

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Minutes of the first July meeting

July 2, 2019

**Members Present**

Chairman Anita Nardone  
Mark Gordon  
Rajesh Kumbhardare  
Glen Marshall  
Ray McKeeman

**Township Personnel Present**

Ed Culp, Asst. Director of Public Works  
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager  
Ted Otteni, Director of Public Works  
Justin Smiley, Township Planner  
John Weller, Director of Planning & Zoning

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Anita Nardone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the meeting of June 4, 2019. (McKeeman/Marshall)

ACTION: 3-0-2, with Mr. Kumbhardare and Mr. Marshall abstaining because they were not in attendance at that meeting.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**IV. PLANS**

1. **GMX Real Estate Group**  
Address: 215 N. Pottstown Pk.  
First Review: Land Development  
Request: Construction of a 4,000 square foot commercial building with parking

John Weller reviewed his memorandum of June 28, 2019. The plan proposes construction of a 3,933 sq.ft. Sleep Number retail store to replace the existing Eastcoast gas station at 215 N. Pottstown Pk. The consultant reviews cited a number of concerns to be resolved by the Applicant. The most significant is the design of the access drives noted by Traffic Planning & Design (TPD). The plan shows both driveways as full-access. Since the site is only accessible to northbound traffic, there should either be a single right-in/right-out driveway, or the existing accesses should be modified such that the south access is ingress-only and the north access is egress-only. Other concerns include the need for the sidewalk to be 6 feet wide and to extend across the entire frontage of the lot along with the disposition of the underground gasoline storage tanks.

Attorney Alyson Zarro of Riley, Riper, Hollin & Colagreco was in attendance on behalf of the Applicant. She noted that due to the small size of the lot (net developable area of 0.40 acre) the Applicant requested a number of dimensional variances to allow the project as shown. The Zoning Hearing Board granted all the relief sought following a hearing on April 25, 2019.

Ms. Zarro advised that Sleep Number's business model is such that the stores are showrooms for the mattresses, and only small soft goods (bed linens, pillows, etc.) are available for customers to take home. As such, the concern about loading area raised by SSM is not an issue: mattresses will not be

warehoused here or delivered from this location. Regarding the TPD comments, the Applicant prefers to keep two access points and agrees to limit the south access to ingress and use the north for egress. She added that this will allow the driveways to be narrower, facilitating the provision of the requested sidewalk extension and ramps to accommodate handicapped persons. The Applicant will widen the sidewalk to six feet and will add trash receptacles and decorative crosswalk. Landscaping will be modified to comply with consultant comments. Ms. Zarro said that angled parking would reduce the number of spaces below the required minimum. The Applicant will work with PennDOT and TPD to assure that the design will make it clear how people are to enter the site and park.

The plan shows water and sanitary sewer connections crossing Route 100. Ted Otteni advised that a new sanitary sewer manhole exists along the curb line to the south which the Applicant could tie into once dedicated. Mr. Otteni further advised that water service was recently installed across Route 100 to the adjacent property and suggested the Applicant coordinate with Aqua for service from this crossing. Ms. Zarro will follow up.

Regarding the removal of the underground tanks, Ms. Zarro said the Applicant has conducted a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and infiltration testing. They will have specific information regarding the removal of the tanks and site remediation at their next meeting with the Planning Commission.

In response to the review by Theurkauf Design & Planning, the Applicant will likely request waivers from the requirement for 11-foot-wide sidewalks between parking lots, cartways, and public entrances to commercial buildings. She will confirm this prior to the next plan submission.

The Applicant will comply with the lighting comments in the Stubbe Consulting review and will provide the requested details on the hours of operation of the exterior lighting.

Mr. Marshall asked if an exit from the back of the site through the Brentwood Shoppes would be possible to minimize traffic exiting onto Pottstown Pk. Ms. Zarro will investigate whether this is feasible. The Commission briefly discussed whether a future user of this building might need a loading dock but concluded that it was unlikely due to the small size of the building and the lot.

