

VIA E-MAIL

October 9, 2015

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission
FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant
RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – October 13, 2015

1. Approval of minutes.
2. Presentation by the Montgomery County Planning Commission on the County Comprehensive Plan, MontCo 2040 : A Shared Vision.
3. Review of Conditional Use Application #CU30-15 for Korman Properties, Inc. that proposes the construction of a corporate rental suite building.

Comment:

a) *Background:*

- *You will remember that this application was reviewed informally at the March 10, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting. Subsequently, a text amendment to the existing R-E Zoning District was adopted to permit Corporate Rental Suites as a Conditional Use (Ordinance #4-241), which was enacted by the Board of Supervisors on June 16, 2015.*

b) *For ready reference, please find attached a copy of my memo under date February 16, 2015 which ticks off a number of suggestions, all of which have been incorporated into the new Ordinance Amendment in some fashion. Please also note comments on page 2 of the memo, dealing with the overall plan. I would note that the current submission does provide for an extensive sidewalk and walkway plan, both internally and along the street frontage.*

- *It would be interesting to determine whether or not there are important missing links to adjoining corporate office destinations that could be installed in order to enhance walkability.*

c) *The current submission provides a series of visual exhibits indicating compliance with the new text amendment in the R-E District.*

- *Exhibit #3 through #7 provide drawings and elevations of the proposed building. Perhaps it is just me, but the proposal for the new building looks more like what one would expect for a repurpose plan of an older industrial building (say something that might exist in Conshohocken) rather than a built-new building, particularly the roof cap design.*
 - *The web page offers images of the exteriors of AVE facilities in Somerset, Malvern, Downingtown and Lansdale which are examples in my view of facilities that have features and materials more appropriate for Blue Bell, Pennsylvania.*
- d) *Exhibit #2 titled Illustrative Site Plan shows extensive landscaping along with two stormwater management basins.*
- *A supplemental landscape plan should be provided which would call out the quantity, size at planting, and species of the plant material proposed for the site. Of particular concern is the streetscape, which could go a long way to mitigate the building mass, which will have an elevation along Union Meeting Road in excess of 500 feet in length.*
 - *A fleshed-out lighting plan showing illuminance photometrics will also be required at the Land Development phase. However, it would be helpful to have an idea of the mounting height and luminaire design contemplated at this phase of the planning and design for the property.*
 - *It could also be exciting to have water features such as fountains designed into the plan especially for the stormwater management basin contemplated for the corner of Union Meeting Road and Jolly Road.*
4. Review of Conditional Use Application #CU31-15 for the Centre Square Fire Company that proposes the construction of a new firehouse with office, storage, meeting and garage space. The new firehouse would replace the existing firehouse on the same parcel.

Comment:

a) *Background:*

- *The Centre Square Fire Company Demolition and Relocation Plan has in concept been a part of the Master Plan for the development of the Community Shopping Center Overlay District since its inception January 20, 2015. The Community Shopping Center Overlay District consists of two parts:*
 - *The first part creates an amendment to the Township Zoning Map which includes the two tax parcels which comprise land currently owned and occupied by Centre Square Fire Company and an adjoining dwelling.*
 - *The Centre Square Fire Company Fire House and associated parking and staging areas will be relocated to a new lot to the rear of the present property. In turn, the lot formerly occupied by*

the fire house will become the important easterly driveway approach, which is part of the overall Centre Square Commons development plan and a new corner pad, reserved for future retail use, but which is not a part of the current submission.

- b) *The Conditional Use Application is accompanied by a detailed development plan. Obviously, the Township Engineering Department will perform a separate and in-depth review of the proposed land development phase of the submission. Sheet #16 of 18 (labeled Landscape and Lighting Plan) and #17 of 18 (labeled Landscape and Lighting Details) do not provide sufficient information to evaluate either landscape or lighting as may be proposed for the new fire company site.*
- Of particular concern would be the manner of buffering along the easterly and southerly property lines and a detail of the proposed light fixtures to include a house-side shield and a photometric plan.*
- c) *The aforementioned driveway access easement area is shown on the plans. Roman and/or Jim may have specific information on the manner of conveyance of the 60 foot right-of-way to the adjoining developer for its construction. However, any approval of this Conditional Use Application should include an agreement to the form and timing of the conveyance of the right-of-way, which plays an integral role in the overall circulation plan within the Community Shopping Center Overlay District.*

5. Review of an Amended Subdivision Plan for 688 Cathcart Road. This application involves a three lot subdivision of approximately 2.79 acres of property located at 688 Cathcart Road, which is on the eastern side of Cathcart Road between Morris Road and Skippack Pike. Access to the site will be from Cathcart Road. The property is zoned R-1 Residential District. The Planning Commission previously approved a similar subdivision in 2004. This subdivision is being revised in regards to stormwater management and landscaping improvements.

Comment: Please see attached review letter dated 9/21/15.

6. Review current zoning hearing board applications.
1. NO. 2056-15: JAMES LAPRADE requests variance relief from the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, Article VII, Section 160-36 relating to rear yards and Article XXVIII, Section 160 204.C relating to residential rear yard intrusions. Applicant proposes to build a 375 square feet deck in the rear yard of the house on the property located at 1741 West Township Line Road in the Township's R-2 Residence District. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will allow the proposed deck to project 15-feet into the rear yard setback, resulting in a 35-foot rear yard where a maximum of a 12.5-foot projection or a 37.5 feet rear yard is permitted under the Ordinance.

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

2. NO. 2057-15: MARK EBERLE & HEATHER JONES request variance relief from the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, as follows: (1) Article VII, Section 160-36 relating to rear yards and (2) Article XXVIII, Section 160 204 relating to residential rear yard intrusions. Applicants propose to build at 61.4 square feet one-story addition in the rear yard of the house on the property located at 832 Ivy Road in the Township's R 2 Residence District. Applicants' requested variance relief, if granted, will allow the addition of the proposed one-story addition with a rear yard setback of 20-feet where 50-feet is required under the Ordinance.

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

3. NO. 2058-15: RISTORANTE CASTELLO, INC. requests a modification of conditions of previously granted relief (prior Decisions and Orders 1980-13, 1928-12, 1914-11, 1799-08, 1678-06 and 1523-04) and/or a variance from Article XXVII, Section 160-192.B(2)(j) of the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, relating to required off-street parking facilities in the C-Commercial District relative to the property located at 721 Skippack Pike. Applicant proposes (1) a reduction in the number of required parking spaces for a 1,982 square feet restaurant expansion; and (2) to condition the requested variance relief on the 1,982 square feet restaurant expansion use being limited to dinner after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and after 5:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday as there would be more available spaces at those times due to the nature of the other tenants. Applicant's requested variance relief, if granted, will result in 14 existing spaces being provided for the proposed expansion, where a total of 27 spaces or 13 additional spaces is required.

Comment: This request is fact sensitive and dependent upon the ability of Applicant to show that there are reasons to support the variance based upon:

- *Complimentary operations which result in the peak demand occurring at different times within the center; or*
- *That the additional space (expansion of 1,982 square feet) is comprised of uses that would not generate the same demand normally associated with a restaurant.*

7. Review pertinent planning issues.

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