

**East Whiteland Township
Planning Commission**

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

This meeting will be held in-person (not virtually) at the East Whiteland Township Building

Minutes

(agenda items [linked](#) to online documents)

Members Present:

Deb Abel, Chair; Todd Asousa, Vice-Chair; Dante Bradley; John Laumer; Jeff Broadbelt; and Bill Wrabley.

Members Absent: Tim Kelly

Also Present:

Zach Barner, Director of Planning & Development; Brittany Carosello, Deputy Director of Planning & Development; Al Vennettilli, Township Engineer; Tom Comitta, Township Planner; and Braun Taylor, Township Solicitors Office.

Regular Meeting beginning at **7:02 p.m.**

Minutes:

Consideration of the **April 26, 2023**, meeting minutes

Mr. Asousa made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to approve the **April 26, 2023**, meeting minutes.

The motion carried unanimously **(4-0)**

Development Applications:

1. **LD-01-2023 for 99 Old Valley Road** (Cockerham) – Preliminary / Final Subdivision Plan to subdivide the existing lot into two (2) separate lots and construct a 1,999 s.f. new single-family dwelling with a patio, a covered porch, a walkway, and a paved driveway on the newly created lot. The existing dwelling and accessory structures will not be redeveloped or improved as part of the proposed project. The property, located at 99 Old Valley Road, is within the R-1 (Residential) District.

Scott Deisher, engineer for the applicant explained the proposal and plans submitted. Mr. Deisher asked if the Planning Commission members would be supportive of a waiver for combined Preliminary/Final plan approval, the members are supportive. The waiver will be requested during the second submission of the plans.

Mr. Deisher explained the waivers being requested and partial waivers being requested. Tree requirements will be fleshed out with the township landscape consultant, including buffer requirements and street trees. Many of the waivers are all will comply. Mr. Deisher explained there will be additional waivers requested asked at the next submission.

Mr. Deisher and Mr. Vennettilli briefly discussed stormwater facility number 2 and infiltration testing. Mr. Deisher will show any stormwater changes on the second submission plans.

Mr. Bradley asked about the sit distance on the property, Mr. Deisher explained that there will be fairly large embankment cuts made at the driveway, Mr. Deisher believes if its graded appropriately it will work fine, site distance will be spot checked during construction.

Mr. Deisher will return to the Planning Commission, after another plan submission and round of consultant reviews.

Ordinance Amendments:

Consider recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding the following [amendments](#) to the Township Zoning Ordinance:

2. [Zoning Text Amendment](#) related to Signs in ROC/R Regionally Oriented Commercial-Residential District Developments (Section 200-89.1) – revised language seeks to allow one *fewer* “site identification” sign, and one additional “entrance pylon” sign.

Lou Colagreco, attorney for the applicant explained the need for the text amendment. The amendment is for a change in signage at the Worthington. The tenants of Worthington have requested that there be one more smaller pylon sign to properly identify each tenant rather than an additional large “Worthington” sign which is permitted by right per the ordinance. There are currently two large Worthington signs which are both smaller than what is allowed per the ordinance. The pylon sign will be 200 sq ft, smaller and much more practical for the various tenants in Worthington. The sign will likely be digital, so it is easier to change the names of potential tenants. This amendment would only affect the Worthington property and parcels located within the Worthington property.

Action: Mr. Bradley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Broadbelt, to recommend approval of the Zoning Text Amendment to the Board of Supervisors. The motion carried unanimously **(6-0)**

3. [Zoning Map and Text Amendment](#) related to Multifamily Route 30 (MF-30) Overlay District:

- a. Text Amendment to existing ordinance language of the MF-30 Overlay District to create additional submission requirements, expanded architectural standards, revised language regarding height and number of stories, and additional references to other existing plans and ordinances.

