

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
Wednesday, June 2, 2010**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Corey
Nancy Carville
Daniel Brennan
Roberts LeBoutillier
David Coghlan
JoAnn Kelton

TOWNSHIP STAFF

John Weller, Planning Director
Pat Layman, Planning Secretary

Dan Corey, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. He noted the Rules of Public Comment printed on the back of the agenda, as well as the Notice outlining what constitutes formal action by the Township.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the April 21, 2010 minutes, as presented.

ACTION: Passed 6-0 (Kelton/Carville)

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

Principles and Steps in Trails Design

Mermie Karger, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, briefly reviewed the basic guide for steps in trails design. A Commission member was concerned about excessive screening and how it could affect safety. Ms. Karger noted the need for a balance between the benefits of screening and a desire to not interfere with the natural landscape.

The Commission expressed full support for using the document as a guide for trail design.

Glen Loch Two Associates

Address: Dunwoody Drive

First Review of Curative Amendment

Hearing: July 8, 2010

Request: Rezone from O/L to R-4

The applicant, Glen Loch Two Associates, filed a request for curative amendment alleging that the Township's Zoning Ordinance was deficient in that it did not provide adequate space for mobile home parks. Marc Kaplin, attorney for the applicant, was present and provided an explanation of the review process. He noted that the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) required every municipal zoning ordinance to provide for all basic forms of housing or to

provide a "fair share" of various dwelling types. The applicant's challenge was that while West Whiteland Township did have areas that allowed mobile homes, the area was such a small percentage of the total land in the Township that it effectively excluded mobile homes. The applicant was requesting that its property located along Dunwoody Drive be rezoned from O/L to R-4 to allow a mobile home park.

Fronefield Crawford, acting as special counsel for the Township, was present and provided further explanation of the curative amendment process. He explained that as the adjudicating body, if the Board of Supervisors elected not to grant relief, then on appeal the Court would answer two questions: is the validity challenge meritorious, and if so, what is the entitlement to relief. At that point, the planning factors of the applicant's proposed sketch plan would be considered by the Court. Mr. Crawford said the role of the Planning Commission was to evaluate the planning concepts as if they were hearing a petition for rezoning, rather than the legal issues of a validity challenge.

Mr. Weller stated that the hearing had been scheduled for July 8, 2010, and the cure had been submitted to the County Planning Commission and the Township's consultants for review and comment.

Dennis Glackin, land planner for the applicant, then provided an overview of the two areas in the Township that allow mobile homes. The first was the area known as Whiteland Crest, which he maintained was basically built out. The second parcel, located on the south side of Route 30, was currently home to 16 mobile homes, but about 90% of the available open space on the parcel consisted of prohibitive slopes. Mr. Glackin maintained that effectively there was no land available for mobile homes in the Township. He cited statistics from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) that designated West Whiteland Township as a growing suburb - growth from the 2000 census through 2008 estimates of a population increase from 16,500 to 18,200 (a growth rate of 10.4%), and an additional 1,811 new housing units needed by the year 2020 (based on the average family size of 2.45 people per unit).

There was then discussion about the meaning of "fair share" and what statistics are used to determine fair share. Mr. Crawford said when considering fair share, the issue of demand was also a factor. Generally, zoning districts that allow for mobile homes also allow for other uses, and the private market may determine how a particular site is developed.

Mr. Kaplin maintained that Whiteland Crest was already fully developed when it was designated an R-4 district.

Mr. Crawford said he felt it was for the Planning Commission to evaluate from a planning perspective whether there was a demand/need for a mobile home park, not to attempt to reach conclusions with respect to the legal issues associated with the challenge, as the Planning Commission's recommendations will precede the hearing. In short, the evidence with regard to the legal issues will come after the Planning Commission's recommendations.

A Commission member asked how the applicant arrived at the determination that there was a clear need and demand for manufactured home parks within the Township. Mr. Kaplin said all national statistics indicate that affordable housing or "work force" housing is needed.

Mr. Glackin then reviewed the proposed sketch plan. The existing road, as well as the existing stormwater management basins would remain. Two clusters of homes were proposed with three different types ranging in size from 20 x 50 feet to 20 x 70 feet in length. No type of age restriction was being proposed.

Commission members expressed concern about the proposed density and the impact on traffic. Mr. Kaplin stated that the proposed impact could not be compared to open space, but rather had to be compared to the impact of the 600,000 square feet of office use that was already approved for the site. He maintained that 199 mobile homes would have less impact than 600,000 square feet of office space.

There was brief discussion about the definition of mobile home versus manufactured home, and that they are generally interchangeable terms.

Commission members noted that the impact on fire, police, and EMS services would be greater for residential use than office use. Mr. Glackin agreed.

Mr. Kaplin said he had completed the applicant's presentation. Mr. Weller said Mr. Crawford and Mr. Comitta would make a presentation on behalf of the Township at the July 7 Planning Commission meeting.

Review of Stormwater Ordinance Revisions

MOTION: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors adoption of the proposed amendments to the Stormwater Management Ordinance, as drafted May 21, 2010.

ACTION: Passed 6-0 (Corey-LeBoutillier)

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Pat Layman