Ms. Zarro said the Applicant's engineer will work with SSM to resolve the stormwater management comments. She presented elevation drawings of the proposed building, noting that it complies with the Town Center architectural design standards. Regarding comment #12 of the TPD review, the Commission agreed that curbing was preferable to bollards.

The Commission took no action on the plan.

## **2. Exton Park**

**Address: 900 E. Swedesford Rd.**

**First Review: Land Development**

**Request: Construction of parking lots and recreational improvements**

Mr. Weller provided a brief history of the Exton Park site. The 700 acres was previously owned by the Church Farm School. The Township now owns about 280 acres with the remaining 450 acres belonging to Chester County. In May 2017, the Township adopted a Master Site Development Plan for its portion of the Park. Tonight's application is for Phase 1 of the Master Plan and includes construction of two parking lots, a playground, recreational trails, various outbuildings, and related improvements on the Township-owned portion. Mr. Weller said SSM has concerns about the stormwater management facilities. Also, the proposed trails do not connect to the Chester Valley Trail.

Mr. Otteni presented the plan on behalf of the Township along with Greg Rishel, project engineer with T&M Associates and Ed Culp, the Assistant Director of Public Works. Mr. Otteni explained that the Park is to be developed in phases. Phase 1, the Swedesford Recreation Area, is at the northwest corner of

the Park. Mr. Otteni said that costly infrastructure is needed before the more visible aspects can be constructed, but the Township is striving to provide the infrastructure and some recreational amenities for residents to enjoy. Mr. Otteni presented a rendering and explained that the trail will cross an existing bridge and connect to the Chester Valley Trail. Mr. Rishel described the two playgrounds.

Regarding SSM's concerns about the stormwater basin and sinkholes, Mr. Otteni said the basin is at the low point of the property. Eighteen acres of parkland already drain to this location, so if this area were prone to sinkholes, one would have appeared by now. While the area is in a karst zone, testing indicates a low risk for sinkholes. The basin is designed to infiltrate and will be planted in a naturalistic manner; the utility lines will be routed around the basin.

The existing mowed-grass perimeter trail will remain in its current state and not be paved. Once the new trails are in place and desire lines appear, they will be formalized.

Addressing the Stubbe Consulting review, Mr. Otteni said he would prefer not to state the hours of operation on the plan in order to be able to accommodate special events and residents' desires. There will be no lighting at the driveway entrances since the Park closes at dusk. The parking lot and security lighting will be reduced to 25% at night to minimize disturbance to neighbors. The Commission agreed with the proposed lighting.

Anna Park of 613 E. Swedesford Rd. expressed concern about traffic speeds and congestion on Swedesford Rd., especially during rush hour. Mark Gordon responded that the Township's traffic consultant has determined that the proposed location of the Park entrance is the safest possible. Mr. Otteni added that because the road is straight there will be adequate site distance in all directions. A traffic analysis performed showed that the Park will not add new traffic during rush hour: Park usage will be minimal at those times and large events will mostly be on week-ends or later in the evening. Mr. Otteni added that, as Public Works Director, he will look into Ms. Park's concerns and see what can be done. There was discussion about a long-range plan for Swedesford Rd. Mr. Otteni suggested wider shoulders and grading back the embankments to improve sight lines. Due to the cost, Glenn Marshall suggested that the Township begin by making incremental improvements in the coming years.

In response to the Theurkauf Design and Planning comments, Mr. Otteni said extending the asphalt trail from the playground to the trail head at the Pennypacker House was not in the Master Plan nor in the budget. Mr. Weller pointed out that this trail connects to one of the mowed paths. In the following discussion, the Commission supported the idea of making this part of the playground trail a mowed path to match the existing path. In response to the Theurkauf comment about sidewalks along streets, Mr. Weller clarified that the Ordinance states that sidewalks are to be provided as required by the Township but does not stipulate that they be along streets. For this reason, we may deem the trails as shown satisfactory. Regarding maintenance of the grass parking lot, Mr. Otteni said the lot is on high ground and will be mowed as a meadow. It will only be used during special events.

