

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
Wednesday, April 18, 2007**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jo Ann Kelton
Bob Hewitt
David Coghlan
Dan Corey
Nancy Carville

TOWNSHIP STAFF

John Weller, Planning Director
Pat Layman, Recording Secretary

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Diane Snyder
Keith Choper

MEMBERS ABSENT

Robert LeBoutillier

Jo Ann Kelton, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the April 4, 2007 minutes, as presented.

ACTION: Passed 3-0-1 (Corey/Hewitt) Coghlan abstained. Carville arrived late.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PLANS:

1. Nirav Hospitality

Third Review: Conditional Use

Hearing: May 8, 2007

Request: Construction of a four-story hotel at Sunrise Blvd. and Coeway Lane

Michael Gill, attorney for the applicant, and Jeff Nagorny, the applicant's engineer, were present. Mr. Gill said the applicant had conducted three hearings before the Board of Supervisors, and the next one was scheduled for May 8, 2007. There were no new review letters from Township consultants.

The applicant was in the process of exploring a redesign to bring the building more in line with the Township's Town Center design standards.

Mr. Gill explained that the original plan for utilities was to run a sewer line down Coeway Lane. The plan of properties was laid out in 1940 with Coeway Lane depicted as a private roadway. After doing research with the Chester County Historical Society, Mr. Gill said there did not appear to be in the record any established easement rights to run utilities down Coeway Lane. He said discussions were held with various property owners along Coeway Lane, but he

did not believe, at the present time, that there was unanimity among the property owners as to what should happen to the private road. Some had expressed to the Township a desire to open Coeway Lane from Route 100 through to Sunrise Boulevard. Mr. Gill said he did not know if the Township wanted that. The applicant's plan was to move the Coeway Lane dead end westwardly and provide access to Sunrise Boulevard for hotel traffic. Because of the lack of unanimity and because there was no established right in the record to run utilities down Coeway Lane, the applicant proposed to run a sewer line to a manhole on the Target property with a pump station on the applicant's property. Water and gas would flow to the applicant's property via gravity from the line in Sunrise Boulevard.

In calculating the height of the building, there was a question as to what constituted the front yard of the property. Rather than pursue a variance, Mr. Gill said the applicant felt it was more economical to redesign each floor of the building to reduce the floor to ceiling height thereby reducing the overall height of the building. The building would still contain four floors.

A Commission member expressed the opinion that it would be a bad decision not to connect Coeway Lane to Sunrise Boulevard noting that it was presently a dangerous egress onto Route 100 from Coeway Lane. A second Commission member disagreed and felt opening Coeway Lane would bring a lot more volume into the area. Mr. Gill said if Coeway Lane was opened to Sunrise Boulevard, it would need to be widened, and there was currently no unanimity among the property owners, nor did Mr. Gill think there was a desire on the part of the Board of Supervisors to open Coeway Lane. Mr. Nagorny said the project's design would allow for the future development of Coeway Lane noting that the centerline of the plan's proposed driveway was meant to align with the centerline of the 40-foot wide private roadway of Coeway Lane. An additional acquisition of right-of-way from the Coeway Lane property owners would be required to meet minimum standards. Mr. Nagorny added that any modification to the function of Coeway Lane would also require permitting from PennDOT.

An unresolved issue was the status of Parcel 5 on the Target land development plan. A condition imposed as part of the Target land development approval in 1997, was that Parcel 5 should not be developed, but was to remain open space. The applicant's proposed driveway crossed over Parcel 5. Mr. Gill said there was a Declaration in the Township's file, signed and notarized in February of 1998, but never recorded, that stated that Parcel 5 shall not be developed as a stand-alone lot. The applicant was not proposing to develop Parcel 5 as a stand-alone lot. Even though the condition restricting Parcel 5 from future development was noted on the recorded plan, Mr. Gill maintained that the Declaration was the ultimate statement of the parties' intent. The matter was referred to the Township Solicitor who had yet to comment.

Mr. Gill said to put traffic from a 66 unit hotel with 39 peak hour trips down Coeway Lane to Route 100 would not be desirable. A Commission member suggested a "right-turn only, local traffic only" sign to enter Coeway Lane, and then those using the facilities on Coeway Lane could continue on out to Sunrise Boulevard. Mr. Gill said that was a matter for the Board of Supervisors and would require unanimity among the Coeway Lane property owners. It would also present a funding issue. The applicant was not willing to acquire property to create a 50 foot wide right of way and to create a 24 foot wide cartway stretching the entire length of Coeway Lane. Mr. Nagorny said the applicant was not opposed to Coeway Lane connecting through to Sunrise Boulevard, it was just a matter that at the present time, it was not the

applicant's desire to pay for the improvements. A Commission member said access to the hotel via Coeway Lane was not the issue, but rather was access allowed to Sunrise Boulevard. If access was not allowed, then the applicant was not looking to use Coeway Lane as its only access, and the development could potentially be in jeopardy.

Mr. Weller and Mr. Gill both confirmed that the right of access over Parcel 5 for the Schneider property would be protected.

There was discussion again regarding utility lines extending down Coeway Lane and the absence of unanimity among the property owners to do that. Mr. Gill said Coeway Lane would not be used by the applicant as a construction entrance.

The Commission decided to wait for the Township Solicitor's decision on the Parcel 5 restriction before making a recommendation.

