

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 2022**

A hybrid work session of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 6:30 PM as a video conference using *Zoom* video technology for the purpose of reviewing the agenda of the public meeting to be held that evening. Chair Kenneth Corti presided in person with Planning Commission members attending virtually that included Vice Chair Richard Shorin, Secretary Cathy McGowan, Joe Habboush, John O'Hara, Kurt Zintner (in person), John Miller, and Alternate members Peter Krecher, Lewis Silver, Township Engineer James E. Blanch, P.E. (in person), Assistant Code Enforcement Officer Travis DeCaro, Township Planning Consultant Rick Collier (in person), IT Director Nicole Leininger (in person) and Recording Secretary Jennifer L. Gallagher were also present virtually. Planning Commission member Joseph Fay was absent.

1. Approval of the minutes

There were no comments or questions on the February meeting minutes.

2. Review current Zoning Hearing Board cases:

- a. **NO. 2308-21 – ALLIANCE PARTNERS HSP, LLC** requests variances from Article XVIII, Sections 160-111(F), subsections (2), (3) and (4), related to Use Regulations with respect to their property located at 795 Jolly Rd., Blue Bell, PA, in the Township's R-E Research and Engineering District. Applicant's requested relief, if granted, will allow Applicants to construct research lab buildings on the property which will have storage areas greater than ten percent (10%) of the building's floor area and three loading docks per building, all of which are prohibited by the Ordinance.

The Planning Commission raised concerns with the woodland buffer area near the residential homes. Vice Chair Shorin expressed concerns with the neighbors providing minimal impact with the new building; concerns included the loading docks, fumes and noise from tractor trailers, a lack of information on the proposed, removal of many trees, and stormwater management concerns due to the topography.

Secretary McGowan questioned if the property is located in a R-1 district or if it is zoned research & development. Chair Corti noted it's in the R-E Research Engineering Zoning District. Mr. Blanch further explained a portion is zoned R-1. Secretary McGowan questioned if they are requesting a variance with this type of building. Mr. Collier explained except that it has too much warehousing uses to conform to the 10 percent allowable and the loading docks are not permitted in the RE Research Engineering District.

Chair Corti questioned if a traffic impact study has been completed. Mr. Blanch replied that no study has been completed for this parcel.

Mr. Krecher commented that with the current market place they need loading docks to make it marketable.

NO. 2310-22 – DANIEL GEIB. - requests variances from Article XII, Section 160-61.B related to Area Regulations and Article XXVIII, Section 160-202 related to Residential Projections into Front Yards with respect to his property located at 1301 Walton Rd., Blue Bell, PA, in the Township's R-5 Residential District. Applicant's requested relief, if granted,

will allow Applicant to construct a 20' by 24' one story addition onto his residence which will project into the front yard when the Ordinance prohibits same and will reduce the minimum front yard setback to 23.3 feet when the Ordinance requires a minimum of 75 feet.

Vice Chair Shorin and Mr. Habboush agreed the property is unusual with it turned on its side, but with proper screening it is acceptable.

Mr. Collier questioned if the addition requires stormwater management. Mr. Blanch replied no stormwater management is required unless additional impervious is added in the future.

- b. **NO. 2311-22 – CHRIS AND JENNA RHOADS** – request variances from Article VII, Section 160-34 related to Side Yards for One Family Detached Dwellings, Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 related to Residential Projections into Side Yards and Article XXIX, Section 160-225.B related to Extension of Non-Conforming Use with respect to their property located at 6 Meade Rd., Blue Bell, PA, in the Township's R-2 Residential District. Applicants' requested relief, if granted, will allow Applicants to construct a 782 square foot, two story addition onto their residence which will reduce the minimum side yard width to 7'8" when the Ordinance requires a minimum of 25 feet and will reduce the aggregate side yards to 38' 5½" when the Ordinance requires a minimum of 60 feet in the aggregate.

Vice Chair Shorin noted the existing property is set back seven to eight feet and other local property owner have made similar improvements. Mr. Collier explained they are stepping the addition in another 10 or 11 inches so it is less of an encroachment into the side yard than the existing house.

Mr. Blanch noted stormwater management is not required for the proposed improvements.

