

PROFESSIONAL LAND PLANNER

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PLANNER-IN-CHARGE PENNSYLVANIA
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNER - NJ

VIA E-MAIL

May 8, 2019

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission 

FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant

RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – May 14, 2019

Regular Session – 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Review of Conditional Use application (#CU40-19) and Land Development application for Normandy Farms Estates (LD-2-19). This application involves the construction of 4 carriage homes on approximately 101.08 acres of property located at 9000 Twin Silo Drive, which is located off of Morris Road between DeKalb Pike and North Wales Road.

Comments:

- First, it should be noted that three applications on this agenda seek a Conditional Use approval. It should be noted that a Conditional Use is a permitted use. However, in this instance the governing body has determined that a particular use has the potential to need additional standards. Under a Conditional Use, conditions may be imposed for the protection of certain facets of the public interest which are deemed worthy of protection. Typically, these conditions are born out of an analysis of the proposed plans or the specificity of the characteristics of a particular property.
- The Conditional Use permits the imposing of such conditions as are necessary to make the use compatible with other uses permitted in the same zone. In this instance, the general use of a retirement community is permitted when approved as a Conditional Use by the Board of Supervisors. At the inception of this development a conditional use was previously issued and has as been may be needed modified over time based on specific changes or modifications requested of or by the applicant.
- The current proposal reflects the addition of four cottage units as part of the Normandy Farms Retirement Community. These units basically require no additional internal infrastructure but do require a very minor modification to the green area identified along the perimeter of the property. The green area is reduced by 0.5% but exceeds the minimum requirement for a retirement community of which is 75%.

- It is noted that a secondary driveway is proposed to Township Line Road which in the overall scheme of things makes sense given the expansion of the residential community in the westerly portion of the site.
3. Review of a Land Development Application for 1 & 11 Skippack Pike (LD-3-19). This application involves the construction of a 7,425 square ft. building on approximately 0.88 acres of property located at 1 & 11 Skippack Pike, which is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Skippack Pike and Butler Pike.

Comments:

- The record plan should be updated to acknowledge the Zoning Hearing Board Decision #2190-19.
 - The integrity of the access from Skippack Pike, the approved driveway condition into the subject property and the shared parking feature permitting 54 parking spaces on the property located at 25 Skippack Pike to be shared with the restaurant proposed at 1 & 11 Skippack Pike should be identified on the plan using durable cross easements subject to the review and approval of the Township Solicitor.
 - The planting schedule should refer to the tree planting and staking detail and the shrub planting detail provided at sheet #13 of 13.
4. Review of a Conditional Use application for 652 DeKalb Pike (#CU39-19). This application involves the construction of 31 single-family attached homes on approximately 15.76 acres of property located at 652 DeKalb Pike, which is located on the east side of DeKalb Pike between Skippack Pike and Morris Road.

Comments:

- This is the proposed redevelopment of the Beachcomber property proposed for 31 single-family attached homes (townhouses) pursuant to the R-3 B Zoning District. You may remember the R-3 B Zoning District was conferred upon the property previously when it became known that the former recreation use of the swim club had ceased.
- Applicant's engineer Holmes Cunningham Engineering in a letter dated March 25, 2019, addressed comments from the numerous Township review letters. The Holmes Cunningham letter refers to my original review letter dated February 6, 2019. It is noted that all of the prior comments have been either revised or addressed in some fashion.
- As part of the consideration for Conditional Use, I would suggest from a planning point of view the following conditions be incorporated into any decision:
 1. Limit the height of townhouses to 2 stories due to the proximity of the adjacent single-family dwellings along Crestline Drive.

2. Buffers should be planted as described and approved on the landscape plan in the early construction phases so that the adjacent residents are afforded buffering at the time of construction rather than having to wait until the construction and sale of the units is completed.
 3. Buffer planting should be guaranteed, i.e. replaced as necessary by the developer along the rear property line as may be needed.
 4. The second access to be incorporated into the plan should have a route that does not involve crossing of any floodplain and provide at least an easement that runs in favor of the proposed townhouse community relative to continued access as may be necessary.
5. Review of Conditional Use application for 1150 Wentz Road (#CU38-19). This application involves the construction of 10 single-family homes on approximately 4.23 acres of property located at 1150 Wentz Road, which is located on the east side of Wentz Road between Plowshare Road and Jolly Road.

Comments:

- Previously, a 13-lot residential subdivision was proposed for this property which would have required a variance to permit a higher density. That plan was reviewed by the Planning Commission and generally was not favorable.
- The current plan proposes 10 lots and appears to be fully compliant with density, minimum lot size, applicable yards and proposed common open-space (51.54% of the property). Access to the property is proposed via Wentz Road, which would terminate in a cul-de-sac. An adjacent stub street known as: "Silver Lake Lane" is not proposed to be extended into the property.
- Subject to acceptable sight distance along Wentz Road and adequate storm water management facilities I would recommend support for the proposal.
- A suggested condition would be that the integrity of the open-space which is a primary purpose under the cluster option be protected by a conservation easement. The quality and condition of existing vegetation should be evaluated and those trees determined of value should be protected and preserved.

6. Review current zoning hearing board applications:

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| 1. ZHB #2178 | CA Senior Living Holdings, LLC
(435 Skippack Pike) | Parking |
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Comments:

- This Appeal was reviewed at last month's Planning Commission Meeting.

2. ZHB #2193-19

AK Jolly LLC
(980 Jolly Road)

Signage

Comments:

- Of the various requests for signs, in my view, the monument signs and the 4 proposed way-finding signs are most appropriate and serve both the travelling public and visitors to the 980 Jolly Road property. I would support this part of the request.
 - There are 4 proposed building façade signs each having 96 sq.ft., two of these are for a specific tenant: "Bright View Landscapes". These raise 2 questions:
 1. Consistent with previous applications the Bright View Signs should represent a tenant who is occupying most or all of the floor space. The idea is to limit façade signs to one per building façade otherwise, the whole idea of a façade sign would in my view be compromised.
 2. The manner of illumination, if any should be identified. Typically, lighting would be either internal or backlit.
 - There are 2 additional façade signs proposed but apparently no specific tenant/occupant is known. I would not favor the grant of a variance for signs which are speculative in nature.

3. ZHB #2194-19

Ristorante Castello, Inc.
(721 Skippack Pike)

Parking

Comments:

- The parking variance reduces the requirement for Ristorante Castello and is based upon a parking analysis, which assumes existing tenant characteristics.
 - My only concern would be that some assurances should be provided that would grant the Township Zoning Officer the right to withhold future occupancy for a use that would result in an over parking condition on the property. No on-street parking nor unauthorized parking on neighboring properties should be permitted for existing or future uses associated with the three buildings at "Village Crossing at Blue Bell".

7. Review pertinent planning issues.

cc: Jim Blanch Greg Monte
Kent Conway Joe Habboush
Ken Corti Otis Hightower
Joseph Fay Cathy McGowan
Kurt Zintner John Miller
Amy Farrell Attorney for 1150 Wentz Road (CU38-19)
Joseph S. Kuhls Attorney for AK Jolly, LLC
Bernadette Kearney Attorney for Ristorante Castello