

VIA E-MAIL

March 9, 2015

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



1. Approval of minutes.
2. Informal presentation regarding 850 Jolly Road.

Comment:

- a. *850 Jolly Road is the site of the former Welex facility. It has been vacant or largely unused for more than a decade. Various re-use plans have been proposed to use the existing building(s) which have also necessitated the need for either a Zoning Map amendment or a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board.*
 - b. *Currently, the Korman Company is proposing a high quality extended stay facility in a new building having multiple floors, which would provide for long-term housing rentals. The idea would be that this type of rental unit, while still being considered temporary like a hotel, would satisfy the needs for those individuals and small families requiring longer stays within the community. It is my understanding that the corporate community heavily relies on this type of product in order to support the needs of consultants and employee transfers. The current proposal would require a text amendment to the existing R-E Zoning District. The idea would be to create a minimum and maximum size for such a facility. No specific plans have been submitted at this time, but applicant does have an expansive presentation package to be viewed by the Township Planning Commission.*
3. Review of a Land Development Plan for Arborcrest – Woodlands I. This application involves the renovation of a 200,000 SF building on approximately 26.67 acres of property located at 785 Arbor Way. The property is zoned RE – Research and Engineering District.

Comment:

- a. *Land development consists of both architectural and site plan improvements to the parcel previously known as Building C, which consists of approximately 26.7 acres and is Zoned R-E Zoning District. The proposed plans result in an updated and modernized building including entrance, courtyards and an addition of a third floor, in roughly the same configuration that was originally occupied by former Building C.*
 - *Existing building equals two levels = 219,000 gfa*
 - *Proposed building equals three levels = 200,000 gfa*
- b. *As can be seen from the above summary, although the building perimeter is somewhat changed and a third floor is added to the building infrastructure, the overall yield in terms of square feet is virtually unchanged.*
- c. *The existing parking lots are being “greened up” and provided with both centralized protected pedestrian link through the parking lot to the building entrances (both north and south side) and extensive new landscaping, consisting of both ornamental plants and parking lot shade trees. The improvement basically brings the parking lot design into compliance with the recent upgrades to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.*
- d. *There is also proposed an extensive lighting plan, consisting of a more light emission sensitive luminaire design, lower in height and which contains a recessed light source providing for light cut-off along the perimeter of the property as well as along the major roadway, which services this and the Blue Bell Investment Company property.*
- e. *Overall comments and recommendations:*
 1. *This is a very well done revitalization Master Plan, showing upgrades to both the existing building, parking lots and vehicular circulation. The upgrades include the introduction of entrance courts, recreation facilities, internal parking lot pedestrian links as well as an overall improved landscape plan.*
 2. *Recommendations:*
 - *The east side driveway would have improved circulation if there were no perpendicular parking along the perimeter of this drive (in other words, if the design would follow the same layout of the westerly driveway). It is understood that a significant number of parking spaces would need to be reduced or relocated, but the overall vehicle circulation would be provided with less potential interference. Applicant could utilize Sections 160-92B.*
 - *I would like to see an overall pedestrian walkability plan. There are segments where sidewalks are proposed to connect with adjacent properties. However, an overall plan which would show how this site would interconnect with all other properties within the campus would be of value.*
 - *Applicant has not availed itself of the “Reduction in length of parking spaces” in Section 160-199 of the Zoning Ordinance.*

4. Review current zoning hearing board application.

1. **NO. 2034-15: ROBERT A. & PATRICIA A. HAASZ** request variance relief from the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, as follows: (1) Article V, Section 160-21, and Article XXVIII, Section 204(D) prohibiting accessory buildings or structures in any location other than the rear yard; and (2) Article XXVIII Sections 160-202 and 203 prohibiting building or parts of buildings into the front or side yards. Applicant proposes to install a 576 square foot one-story carport in the property's side yard located at 887 Parkwood Road in the R1 Zoning District. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will allow an accessory structure in the property's side yard where the Ordinance only permits accessory structures in the rear yard.

