

PROFESSIONAL LAND PLANNER

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF  
CERTIFIED PLANNERS

PLANNER-IN-CHARGE PENNSYLVANIA  
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNER - NJ

VIA E-MAIL

September 4, 2019

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission 

FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant

RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – September 10, 2019

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Regular Session – 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Review of a Land Development/Subdivision Application for 652 DeKalb Pike (Beachcomber Property) (LD-1-19 & S-1-19). 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 application has been reviewed on numerous occasions and most recently has been the subject of the Planning Commission Agenda July 9, 2019. One of the outcomes of the July meeting was that the Planning Commission encouraged applicant's representatives to meet with neighbors along Crestline Drive in an effort to resolve neighbors' concerns regarding landscaping, fencing and the design of emergency access from the Beachcomber Development now known as Creekside at Blue Bell. It is my understanding that there has been a meeting and the results of those items, which are mutually acceptable to both sides, should be incorporated into the Land Development as appropriate.*
- *In addition, Conditional Use Approval is required as a prerequisite to the consideration of the subject land development plan. At the time of this writing a decision has not been rendered by the Board of Supervisors. However, in the event the Conditional Use is approved then all those conditions included as part of the Conditional Use decision should be incorporated into the Plan. From a planning point of view the comments contained in my memos dated July 19, July 8 and June 19, 2019 should be considered as the Plans are finalized. My memo of July 19, which came after July Whitpain Planning Commission is attached for ready reference.*

3. Review Current Zoning Hearing Board Applications:

1. ZHB #2206-19	Hung Sik & Somie Min (1139-1353 Township Line Road)	Shared Parking
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*Comments:*

- *This Appeal is related to ZHB #2207-19 (below). This part of the application deals with relief on the Asian themed strip retail center with frontage along Township Line Road. The center wishes to undergo a redesign but is however deficient in parking in part due to land previously condemned by the PA Department of Transportation in connection with the proposed Route 202 widening.*
- *The Application below is similar in facts generated by a need for the Asian themed strip retail center. The facts are complex and the Shopping Center below (The Shops at Blue Bell) which is anchored by the Giant Food Store has also been the subject of previous decisions of the Zoning Hearing Board.*
- *Any granted approval should include the requirement for the submission of a land development plan to be reviewed by Township Engineering Department.*

2. ZHB #2207-19	Regency Blue Bell, LP (1750 DeKalb Pike)	Shared Parking & Green Space
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*Comments:*

- *See above.*

3. ZHB #2208-19	DelRay Blue Bell Inc. (1750 DeKalb Pike, Spaces 1 & 2)	Outside Display & Storage
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*Comments:*

- *This Appeal basically is to allow a proposed True Value Hardware (Store No. 1 and 2 - See Site Plan Exhibit of 1760 DeKalb Pike)*
- *The request for outdoor storage and sales is always a point of contention since it impacts upon both pedestrian circulation and if it goes that far parking spaces and vehicular circulation. In my view in order to comment further more detail is necessary.*

4. ZHB #2209-19	Vania & Alex Vartanian (1616 Winchester Drive)	Home Use Occupation - Dog Sitting
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*Comments:*

- *This request is very similar to ZHB #2201-19 which had requested a Home Occupation described as "Personal Private Specialized Canine Care". The same concerns raised for that Appeal apply to the subject such as:*

- *Is this proposal akin to a veterinary use?*
- *Primary concerns have to do with noise, sanitary impacts and whether or not grooming will be a service provided by the homeowner.*
- *It is suggested that any approval should be limited to a maximum of one animal at a time.*
- *Applicant has raised the argument that the proposed use qualifies as a “no-impact home-based business”. In order to qualify under this category the use must involve no customer, client or patient traffic ... in excess of those normally associated with residential use. In addition, the activity must comply with Section 160-213. Please note at Subsection G that “The business activity shall be conducted only within the dwelling..”*

5. ZHB #2210-19      Carina Seidel & Ian Carney-Jones      Side & Rear Yard  
(1658 Larchwood Drive)

**Comment:**

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

6. ZHB #2211-19      Signant Health  
(785 Arbor Way)      Building Signage

**Comments:**

- *The proposed sign is relatively small at 25 sf and is proposed basically along the midpoint of the height of the façade wall a short distance from the main courtyard entrance.*
- *It could be said that the Proposal is akin to a wayfinding sign and because of that would appear appropriate given this context.*

4. 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 Jen Gallagher  
Kurt Zintner John Miller

## Van Rieker

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**From:** Van Rieker <vanplan@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 19, 2019 11:11 AM  
**To:** 'Jim Blanch'; 'Roman Pronczak'  
**Cc:** Vanplan  
**Subject:** Beachcomber/ Letter from Bob Brandt

Jim and Roman,

The planning comments contained in my memo to Jim dated June 19 along with a brief follow up memo to the Planning Commission dated July 8, 2019 enumerate my general planning review comments of the plan so far.

In looking over the 4-page memo from the Crestline Drive neighbors, many of these points are already captured in the various staff and consultant review letters or are better answered by others.

However, there are a few additional comments raised by questions that I can help with:

1. General Question #8. The immediate buffer along the Crestline lots boundary based upon Landscape Plan, Sheet number 22 of 27 will be fortified with a mix of 76 evergreen trees to be planted at a height of 7' to 8', plus 101 shrubs in concentrated massings to help fill in the understory of the landscape buffer area.
2. Privacy Question #2. A fence is normally used where there is insufficient space to plant an acceptable buffer. For me, an 8-foot high fence seems like a harsh alternative to the more natural landscape buffer approach.
3. Questions relating to the Emergency Access #3. It is my understanding that the Beachcomber Applicants do not own the 55 plus community. In addition an Emergency Access in that direction would also require crossing the floodplain. A better option would be in a direction that is not constrained by the floodplain Area.

Please contact me with questions,

VAN  
E. Van Rieker, AICP