Action: Mr. Asousa made a motion, seconded by Mr. Broadbelt, to recommend approval of the Zoning Text Amendment to the Board of Supervisors. The motion carried unanimously **(6-0)**

- b. Map Amendment to add three parcels at 310 Lancaster Avenue (42-4-309, 42-4-310.2, and 42-4-310) to the existing MF-30 Overlay District. The site is currently zoned FC (Frontage Commercial) and is improved with an existing boat dealership and repair facility.

Lou Colagreco, attorney for the applicant explained the timeline, stating that this is not the first time the applicant has been present to discuss this matter. The applicant is proposing to build multifamily housing at 310 Lancaster Avenue (Clews and Strawbridge Property).

Mr. Bentley addressed the Planning Commission to explain his plans for his project. Currently the site at 310 Lancaster Avenue is used for boat sales and Mr. Bentley believes it is one of the eye sores on Route 30. The current business is directly up against the roadway, in Mr. Bentley's proposal he would widen the route 30 right of way to allow for a larger setback.

Mr. Bentley discussed the design of his proposal which includes gabled roofs, a setback 4th story, as well as an "old mill feel". Mr. Bentley would agree to deed restrict the property so that the only multifamily to be built would need to follow the same architectural feel. A parking garage will not be visible from route 30, and a total of 240 units are proposed. There is a historic structure located on the property, in which Mr. Bentley would renovate and restore for possibly a coffee house, or community room.

Tom Comitta, Township Planning Consultant mentioned the majority of the newer style multifamily products you see in neighboring areas do not have the roof line variation and facade articulation that are depicted in Mr. Bentley's rendering. Mr. Comitta described the renderings of Mr. Bentley's project to be notable.

Mr. Asousa asked about the size and breakdown of the proposed apartments. Mr. Bentley estimates: a studio as 400-500 sq.ft., standard 1 bedroom at 725 sq.ft., 2bedroom at 1,200 sq. ft. The unit mix will be 60% 1 bedroom (which would be a breakdown of a microstudio, a studio, and 1 bedroom) and 40% 2 bedrooms.

Mr. Laumer asked about potential train noise, Mr. Bentley is not aware that there is much noise from the train.

Mr. Bentley addressed the cost of the project stating the demolition will total around 1 million dollars. The total project cost is estimated to be around 80 million.

Mr. Asousa asked about roadway improvements and future widening. Mr. Bentley plans to widen the road in front of his potential project with the anticipation of grants in the future to help with additional frontage road improvements and ultimately improving traffic flow on route 30.

Mr. Bradley asked about the feasibility of having the building set back far enough to have the 4 drive lanes on Route 30. Mr. Bentley answered that he wouldn't build the apartments and then try to fit the road, he would follow the recommendation of the township's traffic engineer and ultimately all traffic plans would need to be approved by both PennDOT and McMahan. The plan was drawn to match the corridor study, with turning lanes and through lanes. The eastern entrance would be a right in/right out. The western entrance would be a full intersection at existing light.

Ms. Abel was a part of the route 30 corridor plan process, and she believes this project will be a good addition to helping the full route 30 plan come together. She discussed how the GMH project was a starting point to see how multifamily would start the revitalization of route 30, in her opinion the GMH

project is successful and aesthetically made an improvement to the western portion of route 30. Ms. Abel sees the need for limited amounts of multifamily housing in the right areas of the township.

There was discussion regarding the grading that will be needed and the amount of fill to be removed. The site will have multiple retaining walls at the rear of the site. Discussion included basement apartments which are set back in a step back shielded by a berm buffer.

Mr. Bentley stated the shopping strip across the street from the project site has multiple restaurants for future tenants to walk to, the owner of the shopping center is very excited about a future apartment coming.

Mr. Barner discussed how the route 30 corridor is very much a daytime area, many stores and restaurants are closed at night.

Mr. Bradley: Is strongly opposed to the amendment and believes the best use for the route 30 corridor is commercial development. He does not believe residential development should be on Route 30 and does not think a zoning change should be made to remedy an eyesore property. Mr. Bradley is worried about potential stormwater issues on the property. Mr. Bradley thinks multifamily buildings will change the character of route 30.

