

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 2017

A work session of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at 7:00 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. Chairman Kenneth Corti, presided with Commission members Bradley Tate, Richard Shorin, Cathy McGowan, and Alternate members Kent Conway and John O'Hara. Township Planning Consultant E. Van Rieker, Township Engineer James E. Blanch, P.E., Assistant Zoning Officer William McManus and Recording Secretary Gregory Monte were also present. Planning Commission Members Penny Gerber, Otis Hightower and Joe Habboush were absent.

1. Review current zoning hearing board applications.

1. **NO. 2113-17: CHARLES GIAMO** proposes to construct an addition onto the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 855 Valley Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and requests a variance from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards. Applicant's requested variance, if granted, will allow the single-family dwelling to project into the property's side yard, resulting in one side yard measuring 39 feet wide, and an aggregate width of 86 feet for both side yards on the property. The Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width and two side yards having an aggregate width of not less than 100 feet.

The Planning Commission commented that they felt the application was benign.

2. **NO. 2114-17: FRED L. AND JESSICA A. MASSANOVA** propose to construct an addition onto the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 1285 Perri Place, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and request a variance from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards. Applicants' requested variance, if granted, will allow the single-family dwelling to project into the property's side yard, resulting in one side yard measuring 38 feet wide, and an aggregate width of 93 feet for both side yards on the property. The Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width and two side yards having an aggregate width of not less than 100 feet.

The Planning Commission commented that they felt that the addition was rather large, but is consistent with work completed on other properties in the neighborhood.

3. **NO. 2115-17: ABP INVESTMENTS, INC.** proposes to construct five (5) row houses on property located at 300-302 W. Maple Avenue, Ambler, PA 19002 in the Township's R-4 Village Preservation District and requests the following variances in connection therewith: (1) a variance from the definition of "front yard" contained in Article II, Section 160-7.B in order to measure the front yard

setback from the legal right-of-way line where the Ordinance requires the front yard to be measured from the ultimate right-of-way line; (2) a variance from the definition of “lot area” contained in Article II, Section 160-7.B in order to include the area within the ultimate right-of-way in the lot area calculation where the Ordinance excludes such area from the calculation; (3) a variance from Article XI, Section 160-56.A to permit the 3 interior row house lots to be less than the minimum lot area required and exceed the maximum building coverage permitted, and to permit all 5 proposed lots to have a front yard setback of 1 foot and a rear yard setback of 14 feet where the Ordinance requires a minimum of 10 feet and 35 feet, respectively; (4) a variance from Article XXVII, Section 160-192 to provide 1 parking space per dwelling unit where the Ordinance requires 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit and to provide all such parking on one of the proposed lots; (5) a variance from Article XXVII, Section 160-197 to permit parking within the ultimate right-of-way line of Oak Street where the Ordinance requires such parking to be setback a minimum of 5 feet from the ultimate right-of-way line; and (6) a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-214.C.(1) to permit the green area for the 3 interior row house lots to be less than the 50% minimum required by the Ordinance.

The Planning Commission raised concerns regarding the density of the property in relation to the number of units proposed, which is 5. They also had a concern regarding the applicant’s proposal of have 1 parking space per unit. The Planning Commission commented that they would like the applicant to reduce the maximum number of units proposed to four (4). Additionally, they would like the applicant to have a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces per unit.

Mr. Blanch noted that the applicant will need to perform stormwater management on the property as part of the application, when it reaches the land development/subdivision phase.

NO. 2116-17: STEPHEN AND KATHERINE JACKSON propose to construct an addition onto the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 901 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township’s R-1 Residential District and requests a variance from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards. Applicants’ requested variance, if granted, will allow the single-family dwelling to project into the property’s side yard, resulting in a side yard measuring 9.4 feet wide. The property is a corner lot and the Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width. In Decision Nos. 795-90 and 1555-04, the Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board previously granted a variance related to the property to permit a side yard measuring 11.83 feet wide.

The Planning Commission commented that they felt that the addition was rather large.

