

VIA E-MAIL

February 6, 2015

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission
FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant
RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – February 10, 2015

1. Approval of Minutes
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 XXVI (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.

Comment:

- A. *This Zoning Ordinance Amendment represents a "housekeeping" update, which addresses both sign location generally and specific regulations dealing with LED changeable copy signs.*
- B. *It should be noted that this ordinance amendment limits LED or plasma style signs to be permitted only in the "IN" Institutional District or where required by law, such as with gasoline price signs. Staff have reviewed this draft on numerous occasions and I believe that it is now in the form where we can recommend approval.*

3. Review current zoning hearing board application **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.

Comment:

A. *This appeal consists of a request for two additional signs:*

(1) A 48 s.f. one-sided non-illuminated directional sign which would be positioned at the end of the main entrance drive in to the center from Dekalb Pike. I have no objection to having a discreet directional sign, which assists the traveling public as they enter a particular shopping center. However, I do have two concerns with the current proposal. First, 48 s.f. is much too large to function as a discreet directional sign and secondly, this location should be designed so that other tenants within the center could be positioned on the directional sign. A good example of a directional sign package was the proposal that was reviewed by the planning commission in connection with the Village Square Center at Blue Bell. I would suggest that this center participate in a directional sign, having perhaps at most 12 – 20 s.f. on which a directional arrow and clean font styles would be developed for all of the tenants within the center (not limited to just one).

(2) A 104.63 s.f. back-lit façade sign proposed to be positioned on the end of the building, facing and parallel to Dekalb Pike. This façade is approximately 175 feet from the edge of Dekalb Pike. I did want to point out that the recently adopted Community Shopping Center Overlay District provides for slightly larger signage for channel letters provided they did not have a backer panel. In other words, channel letters are preferred when the background is the same color and material as the building façade. This sign does include a white backer panel which is less desirable. Applicant will need to demonstrate that this is the minimum letter size for the façade and we should draw a relationship between the need for the façade sign and the size of the tenancy.

4. Review pertinent planning issues.

cc: Jim Blanch Bradley Tate Jennifer Gallagher
Karen Dolga Ken Corti Nicole Godson
Otis Hightower Penny Gerber
Tory Meitner Richard Shorin
Roman Pronczak Ted McLaughlin