Mr. Broadbelt: Is in support of the Amendment and believes there is a long-term vision. The long-term vision of the township was to make route 30 more of a community and walkable for residents. Mr. Broadbelt thinks the residential plan is a great use of the property and other mentioned uses like a car dealership would not be an ideal use for the property, as it would not help create a vibrant frontage commercial district. Mr. Broadbelt does not think there will be any issue with stormwater. The current site is not managing stormwater whatsoever and is mostly impervious surface, the proposed plan will manage stormwater, creating less runoff.

Ms. Abel: Believes in the Route 30 Corridor plan, and strongly supports the amendment. Ms. Abel helped work on the Route 30 Corridor plan and noted that it was worked on and discussed at length for years. The planning process included multiple public interactions with residents, politicians, and business owners, all who were in support at that time. Ms. Abel believes the overlay will help to revitalize the corridor.

Mr. Asousa: Is in favor of the amendment. He believes we need revitalization rather than the eyesore Route 30 is now. Mr. Asousa strongly believes additional multifamily apartments will help improve Route 30 and with grant funding, private investments, and public investment traffic upgrades will be made to help alleviate through traffic.

Mr. Laumer: Is in support and in favor of the amendment. He noted that with future land development on the site proposed stormwater will be managed whereas it is not managed now and most of the site is currently blacktop. Mr. Laumer also noted there is not a stream on the property, it is a spring. Mr. Laumer stated that stormwater runoff can only be helped by this development as it will be managed, where it is now currently unmanaged.

Mr. Wrabley: Is in favor of the amendment and project. Mr. Wrabley stated everyone hopes for the improvement of Route 30, however hope is not a plan. To have Route 30 operate as a main street,

people need to be there. Mr. Wrabley likes the design and architecture of the proposed development. Mr. Wrabley believes development in this area will help spur needed commercial development and help support the existing complementary commercial development.

Mr. Comitta offered to the Commission that in his over 50 years of experience every night of the week these discussions take place. It would be useful in the long term to think about (zoning changes) and evaluate the following:

1. Growth: 2030/2040 population projections. Will East Whiteland see growth and what are the metrics to determine how much additional housing and services will be needed for future growth?
2. Studies: as it relates to the townships existing plans a studies
3. Balance: where to build and where not to build. Where is the logical place to build?
4. Transformations: Is there an area that is “under performing”
5. Historical Resource Protection
6. Traffic and Streetscape: widening of roads and improvements to create connections and promote walkability.
7. Aesthetics: Roof line variations and architecture of the product
8. Trade up or Trade Down: Is the plan being proposed a trade up or trade down than what is existing?

Action: Mr. Asousa made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wrabley, to recommend approval of the Zoning Map Amendment to the Board of Supervisors. The motion carried **(5-1)** Mr. Bradley opposed the motion.

Public Comment:

Kristy Stevens: Ms. Stevens is concerned about future traffic since current traffic is so bad. Ms. Stevens was involved in the route 30 corridor study planning and understands the vision but is worried about the additional cars on route 30. Ms. Stevens is worried about the potential impact on the school district. Ms. Stevens does believe Mr. Bentleys building is nice compared to others she has seen.

Jenny Ruddy (emailed comment): I strongly urge the planning commission not to recommend refining of the above properly. Enough apartments already.

Letters of Support:

4. [Greenways, Trails, Recreation Program \(GRTP\) Grant for Bacton Hill Park Phase II](#) – Application to the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) for funding to construct new ADA walking trails, installation of inclusive sensory play area, and planting of landscaping, buffering, and a native meadow.

Action: Mr. Bradley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wrabley, to recommend Ms. Abel sign on behalf of the Planning Commission in support of the application to DCED for funding for Bacton Hill Park. The motion carried unanimously **(6-0)**

~ Next Meeting ~

Wednesday – June 28, 2023