

**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MARCH 12, 2019**

Attendees: Sherri Glantz Patchen, Patrick Doran, Vince Manuele, Peter Cornog, Bob Dambman, Scott Quitel, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Krista Heinrich, Township Engineer, T&M Associates

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Manuele

2. Announcements & Correspondence

**Announcements:** None

**Correspondence:** None

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Dambman moved to approve the minutes as written from the February 26, 2019 meeting; seconded by Ms. Patchen. Vote 4-0 (Mr. Doran abstained, was not present at that meeting; Mr. Quitel not present for vote)

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals: None

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:

- SLD#04-19: Whitmarsh Township Authority, 2015 Joshua Road, Lafayette Hill, PA; Land Development Waiver; 2,620 sq.ft. Office Building. Michael Clarke, Esq., Authority Solicitor and Alex Glassman, Esq. from Rudolph Clark, LLC were present representing the applicant along with Tim Ferris, Authority Chairman; Brent Wagner, Executive Director; Kyle Detweiler, Finance Director; Allen Mason, P.E., Authority Engineer with Carroll Engineering Corp.; Chris Peterson, Project Manager; and Phil Rodgers, Architect with Lenhardt Rodgers Architecture & Interiors. The applicant is proposing to construct a 2,620-sq.ft. office building for their use at this location; they currently rent office space at 462 Germantown Pike. Mr. Clarke explained that the Authority would like to build instead of renting for cost effectiveness and for security concerns at the current location (though there have been no incidents). An approximate budget of \$750,000 is anticipated. The Township Engineer has recommended approval of the Waiver conditioned upon the applicant obtaining an Earth Disturbance Permit at which time stormwater management will be looked at. Mr. Clarke commented that no variances are needed for this project; the development meets all zoning requirements. Mr. Peterson described the layout of the building. Public Comment: Linda Doll, Fairway Road, asked for an explanation of what the Land Development Waiver was for; and wanted to know how much more impervious ground coverage was being added for parking and if it would affect stormwater runoff (Krista explained this is a sketch plan and stormwater will be reviewed once they submit calculations and more detailed plans with the Earth Disturbance Permit). Ms. Patchen motioned to recommend approval of the request for Land Development Waiver subject to the applicant obtaining an earth disturbance permit; seconded by Mr. Cornog. Vote 6-0
- SLD#01-19: Ashford Wealth Advisors, 15 E. Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA; Land Development Waiver; Renovate and Expand Existing Building (approximate 800-sq.ft., 2-story addition) and make improvements to the parking facilities. Jim Bannon, Civil Engineer with Nave Newell was present along with RoseMarie Soto, Business Manager with Ashford Wealth Advisors. The applicant is proposing to renovate and expand the existing building (vacant for about 20 years) with the addition in the rear, and make improvements to the parking area on the adjacent lot at 5 E. Germantown Pike, which is also owned by the applicant, to serve both lots. 5 E. Germantown lot is approximately 0.4-acre and 15 E. Germantown lot is approximately 0.1-acre, The applicant had preliminary discussions with HARB and has agreed to work with the Shade Tree Commission and Arborist in regards to the removal of trees on the property as well as getting zoning relief and obtaining an earth disturbance permit. Whether the two lots will be combined or kept separate will be determined by the applicant's land use attorney. The Township Engineer has recommended approval of the Waiver conditioned upon the applicant obtaining an Earth Disturbance Permit. Planning Commission members raised concerns about the proposed replacement of the front porch (originally

recommended by HARB); extent of tree removal and replacement; very prominent location within the historic district Public Comment: Eli Glick, 7 Whitefield Drive and Sydelle Zove, Harts Ridge Road both spoke. Their comments and concerns included urging the planning commission to not recommend granting the waiver until they are shown the entire picture; commented the Shade Tree Commission is thinking about changing the ordinance to where the township will receive cash in lieu of tree replacement; significant stormwater runoff and ponding; would like to thank the owner for purchasing the property and renovating it; this is a significant property located adjacent to several National Registered properties and feel this deserves a holistic review; HARB looks at details, but there are bigger issues; the Planning Commission should have a say on the variances that are needed; and feels this should come back as a combined preliminary and final or in multiple steps. Based upon questions by the applicant, Mr. Guttenplan explained that if this were required to go through land development, that preliminary and final phases could be combined. Mr. Quitel made a motion to recommend against granting the waiver; seconded by Mr. Dambman. Vote 6-0

