

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Stokes Assembly Hall
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown Township
Wednesday May 22, 2019 – 7:30PM

Present

Commissioners – Planning Commission (PC) member Jack Embick was absent, all others were present (6-1). Also present was Township Planning Director Will Ethridge.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Pomerantz called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM, John Furgele and Ron Avellino led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda (JL/RH) 6-0

No changes were made.

Approval of Minutes

Several suggestions were made, including reducing the number of pages for meeting minutes, separating text into smaller paragraphs, and providing a draft to PC members for review. One main change was made to include an opening statement by Mr. Pomerantz on the subject of pipelines. **(KF/RH) 6-0**

Announcements

None

Public Comment – Non Agenda Items

- Ronald Avellino, 1524 Wyndham Ln, commented that he was in favor of some PC's discussion items to be preserved and recorded in better detail. He provided several examples of meetings with value in recording discussions.
- Mr. Pomerantz read Jack Embick's note on the Board's decision not to make a public announcement regarding sighting of coyotes in the Township. Mr. Ethridge noted that the WEGO police department might have posted something regarding that on their website.

New Business

1. **2019-01 SS Simon & Jude School variance application to allow a playground 0 setback from the side of the lot line** - Ronald Avellino, 1524 Wyndham Ln, the business manager of SS Simon & Jude Church, and John Furgele, 1650 E Street St, the church Board member and the Chairman of the facilities, provided background on the application for a variance. Mr. Furgele explained that the chosen location for a Pre-K playground was the ideal use of the existing land and the safest, most direct route for the students to reach play area even though it was bordering Jaguar/Land Rover property. However, the proposed playground would encroach on a 25-foot setback, which called for a variance.

Mr. Furgele noted that he spoke with the general manager of Jaguar/Land Rover, the only neighbor impacted by the application, and he did not have any objections. Mr. Furgele recapped that it was the only level spot in the entire campus of the SS Simon & Jude. There was an existing 4-foot chain-link high fence owned by Jaguar/Land Rover separating the church property and car dealership, and the applicant intended on building their own fence for maintenance and safety reasons. Mr. Pomerantz made a recommendation for the applicant to put a verbal agreement with Jaguar/Land Rover in writing and provide that to the Zoning Hear Board.

PC members expressed safety concerns about locating playground so close to car dealership. Mr. Furgele explained that due to a nature of topography and the fact that that area of car dealership was mostly used for storage, there was a minimum risk of accident to happen.

Mr. Ethridge asked the applicant to explain why the church applied for a variance to construct a new playground within a 25-foot setback when there was an option of leveling and expanding the existing playground. Mr. Furgele indicated that it would take significantly longer and cost significantly more to flatten that area due to elevation. Mr. Avellino noted that the main reason for a variance was to provide the closest and most convenient location for small kids to walk.

Motion to approve to the Zoning Hearing Board SS Simon & Jude School variance application to allow a playground 0 setback from the side lot line with the provision that the applicant will build their own fence on the west side, to complement the fence that is already there. (DP/SR) 6-0

1. **Township Planner Article – The Sharing Economy** – Mr. Pomerantz provided an article to PC members to be aware of described items and make any comments relating to that.

Russ Hatton made a comment that he wanted to make sure that the issue of parking for Uber/Lyft and other ridesharing services would be included in further parking ordinance discussions. Mr. Ethridge confirmed that there was no language in the Code related to the ridesharing parking.

Kevin Flynn made a comment that PC needed to reevaluate regulations pertaining to accessory uses. He raised a concern that it was his understanding that an accessory dwelling should be physically connected in some way with the current use of the property, which was not the case in the most recent application to build a 1,200 sq. ft. accessory dwelling with a detached garage presented to PC. He suggested potentially requiring a maximum distance of an accessory dwelling unit from the existing dwelling, limiting the number of parking spaces, and requiring public water and public sewer connections. He also sought after a better definition of “gross habitable area”. Mr. Ethridge recapped that Tony Verwey, Township solicitor, provided him with some guidance related to that: gross habitable area was calculated by taking the square footage of the dwelling unit footprint and subtracting any unfinished spaces, such as closets, basement etc. PC members agreed that the subject would be revisited.

2. **Ordinance/Code Proposed Changes – Update** – Mr. Pomerantz requested Will Ethridge to present the Board with the compiled list of ordinance amendments and to confirm which ones were considered top priorities. Mr. Ethridge informed PC members that every item on the list with priority “1” had been drafted into an ordinance amendment and would be provided to Rob Pingar and Pat McKenna for review. In addition, Mr. Ethridge was waiting on Kevin Matson on two items noted as priority “1” to confirm the

language for amendments.

Mr. Ethridge informed PC that the sign ordinance was under Act 247 review with the Chester County Planning Commission, new accessory structure setbacks ordinance would be in effect on June 8, and the work was ongoing regarding an update on the international building code that would be included into language relevant to bidirectional antennas. He expected the bidirectional antennas ordinance amendment to be complete by the end of the summer.

Old Business

None

Public Comment

None

Reports

Mr. Pomerantz read notes provided by Jack Embick summarizing his observations of the BOS meeting for 05/20/2019

Adjournment (EA/JL) 6-0

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Next PC Meeting – June 19, 2019, 7:30 pm – Township Building

PC Representative at next Board of Supervisors Meeting: June 3, 2019 –Kevin Flynn

Respectfully submitted,
William Ethridge, Planning Commission Secretary