4. **NO. 2117-17: JOHN AND DIANA MILLER** propose to construct a deck onto the side of the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 877 Crestline Drive, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and requests the following variances in connection therewith: (1) variances from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards; (2) a variance from Article V, Section 160-21 requiring accessory structures to be located in the rear yard only; and (2) variances from Article V, Section 160-19 relating to rear yards for single-family dwellings and Article XXVIII, Section 160-204.C relating to residential rear yard intrusions. Applicants' requested variances, if granted, will allow the proposed deck to project into the property's side yard, resulting in one side yard measuring 36 feet wide, and an aggregate width of 64 feet for both side yards on the property where the Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width and two side yards having an aggregate width of not less than 100 feet. The requested variances, if granted, will also allow the proposed deck to project into the property's rear yard, resulting in a rear yard depth of 43 feet, where the Ordinance requires a minimum rear yard of 75 feet and limits permitted rear yard intrusions to less than 25% of the depth of the minimum rear yard setback for the applicable zoning district.

The Planning Commission commented that they felt the application was benign.

5. **NO. 2118-17: JEFFREY S. BILL AND ROBERT LOWE, SR.** request that the Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board permit the continuation of a non-conforming use or, in the alternative, a change from one non-conforming use to another at property located at 301 W. Maple Ave, Ambler, PA 19002 in the Township's R-4 Village Preservation District pursuant to Article XXIX, Sections 160-221, 160-223 and 160-224 of the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance. The Applicants propose to use the property for the storage and repair of trucks owned and used by Applicant, Jeffrey S. Bill's landscaping business. The Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board previously granted permission to use the property for a non-conforming use in Decision No. 776-90.

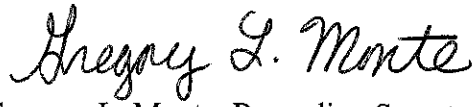
Mr. McManus provided a brief background of the application noting that this a new application from ZHB application #2110-17 which was heard at the April 12, 2017 Planning Commission meeting. He noted that last month the applicant asked for a variance that was denied at the Zoning Hearing Board and now they are appealing the determination of the Code Enforcement Officer.

2. Review of pertinent planning issues.

Mr. Blanch announced that a Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 17th at 5:30pm at the Township Building.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gregory L. Monte". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gregory L. Monte, Recording Secretary

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MAY 2017

The fourth meeting of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission for the year 2017 was held on Tuesday May 9, 2017 at the Whitpain Township Building, 960 Wentz Road, Blue Bell, PA. Chairman Kenneth Corti, presided with Commission members Bradley Tate, Richard Shorin, Cathy McGowan, and Alternate members Kent Conway and John O'Hara. Township Planning Consultant E. Van Rieker, Township Engineer James E. Blanch, P.E., Assistant Zoning Officer William McManus and Recording Secretary Gregory Monte were also present. Planning Commission Members Penny Gerber, Otis Hightower and Joe Habboush were absent.

Chairman Corti called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM. The members of the Planning Commission and Township Staff introduced themselves to the public that were present.

1. Approval of minutes.

Chairman Corti called for any comments or questions on the April meeting minutes from the audience. There being none, Mr. Shorin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tate, to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2017 meeting of the Planning Commission. The motion passed 4-0.

2. Review current zoning hearing board applications.

1. **NO. 2113-17: CHARLES GIAMO** proposes to construct an addition onto the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 855 Valley Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and requests a variance from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards. Applicant's requested variance, if granted, will allow the single-family dwelling to project into the property's side yard, resulting in one side yard measuring 39 feet wide, and an aggregate width of 86 feet for both side yards on the property. The Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width and two side yards having an aggregate width of not less than 100 feet.

Chairman Corti noted for the record that the applicant was not present for the meeting.

Mr. Shorin commented that the proposed addition is consistent with work completed on other properties in the neighborhood.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications.

The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application. The Planning Commission commented that the proposed addition is consistent with work completed on other properties in the neighborhood.

2. **NO. 2114-17: FRED L. AND JESSICA A. MASSANOVA** propose to construct an addition onto the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 1285 Perri Place, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and request a variance from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards. Applicants' requested variance, if granted, will allow the single-family dwelling to project into the property's side yard, resulting in one side yard measuring 38 feet wide, and an aggregate width of 93 feet for both side yards on the property. The Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width and two side yards having an aggregate width of not less than 100 feet.