2. Old School Fitness

First Review: Conditional Use

Hearing: May 8, 2007

Request: Conversion of vacant retail space to fitness club

In attendance were applicants Ken Michels and Darren Wasser, and John Bravacos, their attorney. Mr. Bravacos explained that the proposed site was a currently vacant 10,380 square foot building located at 342 N. Pottstown Pike. The applicant wished to operate a health club at the location. A subdivision/land development approval was received in 1999. No physical changes were proposed to the exterior of the site. The approval received in 1999 included variance relief for certain parking and sidewalk elements. The building was one story with an inside mezzanine covering a small area.

A membership of 650 was anticipated the first year, with an increase to 1,000 thereafter. Mr. Wasser said it was anticipated that the peak time in the morning would result in 25 vehicles, with 25-30 expected at lunch time, and approximately 55 vehicles during the evening peak. There were 95 parking spaces presently on the site for use by the entire complex. Mr. Bravacos said parking for the framing store and the audio shop remained almost entirely in the front of the site. A traffic study would be completed and submitted for the conditional use hearing. The approximate split of spaces between the front and back of the site was about 75 in the rear and 20 in the front.

A Commission member noted that the site had a history of flooding. Mr. Michels said they were aware that the site was located in the floodplain, and added that the general contractor had been in the building since the recent Noreaster storm, and there was no sign of water problems.

Mr. Bravacos said there was a landscape plan included in the original approval in 1999. The applicant was currently in the process of determining what was missing from that plan that would need to be replaced.

A Commission member expressed concern with the left turn movements from the site onto Route 100 and the length of the queue. Mr. Bravacos said the traffic report would address the issue. A Commission member brought up the issue of three new proposed developments all accessing Route 100 at the same area and the need to consider them together rather than individually. A Commission member said that Route 100 was on a closed loop system up to Uwchlan Township. Re-timing of the traffic lights would be requested based on the volumes. Mr. Weller said that TPD was aware of the proposed developments and could be asked to address the issue and make suggestions. Mr. Michels said the morning peak time would be between 5:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. when other businesses were not yet open. He added that their traffic would exhibit a trickle flow effect – not all would come and leave at the same time. Regarding the evening peak time, Mr. Michels said the other two stores on the site closed at 6:00 p.m., so traffic from those businesses would be gone by the time the applicant was outflowing from the evening peak.

Mr. Michels estimated the largest number of individuals in the facility at one time would be 50, and that would probably be on a Monday evening. There would be five full-time employees. Mr. Wasser said they wanted to be part of the community and reach out to students as well as other age groups. There would be coordination of times between the different groups using the facility. Sport teams would come at 2:30-3:00 p.m. while senior citizens and those coming from Intermediate Units would come at 11:00 a.m. via bus. Operating hours for the facility would be 5:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends.

A Commission member asked if the applicant would be submitting plans. Mr. Bravacos said they would submit the land development plan and landscape plan from 1999 for the conditional use hearing. He explained that the applicant would be entering into a lease with the owner of the property, conditioned upon final approval of the plan. There were no changes proposed to the outside of the facility. It was the change from retail to recreation that triggered the need for a conditional use. Because the applicant was not the owner of the site, they did not want to construct sidewalks and do extensive landscaping to the site.

Mr. Weller asked about emergency access provisions. Mr. Michels said he and his partners were first responders, they would have automated external defibrillators (AED) on site, and everyone would be trained in CPR.

The applicant provided a copy of the recorded Declaration of Restrictions for Lionville Run.

The Commission members liked the proposed use and would wait for the results of the traffic study.

3. Perley-Halladay Associates, Inc.
First Review: Sketch Plan
Request: Feedback on plan for accessory building

Joe Hunt, of Yerkes Associates, and Andrew McCarney, of Perley-Halladay, were present. The sketch plan proposed construction of an accessory use to the office and a

realignment of the parking. The design was the result of cooperation of all of the property owners in the immediate area. Mr. Hunt explained that there were two flag lots on Phoenixville Pike, with the Perley-Halladay office and the offices of Yerkes Associates in the back. There were currently two 25-foot accesses. Presently Perley-Halladay crossed CCI Communication's lot as cars were pulling out of parking spaces. The applicant was trying to eliminate that situation. Because there was no easement across the CCI property, the applicant was trying to redefine the lot to allow it to work for all parties. The owner of CCI Communication was present and was in agreement with the proposal. Yerkes would utilize the driveway, widening it another 8 feet for a 24 foot wide drive all the way back.

There would be an increase in Perley-Halladay's parking impervious cover to accommodate the additional trucks that would be parked adjacent to the accessory building. There was no manufacturing done on the site. Mr. McCarney said the accessory building would operate as a garage for service trucks, storage of building materials, tools, etc. The company designed cold storage buildings.

A similar plan had been submitted to the Township in 2001, with a great amount of impervious and loss of a great number of trees – about 213 inches of tree diameter. The new design called for the removal of only 20 inches of tree diameter. There would be reciprocal access easements between the two lots. Additional traffic volume would be 4 to 8 more vehicles.

There was a possibility that the applicant would request three waivers. The first was a waiver from constructing curbing to help improve stormwater management. An infiltration trench was proposed for stormwater management. A second waiver concerned lighting. The applicant wanted to light the parking area from building-mounted fixtures. A lighting plan would be submitted. Because the site was heavily wooded, and there was sufficient buffer between the Yerkes property and the Perley-Halladay property, a third waiver may be requested with regard to buffer plantings to allow the applicant's business to be visible from the road.

The applicant would submit a formal land development plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Weller reported briefly on his attendance at the American Planning Association conference in Philadelphia, and added that he would provide a written summary of the topics discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Layman
Recording Secretary

