

PROFESSIONAL LAND PLANNER

**E. VAN RIEKER, AICP**

215 OLD CHURCH ROAD - NORTH WALES - PENNSYLVANIA 19454

PHONE: 215-699-4070

FAX: 215-699-0294

E-MAIL: vanplan@verizon.net

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF  
CERTIFIED PLANNERS

PLANNER-IN-CHARGE PENNSYLVANIA  
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNER - NJ

VIA E-MAIL

March 6, 2019

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission  
FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant  
RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – March 12, 2019

---

Regular Session – 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of Minutes

2. Review current zoning hearing board applications:

1. ZHB #2183-19                    1002 Skippack, LLC                    Use, Parking, Front Yard  
(1002 Skippack Pike)

*Comment:*

- *This Appeal consists of multiple requests driven by the Proposal to change the existing Non-conforming Use (Gaya Restaurant) to a funeral home.*
- *The operation of a funeral home suggests a consideration that may not have been a concern of the prior operation:*
  - (1) *A potential problem is the necessity for adequate off-street parking and stacking room for cars lined up for the funeral procession to off-site destinations.*
  - (2) *Because of the parking and circulation impacts it is suggested that Jim Blanch and the Engineering Department give very careful consideration to the proposed layout illustrated on the Zoning Plan for 1002 Skippack Pike.*
- *Improvement to both internal green space and perimeter buffering along the parking lot should be encouraged.*
- *There are two road frontage considerations:*

- (1) *The Skippack Pike frontage includes (unused) paved surfaces within the ultimate right-of-way that were formerly used for access and/or parking. The area within the right-of-way should be cleaned up and enhanced by the removal of the surplus paved surfaces in order to beautify the streetscape and prevent unintended use for additional parking.*
- (2) *Vehicular access to Valley Road should be discouraged and limited to only loading and utility service.*
- *My experience has been that funeral homes are generally very stable types of uses where the buildings and the grounds are well maintained*

2. ZHB #2184-19

D'Argento Lago, LLC  
(1150 Wentz Road)

## Density

**Comment:**

- *The subject site is approximately 4.23 acres improved with a farmhouse and large barn structure. The property is zoned R-7 Residential. The Proposal would be to develop the site using a single cul-de-sac from Wentz Road and then implementing “cluster development” which would yield 13 lots and result in approximately 50% of the site remaining as permanent open space.*
- *I support “cluster development” particularly where large contiguous areas of open space can be permanently preserved in a qualitative manner.*
- *Basically, the issue seems to be whether the permanent preservation of open space justifies an increase of 3 dwelling units – from 10 lots to 13 lots for an approximate 30% increase to the number of lots otherwise allowed.*

3. ZHB #2185-19

Eric & Dawn Farno  
(11 Whitpain Drive)

### Side Yard, Lot Width

### *Comment:*

*This is a residential application and typically the Planning Commission remains neutral unless the proposal has a community wide effect.*

4 ZHB #2186-19

Family Dining, Inc.  
(1760 Swede Road)

## Signage

**Comment:**

- *These two menu boards and ordering stations are customarily accessory to a drive-thru restaurant. The relevant issues of signage impact would be:*

- (1) *These signs are internal to the Commercial District and generally do not appear that they would be viewed from adjoining properties including Swede Road, which is approximately 220 ft. from the proposed sign locations.*
- (2) *The menu boards are less than 6 ft. in height and are clearly designed to serve motoring customers, i.e. there does not appear to be a commercial advertising impact from these signs.*
- (3) *I note that the sign screens appear to be Samsung LED style sign faces. A suggested condition would be that the screen illumination should be extinguished when the Burger King is not opened.*

### 3. Review pertinent planning issues.

cc: Jim Blanch Greg Monte John O'Hara  
Kent Conway Joe Habboush Roman Pronzak  
Ken Corti Otis Hightower Richard Shorin  
Joseph Fay Cathy McGowan William McManus  
Kurt Zintner John Miller Jen Gallagher  
Amee S. Farrell (applicants attorney)