

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**FEBRUARY 2015**

A work session of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 7:00 PM at the Whitpain Township Building, 960 Wentz Road, Blue Bell, PA for the purpose of reviewing the agenda of the public meeting to be held that evening. Chairman Kenneth Corti presided with Commission members Richard Shorin, Penelope Gerber, Otis Hightower, and Tory Meitner present. Township Engineer James E. Blanch, P.E., Township Planning Consultant E. Van Rieker, Assistant Zoning Officer William McManus and Recording Secretary Karen Dolga were also present. Planning Commission members Bradley Tate and Edward McLaughlin were absent.

1. Review Ordinance #4-236, an ordinance amending the Code of the Township of Whitpain, Chapter 160 (Zoning), Article XXVI (Signs), Section 160-185 (Types of Signs) to add a new subsection "F" setting forth a new definition of a "Changeable Text Electronic Message Board", and further amending Chapter 160 (Zoning), Article XVI (Signs), Section 160-189 (General Regulations) to repeal existing subsection "B" and replace it with a new subsection "B" prohibiting any sign or portion thereof within the clear sight triangle at any intersection of streets, or any intersection of a driveway and a street; and prohibiting any signs, other than an official street sign, within the legal right of way of any street; and further amending Section 160-189 (General Regulations) to add a new subsection "O" to establish special regulations for signs including a changeable text electronic message board.

The Planning Commission reviewed Ordinance No. 4-236 and discussed comments received from Montgomery County Planning Commission. The Montgomery County Planning Commission suggested that changeable text be allowed side by side with the static portion of the sign. Mr. McManus remarked that the ordinance does allow this provided both parts are on the lowest portion of the sign.

Mr. Shorin questioned the need for size requirements for sign enclosures. Mr. Blanch stated that it is to regulate the structure around the sign.

Mr. Blanch mentioned that Mr. McManus will provide a power point presentation depicting the highlights of the ordinance.

2. Review current zoning hearing board applications.
  - 1.) **NO. 2032-15 PET SUPPLIES PLUS & FORMAN SIGN COMPANY** (DAN FLAVILLE) requests a variance from Article XXVI, Section 160-191.D of the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, relating to permitted signs in the C-Commercial District. Applicant proposes to install two signs: (1) a 48-square foot, one-sided, non-illuminated directional ground sign; and (2) a 104.63 square-foot back-lit façade sign on the property located at 1750 DeKalb Pike for the Pet Supplies Plus

tenant of the shopping center. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will allow (1) a 48-square foot, one-sided, non-illuminated directional ground sign, when the Ordinance only permits 2 square-feet for a directional ground sign; and (2) a 104.63 square-foot façade sign, when the Ordinance only permits 16 square-feet for a façade sign.

The Planning Commission had concerns regarding the size of the signs and font style.

Mr. McManus mentioned that the applicant has a variance that governs the existing signage. He noted that the applicant could take one sign from the front of the building and move it to the side, but it has to be limited to 22 1/2 sf.

3. Review of pertinent planning issues.

Mr. Hightower had concerns regarding Oak Street property maintenance and vehicles blocking Beech Alley.

Chairman Corti suggested a community watch group could aid the Township. Mr. Blanch mentioned that "No Parking" signs will be posted on Beech Alley when the new subdivision is built. The Planning Commission asked if signs could be posted now. Mr. Blanch stated that further review would be needed.

Mr. Blanch announced that the next Town Hall meeting will be held at the Manor House at 7:00 pm on February 25, 2015 to discuss environmental factors and sustainability measures within the community. He also noted that the topic for discussion at the Town Hall meeting scheduled for March 11, 2015 will be on the economy and business community held at Arborcrest. In addition, Mr. Blanch pointed out that the speaker on March 25, 2015 will be Drew Gilchrist, SE Regional Advisor for DCNR, who will focus on the West Ambler community and recreational factors within the community.

The work session adjourned at 7:31 PM, at which time the Planning Commission members left for the public meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen M. Dolga, Recording Secretary

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
FEBRUARY 2015**

The second meeting of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission for the year 2015 was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at the Whitpain Township Building, 960 Wentz Road, Blue Bell, PA. Chairman Kenneth Corti presided with Commission members Richard Shorin, Penelope Gerber, Otis Hightower, and Tory Meitner present. Township Engineer James E. Blanch, Township Planning Consultant E. Van Rieker, Assistant Zoning Officer William McManus and Recording Secretary Karen Dolga were also present. Planning Commission members Edward McLaughlin and Bradley Tate were absent.

Chairman Corti called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. The members of the Planning Commission and Township Staff introduced themselves to the public that were present.

1.) Approval of minutes.

Chairman Corti called for any comments or questions on the January meeting minutes from the audience. There being none, Mrs. Gerber made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meitner, to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2015 meeting of the Planning Commission. The motion passed 5-0.

