



T O W N S H I P o f W E S T W H I T E L A N D

## DEPARTMENT of PLANNING & ZONING

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# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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### SUMMARY of ACTIVITY

The Township granted final plan approval for the following **development** during 2021:

- 18,887 sq.ft. of commercial space,
- 95 single-family homes, and
- 68 townhouse homes.

Ordinance No. 461, passed on June 23, amended the **Transportation Capital Improvements (Act 209) Plan** to increase the traffic impact fee from \$1,219.65 to \$1,449.00 per PM peak-hour trip, pursuant to the recommendation of the Traffic Impact Fee Advisory Committee. The Board of Supervisors had reconvened the original Committee to consider whether such an increase might be appropriate. The Committee met (virtually) with Staff and consultant Natasha Manbeck of McMahon Associates on May 3 and voted to recommend the increase as ultimately approved by the Board.

Ordinance No. 466, passed on December 8, amended the plan requirements and other provisions affecting the submission and review of subdivisions and land developments. This Ordinance **amended portions of both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance**. There were no other amendments to either of these ordinances during 2021.

The future of the **Exton Crossroads** was a frequent topic in 2021:

- On February 2, the Philadelphia chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) presented the final version of their report on the Exton Crossroads based upon their October 2020 visit. In response to this presentation, the Board of Supervisors appointed a focus group of members of various Commissions and Boards to brainstorm ideas about how to proceed with implementation of the report recommendations.
- In September, we posted a video on the Township website to inform the public about development projects under construction and how they fit the Township's general planning policy, which we branded "Development by Design." That same month, we published a newsletter highlighting development generally and the Exton Crossroads specifically. The newsletter included a survey (also available on the Township website) whereby residents and business owners could provide feedback about their thoughts and improvements they wanted to see in the Crossroads area.

- On November 17, we held a public meeting (in-person and simultaneously via Zoom) called “Community Conversation: Exton Crossroads” to present and discuss the topics addressed in the September newsletter, the ULI report, and the survey results to date (the response period ended on November 30). Those attending gave additional feedback about the future of the Exton Crossroads and the Township generally.

Staff and McMahon Associates (the Township’s traffic engineering consultant) created a brochure promoting funding for the construction of a third northbound lane for PA Route 100, as proposed by the Pottstown Pike Congestion Mitigation Feasibility Study of 2018.

### PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission met seventeen times during 2021. At their reorganization meeting on January 5, they elected Mark Gordon to be Chair and Ray McKeeman to be Vice-Chair; Mr. Gordon and Mr. McKeeman served in these offices for the full year. Commission members Dan Cote, Brian Dunn, Jeff Glisson, and MaryFrances McGarrity also served for the entire year. Joseph Altimari resigned from the Commission in May, and the Board re-appointed former member Andy Wright to take his place in November. Mr. Dunn was elected to the Board of Supervisors in November and therefore left the Commission after the final meeting of 2021.

In the course of the year, the Commission reviewed four conditional use applications, four land development plans, and no sketch plans. The Commission also worked extensively on the amendments to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance regarding plan requirements and plan review processes; the Board of Supervisors approved these amendments by Township Ordinance No. 466 in December. The Commission also reviewed an ordinance amendment to define “active adult community” and to allow such use in the IN Institutional Overlay district. On the following chart, “approved” in the “Status” column indicates the date of the meeting at which the *Commission* passed a motion recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the plan or conditional use application, not the date of approval by the Board.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	690 E. Lincoln Associates	Land Development	Construction of a 5,590 sq.ft. convenience store and gas station and 68 townhouses on a 18.9-acre lot at the southwest corner of E. Lincoln Hwy. and Ship Rd.	Approved 11/4/21
2	Boot Rd. Storage	Subdivision	Subdivision to provide an existing dwelling on the commercial property at 200 King Rd. with its own 1.0-acre lot.	Approved 1/19/21
3	Columbia Cottage	Conditional Use	Construction of 72-unit senior care facility on a 6.0-acre lot at 930-936 E. Boot Rd.	Under Review
4	Dunwoody Dr. Outdoor	Conditional Use	Construction of 2-sided billboard at 1473 Dunwoody Dr., adjacent to the US Route 202 expressway.	Approved 1/19/21
5	Public Works Facility	Conditional Use	Construction of 3 buildings with a total footprint of 39,200 sq.ft. on a 25.1-acre vacant lot at 215 Valley Creek Blvd.	Approved 10/19/21
6	Raj Real Estate	Land Development	Construction of a 1-story retail and storage building covering 13,297 sq.ft. on a 3.0-acre lot with an existing retail commercial building (which is to remain) at 4 Tabas La.	Approved 2/2/21
7	Ship Run Developers	Subdivision	Subdivision to allow construction of 95 single-family homes on a 62.5-acre lot at 500 E. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 6/1/21

8	Whitford Property, Inc.	Conditional Use	Demolition of existing Sunoco/Welsh Automotive building and a portion of an existing office building to accommodate a 5,585 sq.ft. Wawa convenience store and gas station on a 3.2-acre lot at 401-403 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Under Review
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The preceding section is provided in part to satisfy the reporting requirement of §207(a) of Pennsylvania Act 247, the Municipalities Planning Code.

### HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Historical Commission met eleven times during 2021; only the July meeting was cancelled due to lack of business. At the reorganization meeting on January 11, the Commission elected Julie Bauer to be Chair and Joe McCormick to be Vice-Chair. Ms. Bauer and Mr. McCormick served in these offices for the entire year, as did members Roberta Eckman, John Kabli, Jonathan Martin, and John Prendergast. There is one vacancy on the Commission.

As provided by the Township Zoning Ordinance, the Commission advises the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board regarding subdivisions, land developments, conditional use applications, and variance applications involving properties that have or are within 300 feet of an identified historic resource. The Commission also reviews applications for building permits, demolition permits, sign permits, and zoning permits for historic resources. Other Commission activity in 2021 included the following:

- Work continued on the update to “A History of West Whiteland,” including the Township’s official inventory of historic resources. Due to COVID-related delays, the work took longer than first anticipated, and we received a six-month extension from the Chester County Planning Commission, which provided significant funding through their Vision Partnership Program. The project consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group, expects to complete all deliverables by the first quarter of 2022, including updates to the survey of historic resources, the historic resources map, and the document text, along with support for creating an interactive mapping tool for public use.
- On November 8 the Commission recognized the 2020 and 2021 recipients of the Historic Preservation Awards for outstanding preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources. The 2020 awardees were: Buckman’s Ski & Showboard Shop/Thomas D. Trimble House at 403 N. Pottstown Pk.,<sup>1</sup> Chase Bank/Malvern Federal at 109 N. Pottstown Pk., and Williams Cabins at 513 E. Lincoln Hwy. The 2021 awardees were: Arrandale manor house at 408 W. Lincoln Hwy., the David Ashbridge Log House on King Rd., and the Evan Lewis House on N. Ship Rd. These were the eighth and ninth consecutive years that the Commission has presented awards.
- The Commission provided expert assistance to the owners of the following historic sites: the Arrandale Barn, adjacent to the Arrandale manor house mentioned above; the Ashbridge Tenant House, which is part of the historic core of the Main Street at Exton community; the barn of the former Ryerss Infirmary for Dumb Animals, now a private residence and part of the Ryerss Hunt community; the Hannah White Log House along W. Boot Rd.; Maple Spring Farm on Shoen Rd.; Fairfield/Charles Thomas House at 225 N. Whitford Rd.; and a Gothic Revival farmhouse, also along N. Whitford Rd.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific addresses are shown only for non-residential properties.

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - PLANNING ACTIVITY

The authority to approve subdivision and land development plans and conditional use applications rests with the Board of Supervisors, which is advised by the Planning and Historical Commissions, a variety of consultants, and Staff. In 2021, the Board approved four conditional use applications (three more than in 2020) and four final land development plans (same as 2020).

The following chart lists all plans considered by the Board during 2021 in alphabetic order. The “type” column states how the plan was *approved*: our Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance deems the first plan submitted for a project to be a “preliminary” plan, but if it shows all the information required for a final plan the Board may approve it as such.

Please note that 690 E. Lincoln Associates and Ship Run Developers - although distinct entities - worked cooperatively in the development of the properties at 500 and 690 E. Lincoln Hwy. Following conditional use approval of their respective projects, 690 E. Lincoln Associates took on the responsibility for construction of the townhouse portion of the original Ship Run Developers project. The project descriptions in the chart reflect this conveyance.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	690 E. Lincoln Associates	Conditional Use	Construction of a 5,590 sq.ft. convenience store and gas station on a 3.8-acre lot at the southwest corner of E. Lincoln Hwy. and Ship Rd.	Approved 2/10/21
2	690 E. Lincoln Associates	Final Land Development	Construction of a 5,590 sq.ft. convenience store and gas station and 68 townhouses on a 18.9-acre lot at the southwest corner of E. Lincoln Hwy. and Ship Rd.	Approved 12/8/21
3	Boot Rd. Storage	Final Subdivision	Subdivision to provide an existing dwelling on the commercial property at 200 King Rd. with its own 1.0-acre lot.	Approved 2/10/21
4	Dunnwoody Dr. Outdoor	Conditional Use	Construction of 2-sided billboard at 1473 Dunnwoody Dr., adjacent to the US Route 202 expressway.	Approved 4/14/21
5	Public Works Facility	Conditional Use	Construction of 3 buildings with a total footprint of 39,200 sq.ft. on a 25.1-acre vacant lot at 215 Valley Creek Blvd.	Approved 11/23/21
6	Raj Real Estate	Land Development	Construction of a 1-story retail and storage building covering 13,297 sq.ft. on a 3.0-acre lot with an existing retail commercial building (which is to remain) at 4 Tabas La.	Approved 2/2/21
7	Ship Run Developers	Conditional Use	Construction of 95 single-family detached dwellings and 68 townhouse dwellings on a 81.5-acre lot at 500 E. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 2/10/21
8	Ship Run Developers	Final Subdivision and Land Development	Subdivision to allow construction of 95 single-family homes on a 62.5-acre lot at 500 E. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 10/13/21