3. Review pertinent planning issues.

Chair Corti announced the closure of Morris Road is going to be closed March 14, 2022 until April 1, 2022. Jim noted that the closure is on the east side of the intersection.

Chair Corti discussed the replacement bridge over the Wissahickon located in Lower Gwynedd with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Collier mentioned Land Concepts has been asked to look into noise and lighting in residential areas to come up with different standards because of light passing into individual yards.

The work session adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer L. Gallagher, Recording Secretary

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 2022**

The third hybrid meeting of the Whitpain Township Planning Commission for the year 2022 was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, as a video conference using *Zoom* video technology. Chair Kenneth Corti presided in person with Planning Commission members attending virtually that included Vice Chair Richard Shorin, Secretary Cathy McGowan, Joe Habboush, John O’Hara, Kurt Zintner (in person), John Miller, and Alternate members Peter Kreher and Lewis Silver, Township Engineer James E. Blanch, P.E. (in person), Assistant Code Enforcement Officer Travis DeCaro, Township Planning Consultant Rick Collier (in person), IT Director Nicole Leininger (in person) and Recording Secretary Jennifer L. Gallagher were also present virtually. Planning Commission member Joseph Fay was absent.

1. Approval of Minutes

Chair Corti called for any comments or questions on the February 8, 2022, meeting minutes from the Planning Commission, Township Staff or the audience. There being none, Vice Chair Shorin made a motion, seconded by Mr. O’Hara to approve the minutes for the February 8, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission. Chair Corti made a formal roll call vote Vice Chair Shorin, aye; Secretary McGowan, aye; Mr. O’Hara, aye; Mr. Habboush; aye, Mr. Zintner; aye, Mr. Miller; aye, and Chair Corti also voted to pass this motion. The motion passed 7-0.

2. Review current Zoning Hearing Board cases:

During the Regular Session, Chair Corti reordered the ZHB applications that were heard, discussed, and reviewed in the following order.

- a. **NO. 2310-22 – DANIEL GEIB.** - requests variances from Article XII, Section 160-61.B related to Area Regulations and Article XXVIII, Section 160-202 related to Residential Projections into Front Yards with respect to his property located at 1301 Walton Rd., Blue Bell, PA, in the Township’s R-5 Residential District. Applicant’s requested relief, if granted, will allow Applicant to construct a 20’ by 24’ one story addition onto his residence which will project into the front yard when the Ordinance prohibits same and will reduce the minimum front yard setback to 23.3 feet when the Ordinance requires a minimum of 75 feet.

Present for the Applicant: Daniel Geib, Homeowner

Chair Corti noted the property has two front yards and he had no major objections or issues with the Zoning Hearing Board application. Chair Corti explained that there is no stormwater management requirement based on the size of the improvements.

Vice Chair Shorin and Mr. Collier commented that additional hedges could be added to fill in any gaps along the backyard.

Chair Corti stated that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications. The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application.

- b. **NO. 2311-22 – CHRIS AND JENNA RHOADS** - request variances from Article VII, Section 160-34 related to Side Yards for One Family Detached Dwellings, Article XXVIII, Section 160-203 related to Residential Projections into Side Yards and Article XXIX, Section 160-225.B related to Extension of Non-Conforming Use with respect to their property located at 6 Meade Rd., Blue Bell, PA, in the Township’s R-2 Residential District. Applicants’ requested relief, if granted, will allow Applicants to construct a 782 square foot, two story addition onto their residence which will reduce the minimum side yard width to 7’8” when the Ordinance requires a minimum of 25 feet and will reduce the aggregate side yards to 38’ 5½” when the Ordinance requires a minimum of 60 feet in the aggregate.

Present for the Applicant: Chris Rhoads, Homeowner

Mr. Collier recommended some landscaping to soften the visual changes between the immediate neighbor.

Chair Corti stated that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications. The Planning Commission chose to remain neutral on the subject application.

- c. **NO. 2308-21 – ALLIANCE PARTNERS HSP, LLC** requests variances from Article XVIII, Sections 160-111(F), subsections (2), (3) and (4), related to Use Regulations with respect to their property located at 795 Jolly Rd., Blue Bell, PA, in the Township’s R-E Research and Engineering District. Applicant’s requested relief, if granted, will allow Applicants to construct research lab buildings on the property which will have storage areas greater than ten percent (10%) of the building’s floor area and three loading docks per building, all of which are prohibited by the Ordinance.

