

# East Whiteland Township

Planning Commission

Wednesday –November 20, 2019

## Minutes

### **Members Present:**

Deb Abel, Chair; Peter Fixler; Tim Kelly; John Laumer; and Dante Bradley.

**Members Absent:** Todd Asousa; Jeff Broadbelt, Vice Chair

### **Also Present:**

Zachary Barner, Director Planning & Development; Brittany Bulger, Planning Coordinator; Darrell Becker, Township Engineer; and Joe McGrory, Township Solicitor.

### **Call to Order:**

Ms. Abel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Minutes:**

Approval of the October 23, 2019 meeting minutes.

**Action:** Mr. Fixler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to approve the minutes.

The motion carried unanimously **(5-0)**

### **Development Applications:**

1. [2019-15-LD for “WaterWalk at Worthington”](#) (Oakwood WaterWalk Hotel) – Preliminary Land Development / Master Plan application to construct a 153-room extended stay hotel, interior courtyard, surface parking, walking trail, and stormwater management facilities. This project is associated with the Uptown Worthington Master Plan. The property, located at 85 Matthews Road, is within the O/BP (Office/Business Park) and ROC/R (Regionally Oriented Commercial/Residential) Overlay Districts.

Alyson Zarro, Attorney for the Applicant, explained that the proposed hotel would be constructed in the ROC/R zoning district along Matthews Road (adjacent to the Vanguard Campus). The concept was previously envisioned to be part of the approved master plan for Worthington, but was not formally reviewed and approved as part of the original (or subsequently amended) plans. The hotel would consist of two buildings separated by a central courtyard. There will be two access points along Matthews Road (including a 26' wide fire apparatus access road). A third entrance will connect into the surrounding development once subsequent phases are constructed.

Ms. Zarro provided an overview of the Township review letters. There are a handful of the stormwater and site design adjustments required by the ARRO review. As currently designed, applicant would be requesting four (4) waivers related to both stormwater and landscaping design. The McMahon traffic reviews suggests that the entrance/exit scenario revised such that the eastern access would become an exit-only, rather than an entrance only. The sanitary review provided by Pennoni emphasized that the applicant must design the site to accommodate an access drive (no less than 12 feet wide) to the townships flow meter pit. The Applicant agrees to comply with all outstanding comments in the various reviews.

Mr. Laumer asked whether the design would be safe and practical for bikers and pedestrians seeking to use the surrounding trail network. Ms. Zarro explained that there would be a connecting path from the Chester Valley Trail (CVT) to the hotel and into the Worthington site. Mr. Barner advised that the County has stated that their preference would be for the CVT to remain along Matthews Road (as currently constructed). The Township supports this concept, but encourages the Applicant to construct the internal connector trail as it would be beneficial to the residents and patrons of the Worthington. The proposed connection was initially shown on the plans as 10 feet wide, but could be reduced to a "walking path" (approx. 6 feet wide) since it will not need to meet county specifications for a "multi-use trail."

Oakwood Waterwalk representative, Aaron McPeak, presented the architectural renderings for the proposed hotel, showing 4 stories with a primarily brick exterior paired with cool, dark colors. Ms. Abel noted that the hotel design does not seem to fit in with surrounding styles and should feel more cohesive with its adjacent buildings, perhaps not featuring so many different architectural styles. Mr. McPeak suggested that his team could review some of the Company's other facilities to find a design that would better compliment the surrounding development.

The Application was continued to a future meeting in order for the Applicant to revise and resubmit the plans, including additional details on the architectural design.

**Public Comment:**

Paul Jensen, local businessman and manager of the nearby Sonesta Suites, voiced his opposition to this application suggesting that the local market is not in need of an additional hotel. He believes there is little (or no) demand for additional hotel rooms in East Whiteland Township and the surrounding. He fears that more supply (combined with less demand) could be detrimental to existing business. He warned that underutilized hotel facilities could lead to unintended consequences.

**Adjournment:**

Ms. Abel adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.