

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 2010**

A work session of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 6:45 PM at the Whitpain Township Building, 960 Wentz Road, Blue Bell, PA for the purpose of reviewing the agenda of the public meeting to be held that evening. Planning Commission members Ken Corti, Vince Philomeno, Daniel Kluger, Rick Shorin, Yongli Min, and Harry Phifer were present. Township Engineer Roman M. Pronczak, Township Planning Consultant E. Van Rieker, and Assistant Zoning Officer William McManus, and Supervisor Adam Zucker were also present. Planning Commission member Mark Clemm, Assistant Township Engineer James Blanch, and Recording Secretary Michele Alifano were absent from the meeting.

1. Zoning Hearing Board Applications.

- a. #1853-10: This application, filed by St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, is a request to allow an additional 4.65 sq. ft. sign for the Yeseung Presbyterian Church to be placed below the existing 34.6 sq. ft. Christian Science Church sign, which would increase the maximum ground sign area from 30 sq. under Section 160-191.E(1) and 34.6 sq. ft. under Zoning Hearing Board Decision No. 1727-07 to 39.2 sq. ft. at the subject property.

Mr. Rieker stated that he agrees that there is a need to control signage, and that secondary signage is typically not something that is encouraged. He added that with religious expression, he would tend to be more lenient in granting requests, although that does not necessarily mean that all proposals from religious institutions would be seen as appropriate uses. There was also some discussion about the possible need to elevate the whole sign structure if the request is approved.

Mr. Shorin indicated his concern over the differing fonts and colors on each piece of the sign, which gives an inconsistent overall appearance to the sign.

Mr. Kluger suggested that a possible solution would be to ask the tenants to redo the whole sign so that it would be in conformity, rather than just granting permission to place another sign on the existing one.

- b. #1854-10: This is a residential application to allow the addition of a 30' x 25' two car garage onto the side of the house reducing the existing nonconforming side yard from 41' to 11' and reducing the existing nonconforming aggregate side yard from 95' to 65' at the subject property.
- c. #1855-10: This application, filed by Genisys Credit Union, is a request to allow a 52 sq. ft. façade identification sign, which would increase the maximum façade sign area from 20 sq. under Section 160-191.D(2), and a 35

sq. ft. under Zoning Hearing Board Decision No. 232-73, based on a 20 foot wide store frontage at the subject property.

Mr. Shorin asked what size limitations were placed on signs for other tenants in the shopping center because the consensus was that the requested 52 sq. ft. identification sign will look over-sized in comparison. Mr. Rieker stated that the applicant was previously approved for a 35 square feet identification sign, and he advised that this request, which is already over and above that limitation, does not include the portion of the sign that identifies a 24 hour ATM machine. The 52 sq. ft. would only include the name of the credit union and its logo.

2. Pertinent Planning Issues.

Mr. Rieker asked about the status of several rezoning applications that had been recently submitted to the Township. Mr. Pronczak stated that the scheduling of public hearings would ideally be spaced out, as several controversial cases will be reviewed including the Reed's property and the Leoni property. Mr. Rieker advised that the Municipalities Planning Code allows for a decision regarding the granting of a hearing to be made by the Board of Supervisors. Also, Mr. Rieker stated in some Townships, that the Board of Supervisors has been advised by the Township Solicitor to have the Planning Commission work out all details with the applicant regarding plans for projects and any revisions, prior to scheduling a public hearing.

There was some brief discussion regarding proposed Ordinance #4-228 (Oak Lane day School), which will be formally reviewed by the Planning Commission on the March, 2010 agenda. Mr. Pronczak stated that the request for the change in zoning from "IN" Institutional to "R-5" Residential would require minimum lot size of 80,000 sq. ft. He added that the school which is currently at the location will still be operational until the end of 2010. There was some further discussion about density and intensity of various uses.

The work session adjourned at 7:30 PM, at which time the Planning Commission members left for the public meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Alifano, Recording Secretary

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 2010**

The second meeting of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission for the year 2010 was held on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at the Whitpain Township Building, 960 Wentz Road, Blue Bell, PA. Chairman Ken Corti presided with Commission members Vince Philomeno, Daniel Kluger, Rick Shorin, Yongli Min, and Harry Phifer present. Township Engineer Roman M. Pronczak, Township Planning Consultant E. Van Rieker, and Assistant Zoning Officer William McManus, and Adam Zucker were also present. Planning Commission member Mark Clemm, Assistant Township Engineer James Blanch, and Recording Secretary Michele Alifano were absent.