***Comment:** This is a residential application and typically the Planning Commission remains neutral unless the proposal has a community-wide impact.*

2. **NO. 2035-15: JOSEPH J. & DONNA N. FERRIER** request variance relief from the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, as follows: (1) Article XII, Section 160-62 prohibiting accessory buildings or structures in any location other than the rear yard in the R-5 Agricultural/Rural Residential District; (2) Article XII 160-66(B)(3)(b)(1) prohibiting development in deed-restricted common open space; and (3) Article XXVIII, Section 160-202 prohibiting erection of buildings or parts of buildings in the front yard. Applicant proposes to install a generator in the property's front yard located at 1201 Walton Road. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will allow the generator in the property's front yard in deed-restricted common open space when the Ordinance only permits accessory structures in the rear yard and prohibits development in deed-restricted common open space.

***Comment:** While not defined in the Zoning Code, a generator would normally be considered an accessory use and as such would be prohibited from being positioned in a front yard. This application is somewhat unique in that the lot is oversized and the house is positioned in the rear most portion of this oversized property. Any approval for a generator should demonstrate compliance with the Township's noise ordinance, when measured at the property line – if necessary, the generator should be relocated closer to the dwelling in order to demonstrate compliance with the Township noise ordinance, based on manufacturer's specifications.*

3. **NO. 2036-15: 1155 DEKALB ASSOCIATES, LLC** request a determination that the construction of a proposed 6-unit, two story multi-family dwelling at 1155 Dekalb Pike with a floor area of approximately 5,310 square feet is a permitted extension of a nonconforming use under Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance Article XXIX, Section 16-225. In the alternative, Applicant requests variance

relief from the Ordinance, as amended, as follows: (1) Article XXIX, Section 160-225 that permits an extension of a nonconforming use by only 25%; (2) Article XXIX, Section 160-226 that allows a discontinued nonconforming use to only be resumed within one year of the discontinuance; and (3) Article XIX, Section 160-119 relating to permitted uses in the C-Commercial District. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will allow construction of a 6-unit, two story multi-family dwelling, where such use is not expressly permitted.

Comment:

- a. *The current proposal requests an interpretation for relief from the non-conforming use extension provisions of the Zoning Ordinance or in the alternative at Article XIX, a use variance to permit six dwelling units in a 2 story multi-family dwelling building in the C – Commercial District. Basically, use variances are to be considered when the applicable property within the zoning district suffers from change of circumstance, obsolescence either functional or external or is of such size as to generally be considered too small for zoning map amendment. In these circumstances, the use is considered by the Zoning Hearing Board rather than pursuant to legislative action by the governing body (Board of Supervisors).*
- b. *A reasonable test for such an application include:*
 - 1) *The building bulk and impervious coverages are similar to or are no different from what may be anticipated from a development of a by right use.*
 - 2) *That the intensity, i.e. measured in terms of traffic impact, number of persons who regularly come upon the property and other such use impacts such as noise, lighting, etc. are considered to be no greater than what may normally be experienced when a by right use is permitted.*
- c. *In addition it would be relevant to determine that the proposed use is generally consistent with or not incongruent with surrounding land uses.*

CONTINUANCES

4. **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 ground sign; and (2) a 104.63 square-foot façade sign, when the Ordinance only permits 16 square-feet for a façade sign.

Comment: *The current application represents a revision and vast improvement to the sign variance requests that were initially reviewed last month.*

- a. *The non-illuminated directional sign has been reduced in overall size and consists of a directional sign design that could accommodate other tenants within the center. As such, the proposal represents a “master plan” directional sign. My only concern would be to make sure that all letter size and font styles are the same.*
- b. *The proposed façade sign has been redesigned to eliminate the white backer board and instead use channel letters, which is a style that we have recommended in the past believing it to be more compatible architecturally with the building facades.*

6. 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