2.) Review Ordinance #4-236, an ordinance amending the Code of the Township of Whitpain, Chapter 160 (Zoning), Article XXVI (Signs), Section 160-185 (Types of Signs) to add a new subsection "F" setting forth a new definition of a "Changeable Text Electronic Message Board", and further amending Chapter 160 (Zoning), Article XVI (Signs), Section 160-189 (General Regulations) to repeal existing subsection "B" and replace it with a new subsection "B" prohibiting any sign or portion thereof within the clear sight triangle at any intersection of streets, or any intersection of a driveway and a street; and prohibiting any signs, other than an official street sign, within the legal right of way of any street; and further amending Section 160-189 (General Regulations) to add a new subsection "O" to establish special regulations for signs including a changeable text electronic message board.

Mr. McManus provided a power point presentation explaining the key points of the Ordinance No. 4-236 regarding Changeable Text Electronic Message Board. He explained that the changeable text electronic message boards are permitted only in Institutional District and are only permitted on monument/pylon signs. Mr. McManus noted the size restrictions which are based on the type of road and frontage. He pointed out the different parts of the sign noting the changeable area is limited to 35%. In addition, Mr. McManus mentioned that changeable text must only be text and cannot change more than once a minute.

Planning Commission comments:

Mr. Rieker thanked Mr. McManus for the presentation and commented that it was a great overview of the ordinance. He pointed out other items listed in the

ordinance such as all signs must be kept out of the clear sight triangle and legal right-of-ways.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

There being no further comments or questions, a motion was made by Mr. Shorin, and seconded by Mrs. Gerber, to recommend that the Board of Supervisors grant approval of Ordinance #4-236.

The motion passed 5-0.

3.) Review of current Zoning Hearing Board applications.

**NO. 2032-15 PET SUPPLIES PLUS & FORMAN SIGN COMPANY (DAN FLAVILLE)** request a variance from Article XXVI, Section 160-191.D of the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, relating to permitted signs in the C-Commercial District. Applicant proposes to install two signs: (1) a 48-square foot, one-sided, non-illuminated directional ground sign; and (2) a 104.63 square-foot back-lit façade sign on the property located at 1750 DeKalb Pike for the Pet Supplies Plus tenant of the shopping center. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will allow (1) a 48-square foot, one-sided, non-illuminated directional ground sign, when the Ordinance only permits 2 square-feet for a directional ground sign; and (2) a 104.63 square-foot façade sign, when the Ordinance only permits 16 square-feet for a façade sign.

Present for the applicant: Gregg Adelman, Kaplin Stewart

Mr. Adelman distributed aerial and rendering photographs to the Planning Commission. He stated that the applicant is seeking two sign variances, one for an internal directional sign and a façade sign on the corner of the Pet Supplies Plus store. Mr. Adelman remarked that a directional sign is being proposed at the "T" intersection and can be used for other tenants. He mentioned that the proposal for a façade sign is similar to the Giant's sign. Mr. Adelman stated that the façade sign is to be internally illuminated, back lit, stay on only during business hours and that it is 104 sf.

Mrs. Gerber asked if the proposed sign on the building the same as the one on the front. Mr. Adelman replied no, it is larger but same motif and color.

Chairman Corti inquired if the applicant would be willing to remove one of the existing signs from the front face of the building, address the size and

the white background of the sign. Mr. Adelman replied that he would review the Planning Commission's comments with the applicant. In addition, the Planning Commission expressed concerns regarding the directional sign size and appearance. Mr. Rieker explained that if a directional sign is needed it should be for all tenants and uniform.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board cases, but suggested that the applicant consider asking the Zoning Hearing Board for a continuance.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

There being no further comments or questions, a motion was made by Mrs. Gerber, and seconded by Mr. Meitner, to remain neutral on the subject application, but voiced serious concerns that the directional sign is aesthetically displeasing in appearance and size. The Planning Commission also noted that the façade sign was large and the white backer panel was not desirable. In addition, the Planning Commission recommended that the applicant be more prepared and consider asking the Zoning Hearing Board for a continuance.

The motion passed 5-0.

#### 4.) Pertinent Planning Issues

Chairman Corti announced that the second Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting will be held on February 25, 2015 at Prophecy Creek Park from 7:00 pm-9:00 pm. The focus of the meeting will be on environmental factors- Blue Bell Village. Additionally, he announced the following Town Hall meeting dates:

- March 11, 2015 at Arborcrest focusing on economic factors-Center Square area
- March 25, 2015 at Centre Square Fire Company focusing on recreational factors-West Ambler area, and
- October 14, 2015 (tentatively) at the Montgomery County Community College to present the draft comprehensive plan.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Mr. Shorin, and seconded by Mr. Meitner to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Shorin', written in a cursive style.

Richard Shorin, Secretary