Chairman Corti called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

1. Approval of minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Philomeno, seconded by Mr. Shorin, to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2010 meeting of the Planning Commission. The motion passed 6-0.

2. Zoning Hearing Board Applications.

- a. #1853-10. Application filed by St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church as owner of the property located at 750 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA, 19422 for variances from the terms of Article XXVI, Section 160-191.E(1) and Zoning Hearing Board Decision No. 1727-07 to allow an additional 4.65 sq. ft. sign for the Yeseung Presbyterian Church to be placed below the existing 34.6 sq. ft. Christian Science Church sign, increasing the maximum ground sign area from 30 sq. under Section 160-191.E(1) and 34.6 sq. ft. under Zoning Hearing Board Decision No. 1727-07 to 39.2 sq. ft. at the subject property. The zoning classification of the subject property is "IN" Institutional District.

Chairman Corti noted that there was no one present for the applicant.

Mr. Shorin expressed his concern regarding the overall size of the sign being at its limit, and the inconsistent format that would be created with the addition of differing fonts, colors, and sizes. He suggested that the applicant could redo the total sign, and shrink it down to the existing size.

A motion was made by Mr. Shorin, seconded by Mr. Phifer to recommend that the Zoning Hearing Board deny the subject application due to the following conditions:

1. The content of multiple fonts, colors, and general appearance of the sign being distracting.
2. A variance may set a precedent for future applicants for multiple signs on a sign post.

The motion passed 6-0.

- b. #1854-10. Application filed by John C. & Mary M. Martin as owners of the property located at 1327 Lee Road, Blue Bell, PA, 19422 for variances from the terms of Article V, Section 160-17 and Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 to allow the addition of a 30' x 25' two car garage onto the side of the house reducing the existing nonconforming side yard from 41' to 11' and reducing the existing nonconforming aggregate side yard from 95' to 65' at the subject property. The zoning classification of the subject property is "R1" Residence District.

Chairman Corti noted that the applicant was not present. There were no comments or questions regarding this application, and Chairman Corti stated that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on residential applications.

A motion was made by Mr. Philomeno, seconded by Mr. Min, to remain neutral on the subject application. The motion passed 6-0.

- c. #1855-10. Application filed by Genisys Credit Union as tenant of the property located at 1510 DeKalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA, 19422 for variances from the terms of Article XXVI, Section 160-191.D(2) and Zoning Hearing Board Decision No. 232-73 to allow a 52 sq. ft. façade identification sign increasing the maximum façade sign area from 20 sq. ft. under Section 160-191.D(2) and a 35 sq. ft. under Zoning Hearing Board Decision No. 232-73 based on a 20 foot wide store frontage at the subject property. The zoning classification of the subject property is "C" Commercial District.

Chairman Corti noted that the applicant was not present.

Mr. Philomeno commented that the maximum sign area of 35 sq. ft. is sufficient, and that to allow the 52 sq. ft. requested would be excessive.

Mr. Shorin stated that by allowing this request, the sign would appear inconsistent and out of place with the signs from adjacent stores.

A motion was made by Mr. Kluger, seconded by Mr. Shorin to

recommend that the Zoning Hearing Board deny the subject application due to the following concerns:

1. The applicant failed to demonstrate a legitimate hardship.
2. The maximum façade sign area of 35 sq. ft. as per Zoning Hearing Board Decision #232-73, are more than adequate.

The motion passed 6-0.

3. Pertinent Planning Issues

Mr. Pronczak informed the Planning Commission of the electronic newsletter, as well as the Twitter site, that the Township now utilizes to keep the public informed, and he stated that it was extremely helpful in advising residents of the progress of the Public Works Department in their efforts to clear the roads during the recent snowstorms. Mr. Pronczak also stated that there was a link on the Township website which could be used to sign up for the email newsletter.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Mr.Philomeno, and seconded by Mr.Phifer to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Shorin, Secretary