- SLD#09-18: 601 Washington Street Associates, LP, 601 Washington Street, Conshohocken, PA; Sketch Plan; 270 Unit Residential Apartment Complex. Ed Campbell, Esq. was present representing the applicant; also present: Rick Roseberry, Maser Consulting (Engineer); Kevin Kyle, MLP Ventures (developer); and Rich Carroll, JKRP (architect). The applicant is proposing a 270-unit apartment complex supported by 476 parking spaces, less than half of which will be underneath the two wings of the building. The building will be podium construction which means the building will be elevated due to the property being located in the floodplain with all dwelling units above the floodplain. Reviews from the Township Engineer; Fire Marshal; Zoning Officer; and Montgomery County Planning Commission were received by the applicant. After discussions regarding need for native vegetation along the river/habitat; how the public is going to access the riverfront; building design and aesthetics (fortress-like due to compact footprint); Washington Street streetscape; environmental studies conducted; and extensive discussion of the applicant's responses to the Montgomery County Planning Commission's comments; the Planning Commission recommended using the Riverfront Plan as a starting point and "then get creative." Public Comment: Sydelle Zove, Harts Ridge Road, had concerns about the unfettered public access to the river; the environmental analysis of the existing building materials on-site and the appropriate disposal of the materials; agrees with the parking location and supports the variance for front yard parking; and concerned with fire safety and hopes the Fire Marshal weighs in early in the planning process. Mr. Campbell commented that they will provide more detail on the type of pollution on the hotspot identified in the environmental studies and the unit counts. The next step will be to evaluate the reviews from a zoning standpoint, make an application to the Zoning Hearing Board and presumes they will be back in front of the Planning Commission before going to the Zoning Hearing Board and hopes his client will be able to present a more detailed description of what the riverfront amenities will be like, and possibly come back with another sketch.

6. Conditional Use Applications: None

7. Old Business:

- Status update for posting Planning Commission documents on the website. There has been extensive conversation and it was determined that it is not practical to put all the information on the website. The documents are kept in Township files and will be made available to the public through Right-to-know Requests.
- Status update to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Guttenplan is expecting the final draft this week and it will be sent out to all the review agents. Once we get all the review comments back it will come back to the Planning Commission with all the comments and the consultant for a public meeting. It will be up to the Planning Commission as to what recommendation is made at that point. If recommended for adoption, it will then go to the Board of Supervisors for Public Hearing.

8. New Business:

9. Public Comment:

- Sydelle Zove, Harts Ridge Road, spoke of her experiences with right-to-know requests; feels we can do better on the website with information. Spoke with Montgomery County Planning Commission and they will be moving to a much more transparent system with their reviews and feels the Township can do just as well. Ms. Zove also suggested putting on the website on the SLD page, a message that the Township files contain far more information than is provided on the website and that with a right-to-know request the information will be available to view and the page should include a link to the right-to-know form.
- Eli Glick, 7 Whitefield Drive, questioned when the meeting minutes will be posted on the website since 14 E. Germantown Pike will be on the Zoning Hearing Board agenda the next day. He was advised as protocol when a Zoning Hearing Board application comes to the Planning Commission for review the Zoning Hearing Board is provided a memo with what the Planning Commission's discussion and vote was. He also disagrees with the new paragraph on the minutes; and also feels the public should be able to see any information submitted to the Planning Commission on the website.
- Linda Doll, Fairway Road, questioned the decision that handouts would not be included in the minutes (she thought handouts were to be included); in response it was explained how the availability of handouts will be referred to in the minutes.

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning, existing land use, and various land use and zoning applications in Whitemarsh Township. No formal decisions are rendered by the Planning Commission. Formal decisions are rendered by the Board of Supervisors or Zoning Hearing Board, as prescribed by law, based on the type of application.

All written or graphic material that is presented to the Planning Commission at a public meeting shall be kept in Township files and is subject to examination under the PA Right-to-know Law.