passed, 5-0

**V. Historical Commission Concerns**

Mr. Smiley said a letter was sent to the owner of historic site #134, a log building at 1556 S. Whitford Road. Mr. Yocum visited the site and noted that some work has been done with metal sheeting having been placed on the roof.

Mr. Yocum will be touring and meeting on the Arrandale Barn tomorrow, June 9<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Strawley provided an update on the Historical Survey project. She said she may request an extension due to delays caused by COVID-19, She added that the survey for many properties can be completed from public rights-of-way. She will present a demonstration of how the survey works at the July 13 meeting.

Mr. Smiley said there has been no activity on the Pennypacker House. While someone did express interest in the Witch's Cap, Ms. Gural-Bear advised that she believes this fell through.

Mr. Kabli said that Vista has been reporting that the Exton Mall is not expected to survive another year. Mr. Smiley said PREIT is coming to the July 13 Historical Commission meeting and the June 30 Planning Commission meeting with a plan for another apartment building similar to the Hanover project.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting. (Eckman/Prendergast)**

**Vote: Passed, 5-0**

Recording Secretary,

  
Justin Smiley, AICP  
Township Planner