## ZONING

Long-time Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) member Brian Dunn left the Board to join the Planning Commission at the beginning of the year. Mr. Dunn was replaced by Shiva Subramanian, but Mr. Subramanian later moved out of the Township and for that reason tendered his resignation, effective June 15. After more than twenty years on the ZHB, Paul Nickels

resigned in March, and the Board of Supervisors awarded him the Township's Albert Greenleaf Award in April in recognition of his remarkable service. Also in April, the Board appointed JoAnn Kelton to complete Mr. Nickels' term and Guy McCandless as an alternate to the ZHB; Mr. McCandless became a full member of the ZHB when Mr. Subramanian's resignation became effective. The ZHB reorganized in May, electing Paul Clery to be Chair; Mr. Clery, Ms. Kelton, and Mr. McCandless all served through the end of 2021.

The ZHB met ten times in 2021 to hear eleven variance applications, an increase of five from the six variance applications heard in 2020:

- Alex and Erin Knapp applied for relief from various area and bulk limits to allow construction of a garage accessory to their residence at 1410 Spackman Ln. in the R-1 Residential district. The hearing was held on February 25, and the Board granted the variance requested with conditions.
- Beau and Amanda Shepard applied for relief from setback requirements and building coverage to allow construction of a 2-story addition to their residence at 949 Elmwood Ave. in the R-2 Residential district. The hearing was held on February 25, and the Board granted the variance requested with conditions.
- The Chester County Library applied for relief from limit on impervious cover and from minimum required building setback from an internal access drive for their facility at 450 Exton Square Pkwy. in the TC Town Center district. The hearing was held on March 25, and the Board granted the variance request with conditions.
- Yellow Cab Holdings PA, LLC applied for relief to allow a wall-mounted sign to extend above the roof line and to allow a new freestanding sign for the Wendy's restaurant at 153 E. Swedesford Rd. in the TC Town Center district. The hearing was held on May 27, and the Board granted the variance request with conditions.
- Nathan Buchanan and Elizabeth Jones applied for relief from various area and bulk standards to allow the construction of a 2-car detached garage accessory to the existing residence at 1314 Greentree Ln. in the R-2 Residential district. The hearing was on May 27, and the Board granted the variances requested with conditions.
- Raquel Izquierdo applied for relief from coverage limits to allow a covered deck and pool at the rear of the residence at 1420 W. Woodbank Wy. in the R-1 Residential district. The Board denied the variances following a hearing on May 27, but the Applicant modified her request, made a new application to the Board, and the Board granted the variance to allow the covered deck following a hearing on July 29.
- Whitford Property, Inc. applied for relief from sign regulations, setbacks, and limit of expansion of a non-conforming use to allow for a Wawa convenience store and gas station at 401-403 W. Lincoln Hwy. in the O/C Office/Commercial district. The hearing was held on June 24, and the Board granted four of the five requested variances with conditions. The ZHB did not grant relief to allow a wall-mounted sign larger than allowed on the south façade of the proposed building.
- Eric and Carly Lloyd applied for relief from setback regulations to allow a swimming pool at the rear of the residence at 1389 Highland Ave. in the R-1 Residential district. The hearing began on August 26 and was continued to September 30, at which time the Board granted the variance requested with conditions.
- Greg and Lori Corner applied for relief from the definition of "family" to allow more than three unrelated people to live in a single-family house at 50 W. Boot Rd. in the NC Neighborhood Commercial district. Following the hearing on November 18, the ZHB denied the variance.

- Robert and Caroline Kavanagh applied for relief from various provisions to allow a detached 2-car garage in the front of the existing residence at 161 Valley View Dr. in the R-1 Residential district. The hearing was held on December 16, and the Board granted all variances as requested.

There were no applications for special exceptions or appeals from the determination of the Zoning Officer in 2021.

### **STAFF and TRAINING**

Staff attended the following conferences and workshops during 2021. Many of these events provided staff with credits toward maintaining their AICP certification as planners.

- Mr. Weller and Mr. Smiley organized and conducted a tour of new development projects for Township staff on June 23.
- Mr. Weller and Mr. Smiley developed materials and text for the the Development Newsletter, the related video, and the “Community Conversation: Exton Crossroads” meeting on November 17.
- Mr. Weller attended the annual conference of the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Planning Association (APAPA) in Pittsburgh on October 17 through 19.
- Mr. Smiley attended American Planning Association and ESRI (GIS) webinars throughout the year to maintain AICP certification.