Present for the Applicant: Fred & Jessica Massanova, Applicants

Mr. Shorin commented that he had a concern with the size of the addition. He asked the applicants if they have spoken to their neighbors. Mr. Massanova responded that they have. He mentioned that the entire exterior of the house will be completely rehabbed.

Mr. Shorin suggested that the applicant place some landscaping on the property to soften the look of the addition.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications.

The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application. The Planning suggested that the applicant place some landscaping on the property to soften the look of the addition.

3. **NO. 2115-17: ABP INVESTMENTS, INC.** proposes to construct five (5) row houses on property located at 300-302 W. Maple Avenue, Ambler, PA 19002 in the Township's R-4 Village Preservation District and requests the following variances in connection therewith: (1) a variance from the definition of "front yard" contained in Article II, Section 160-7.B in order to measure the front yard setback from the legal right-of-way line where the Ordinance requires the front yard to be measured from the ultimate right-of-way line; (2) a variance from the definition of "lot area" contained in Article II, Section 160-7.B in order to include the area within the ultimate right-of-way in the lot area calculation where the Ordinance excludes such area from the calculation; (3) a variance from Article XI, Section 160-56.A to permit the 3 interior row house lots to be less than the minimum lot area required and exceed the maximum building coverage permitted,

and to permit all 5 proposed lots to have a front yard setback of 1 foot and a rear yard setback of 14 feet where the Ordinance requires a minimum of 10 feet and 35 feet, respectively; (4) a variance from Article XXVII, Section 160-192 to provide 1 parking space per dwelling unit where the Ordinance requires 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit and to provide all such parking on one of the proposed lots; (5) a variance from Article XXVII, Section 160-197 to permit parking within the ultimate right-of-way line of Oak Street where the Ordinance requires such parking to be setback a minimum of 5 feet from the ultimate right-of-way line; and (6) a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-214.C.(1) to permit the green area for the 3 interior row house lots to be less than the 50% minimum required by the Ordinance.

Present for the Applicant: Arthur B. Herling, III, Applicant
Jason Smeland, P.E., Lenape Valley Engineering

Mr. Herling provided a brief background of the requested relief stating that he is proposing to redevelop the property located at 300 W. Maple Avenue. He noted that the property is currently a 6-unit non-conforming mixed use property consisting of (5) five residential dwellings and (1) one commercial shop for the storage of heating and cooling equipment and the cutting and bending of sheet metal. Mr. Herling commented that the property has no onsite parking and the current building is in very poor condition. He mentioned that his proposal is to discontinue the commercial use and redevelop the existing (5) five residential units into new housing, which would each have a front and rear entrance as well as a front porch, which he explained would fit in with the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Herling added that each new unit would have (1) one parking space. He commented that the new homes will raise property values and felt that they will be an asset to the community and be supportive of the West Ambler Revitalization Plan and Streetscape Project. Mr. Herling showed the Planning Commission a series of exhibits and architectural renderings of the proposed housing.

Mr. Tate asked if the applicant would consider splitting up the units to provide more space for parking in between the units. Mr. Herling responded that it would be customary to have parking in the alley way being that most of the homes have parking access from the alley way.

Mr. Shorin asked what is the current square footage of the existing building. Mr. Herling responded that the building is approximately 3600 square feet. Mr. Shorin asked what the square footage of the proposed dwellings will be. Mr. Herling responded that it is about double, with each unit being approximately 1300 square feet.

Mr. Shorin asked if the third floor of the units will be occupied. Mr. Herling responded that his architect is still working on the design, but possibly there could only be decorative dormers on the exterior of the third floor.

Mr. McManus asked for clarification regarding the amount of green area on the property. Mr. Smeland responded that the green area is 44.4%.

Mr. Rieker commented that the Township likes to encourage redevelopment and rebuilding in West Ambler. He suggested that the applicant limit the number of units to 4 being that the proposed density on the property exceeds the zoning ordinance. Mr. Rieker also noted that the applicant should provide a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces per unit.