Present for the Applicant: Rob Lewis, Kaplin Stewart
Max Ryan, Owner
Shawn Muntz, Engineer

Following the presentation and overview of this Application given by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Ryan, Mr. Kreher questioned the current zoning rules limits the applicant to 10 percent of the face as storage and warehouse and that is what the applicant is seeking a waiver for. Mr. Lewis explained they are seeking variance to allow storage to exceed that amount. Tenants with Life Science may occupy 40 – 50 percent of their space with storage and the remainder would be lab or office space usage. Mr. Kreher questioned if you are granted the variance would there be any limits in the amount of space. Mr. Lewis explained the plan at the Zoning Hearing Board they would request the tenant to use only 40 – 50 percent of the square footage. Mr. Lewis expressed the difficulty of finding a tenant for parcel D. There are interested Life Science companies, but once they realize additional variances will be needed for the facilities, they begin looking at other townships where they may obtain approvals. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Lewis agreed that the tenant would be aware of time restrictions to prohibit overnight delivery.

Vice Chair Shorin expressed concerns on the circulation of the building and questioned if there was a way to avoid the trucks going to the back area of the building. Vice Chair Shorin mentioned the roadways near the facility may need to be widened. Mr. Lewis mentioned that

truckers may need to utilize Township Line Road and Union Meeting Road and/or Skippack Pike and Union Meeting Road. Mr. O'Hara expressed that there is a wide-open parking lot facing the berm and it seems that this is the only way the trucks may access the buildings. Mr. Lewis explained they can bring the trucks in from any of the drive aisles. Mr. O'Hara expressed the large berm may block the view, but it seems the building is in the wrong orientation. Mr. Lewis clarified that Mr. O'Hara would like to see the open end towards the residents, and the bottom L shape towards the residents. Mr. O'Hara and Vice Chair Shorin agreed.

Mr. O'Hara questioned what happens to the wildlife when you take out a large tree area. Mr. Collier explained any time you disrupt the woodland area you lose habitat which is an issue.

Chair Corti followed up with concerns on where stormwater management will be located.. Chair Corti questioned if they are considering removing the roadbed and restoring woodland area. Mr. Lewis replied they are not proposing a connection on this plan. Mr. Ryan explained if appropriate the road could be removed.

Mr. Muntz explained the infiltration basin and rain garden is proposed on the plans and it would comply with township requirements.

Secretary McGowan questioned the R-1 area and what is intended in this area. Mr. Lewis noted the intent on the plans is not to use the 5-acre area. Secretary McGowan questioned if they could show the vacant land on the plan. Vice Chair Shorin mentioned the area should be used for emergency access or a walking area.

Chair Corti stated that typically the Planning Commission remains neutral on Zoning Hearing Board applications. The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Chair Corti expressed that the information provided is incomplete and preliminary for the Planning Commission to make recommendations. Vice Chair Shorin noted that they may not be able to make recommendations but may express concerns to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Habboush mentioned the delivering time should be restricted to no overnight deliveries.

The Planning Commission raised many concerns from the Land Concepts review letter from March 3, 2022 addressing the amount of storage space and not to exceed 40 – 50% of the total floor area, no public vehicular access to or from Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike, future traffic impact study, no overnight deliveries, location and type of stormwater management for the large amount of impervious cover, looking at ways to enhance and mitigate the impact to the woodland and more detail about the proposed berm. The Planning Commission recommended the Applicant consider rotating the building 180 degrees to reduce traffic impacts closest to the residential area.

3. Review pertinent planning issues.

It was mentioned that there will be a temporary roadway closure on the east side of the Morris Road and DeKalb Pike intersection for about 3 weeks to complete concrete paving as part of the 202 Widening Project.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Vice Chair Shorin, and seconded by Mr. Zintner, to adjourn. Chair Corti made a formal roll call vote: Vice Chair Shorin, aye;

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Secretary Cathy McGowan, aye; Joe Habboush, aye; John O'Hara, aye; Kurt Zintner, aye; John Miller, aye; and Chair Corti also voted to pass this motion. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy McGowan, Secretary