Addressing TPD comments, Mr. Otteni assured that there will be adequate site distance. Regarding moving the crosswalk closer to Swedesford Road, Mr. Otteni said keeping it in line with the grass path will be safer. Regarding comment #8, Mr. Otteni said he agrees with the intent but prefers to stay away from curbing to allow stormwater to sheet-flow from the road. Mr. Otteni confirmed that fire and rescue vehicles will have adequate room to enter the site.

**MOTION:** To recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the "Exton Park - Swedesford Recreation Area" land development plan as depicted on the 37-sheet plan set prepared by T&M Associates dated June 10, 2019 with the following waivers and subject to the following conditions:

1. The plan is approved as a final plan, pursuant to §281-10.H of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance ("S/LDO").

2. Waiver of §270-29.E(3) of the Stormwater Management Ordinance to allow high-density polyethylene pipe in lieu of concrete pipe for Township-owned and maintained stormwater management facilities, pursuant to comment #1 of the Spotts, Stevens and McCoy (“SSM”) review dated June 26, 2019.
3. Waiver of §281-17.C of the S/LDO to allow 30” x 42” plan sheets, pursuant to comment #3 of the SSM review dated June 26, 2019.
4. Waiver of §281-32.A of the S/LDO such that curbs need not be provided along all streets, pursuant to comment #4 of the SSM review dated June 26, 2019.
5. Waiver of §281-32.B of the S/LDO such new curbs need be provided only to the extent shown on the plan and not around all paved areas, pursuant to comment #5 of the SSM review dated June 26, 2019.
6. Waiver of §281-32.C(2) of the S/LDO to allow curbs with a reveal of not less than six (6) inches, pursuant to comment #6 of the SSM review dated June 26, 2019.
7. Waiver of §281-33.D(4)(a) to allow the “large shrubs” to be not less than thirty (30) inches tall at time of planting.
8. Waiver of §281-33.D(4)(b) to allow more than fifty (50) percent of the small shrubs to be a non-native species, pursuant to comment #10 of the Theurkauf Design and Planning (“Theurkauf”) review dated June 25, 2019.
9. Waiver of §281-35.A of the S/LDO such that no perimeter buffer need be provided along the southern boundary line with the Church Farm School property, pursuant to comment #4d of the Theurkauf review dated June 25, 2019.
10. Waiver of §281-35.D of the S/LDO to allow the screen buffer plantings as shown and to count existing vegetation toward the buffer requirement, pursuant to comment #2 of the Theurkauf review dated June 25, 2019.
11. Waiver of §281-35.E(1) of the S/LDO such that no perimeter buffer need be provided for the stormwater management basins in addition to the landscaping already shown on the plan.
12. Waiver of §281-35.G(1)(a) of the S/LDO such that no parking lot screening buffer need be provided in addition to the landscaping already shown on the plan.
13. Waiver of §281-36 of the S/LDO to deem existing trees sufficient to satisfy the street tree requirement, in accordance with §281-36.E of the S/LDO and comment #6 of the Theurkauf review dated June 25, 2019.
14. Waiver of §281-37.B(4) of the S/LDO such that no additional trees need be provided for the parking lot islands.
15. The configuration of the proposed trail shall be modified pursuant to discussion at tonight’s meeting.
16. All remaining consultant and Township Staff concerns shall be addressed to the satisfaction of the Township. These shall include but are not limited to:
  - The design of the stormwater management facilities pursuant to comments #15, #18, and #19 of the SSM review dated June 26, 2019.
  - Revising the color temperature of the proposed lighting to be less than 3000K, pursuant to comment #3 of the Stubbe Consulting review.

(Marshall/McKeeman)

ACTION: Passed, 5-0

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The July 16 agenda will include a plan for an addition to the Johnson Matthey facility and a day care at the corner of Whitford Rd. and Lincoln Hwy.

Mr. Weller advised that Staff met with representatives from Chester County Economic Development regarding the future of the Exton crossroads area. They will assist in convening a meeting with representatives from PREIT regarding their plans for the future of Exton Square.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



John R. Weller, AICP  
Director of Planning & Zoning