Audience Comments

Dorian Hatchell, 203 Oak Street – Ms. Hatchell asked if this meeting is where she can raise her concerns regarding safety, transportation, and hours of construction. Chairman Corti responded that this meeting is to discuss the setbacks, parking and green area in terms of ZHB application. Mr. Tate suggested that Ms. Hatchell attend the Zoning Hearing Board meeting on May 18th to express her concerns.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications.

The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application. The Planning Commission commented that they would like the applicant to reduce the maximum number of units proposed to four (4). Additionally, they would like the applicant to have a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces per unit. The Planning Commission appreciated that the applicant is improving the neighborhood and saving a mature tree on the existing property.

4. **NO. 2116-17: STEPHEN AND KATHERINE JACKSON** propose to construct an addition onto the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 901 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and requests a variance from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and a variance from Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards. Applicants' requested variance, if granted, will allow the single-family dwelling to project into the property's side yard, resulting in a side yard measuring 9.4 feet wide. The property is a corner lot and the Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width. In Decision Nos. 795-90 and 1555-04, the Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board previously granted a variance related to the property to permit a side yard measuring 11.83 feet wide.

Chairman Corti noted for the record that the applicant was not present for the meeting.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications.

The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application. The Planning Commission commented that they felt the addition was rather large.

5. **NO. 2117-17: JOHN AND DIANA MILLER** propose to construct a deck onto the side of the existing single-family dwelling on property located at 877 Crestline Drive, Blue Bell, PA 19422 in the Township's R-1 Residential District and requests the following variances in connection therewith: (1) variances from Article V, Section 160-17 relating to side yards for single-family dwellings and Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 relating to projections into side yards; (2) a variance from Article V, Section 160-21 requiring accessory structures to be located in the rear yard only; and (2) variances from Article V, Section 160-19 relating to rear yards for single-family dwellings and Article XXVIII, Section 160-204.C relating to residential rear yard intrusions. Applicants' requested variances, if granted, will allow the proposed deck to project into the property's side yard, resulting in one side yard measuring 36 feet wide, and an aggregate width of 64 feet for both side yards on the property where the Ordinance requires a minimum side yard of 45 feet in width and two side yards having an aggregate width of not less than 100 feet. The requested variances, if granted, will also allow the proposed deck to project into the property's rear yard, resulting in a rear yard depth of 43 feet, where the Ordinance requires a minimum rear yard of 75 feet and limits permitted rear yard intrusions to less than 25% of the depth of the minimum rear yard setback for the applicable zoning district.

Present for the Applicant: Diana Miller, Applicant

Chairman Corti asked if the applicant has spoken to their neighbors. Ms. Miller responded that they have, but asked if they should bring something in writing to the Zoning Hearing Board meeting. Chairman Corti responded yes.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications.

The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application. The Planning Commission suggested that the applicant obtain their neighbors' approval in writing to bring to the Zoning Hearing Board meeting on May 18th.

6. **NO. 2118-17: JEFFREY S. BILL AND ROBERT LOWE, SR.** request that the Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board permit the continuation of a non-conforming use or, in the alternative, a change from one non-conforming use to

another at property located at 301 W. Maple Ave, Ambler, PA 19002 in the Township's R-4 Village Preservation District pursuant to Article XXIX, Sections 160-221, 160-223 and 160-224 of the Whitpain Township Zoning Ordinance. The Applicants propose to use the property for the storage and repair of trucks owned and used by Applicant, Jeffrey S. Bill's landscaping business. The Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board previously granted permission to use the property for a non-conforming use in Decision No. 776-90.

Chairman Corti noted for the record that the applicant was not present for the meeting.

Chairman Corti called for any additional comments or questions from the audience. There were none.

Chairman Corti mentioned that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications.


The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application. The Planning Commission noted that they have the same concerns that were mentioned at the April 12th Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission had a concern of the impact on the adjacent neighborhood. The concerns include the impact that the trucks would have on Maple Avenue, Oak Street, and Railroad Avenue, including noise and fumes. Additionally, they were concerned with safety in terms of the adjacent TOT park and neighborhood. If the variance were to be approved, it is requested that there be property screening around the entire perimeter of the property.

3. Review Pertinent Planning Issues

Chairman Corti announced that a Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 17th at 5:30pm at the Township Building.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Mr. Tate, and seconded by Ms. McGowan to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Shorin, Secretary