

**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING JANUARY 9, 2018**

Attendees: Peter Cornog, Robert Dambman, Patrick Doran, Vince Manuele, Sherri Glantz Patchen, Scott Quitel, Dave Shula, Amy Grossman (BOS Liaison), Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Jim Sullivan, Township Engineer, T&M Associates

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Patchen
2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair: Motion by Mr. Shula, second by Mr. Cornog to elect Vince Manuele as Chair. Motion by Mr. Manuele, second by Mr. Cornog to elect Dave Shula as Vice-Chair. Votes for both officers were unanimous.
3. Announcements & Correspondence
  - Announcements**
    - Introduction of new members. After the introductions, Mr. Dambman and Mr. Doran provided short personal backgrounds and explained their interest in being on the Planning Commission.
  - Correspondence**
    - None
4. Approval of Minutes:
  - Ms. Patchen requested a minor correction with reference to her position on SLD #01-15, VFW at Fort Washington, LTD. Mr. Cornog moved to approve the meeting minutes from November 28, 2017 with Ms. Patchen's correction, seconded by Ms. Patchen. Vote 4-0-3 (Mr. Quitel, Mr. Doran and Mr. Dambman abstained).
5. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals:
  - None
6. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:
  - SLD#07-17 Jose and Lisa Ramos, 7001 & 7033 Sheaff Lane, Fort Washington, PA; Minor Subdivision / Lot Line Adjustment. Jared Lowman, Landscape Architect, Nave Newell, Inc. was present representing the applicants. The applicants were also in attendance. The applicants' existing lot as shown on the submitted plan, is just over 4 acres to which they are seeking to add an adjacent lot of approximately 3.4 acres. It was noted that the applicants also own an adjacent lot of approximately 2 acres, contained in the same deed as their 4+-acre lot that was not correctly identified as theirs on the plan. The 3.4-acre lot would be subdivided off of 'The Highlands' which is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A letter was submitted from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission authorizing the submission of the subdivision application and outlining the subsequent steps involved at the state level. In response to some questions, the applicants explained that they own the solar panels shown on the 3.4-acre lot and were not originally aware that they were on the state's land until the state had a survey done. The applicant will comply with all comments from the Township Engineer and Zoning Officer review letters. Mr. Lowman went over the waivers requested and all were recommended for approval with the exception of showing a density calculation which is not applicable, and showing floodplains and floodplain soils which was not approved. The waiver request for showing existing features within 500ft. of the property was changed to a partial waiver conditioned upon the inclusion of an aerial photograph in the plan set. It was also noted that while a waiver from a fee in lieu of land to be dedicated for park and recreation use is needed, the Commission does not typically make a recommendation on such fee waivers. Mr. Shula moved to recommend granting approval of the plan

with the requested waivers as amended above, subject to the correction of the plan to add the additional area owned by the applicants and filing a deed of consolidation to include all of the resultant Ramos' land; seconded by Ms. Patchen. Vote 7-0

- SLD#01-14 Whitmarsh Station, 5130 & 5136 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting; Zoning Text Amendment, Amending Section 116-33.C. and Adding New Section 116-85.3.E., a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment prepared by Paone Builders in collaboration with the Township. Mr. Guttenplan explained Paone Builders initially proposed an ordinance to require an 8-foot rear yard setback for decks attached to zero-lot-line homes built in the AD District (in the 'Whitmarsh Station' subdivision). The initial amendment was in response to several variance requests for deck encroachments in this development. At the September 12, 2017 Planning Commission meeting, it was recommended that the amendment be authorized for a public hearing. The Board of Supervisors authorized the hearing at their September 28, 2017 meeting but raised concern that in the case where there is an oversized rear yard, even with the 8-foot setback, a large deck that covered most of the rear yard, could be built. The amendment has therefore been modified to restrict the size of any deck to a maximum of 500 square feet. The entirety of Section 116-33.C. of the Zoning Ordinance is also proposed to be amended; this is the section that deals generally with projections of decks, patios, etc. into the various setbacks. Section 116-33.C.(1) needed to be amended to cross-reference the new Section 116-85.3.E. in the AD Attached Dwelling District for the zero-lot-line decks. Rather than just do that, it was decided to simplify the entire Section 116-33.C. which has caused continuous confusion and was already on the list of 'housekeeping' amendments. Changes and suggestions were discussed and approved by the Planning Commission. Ms. Patchen made a motion to recommend approval of the ordinance with Section 116-85.3 modified to include at the beginning, a reference to 'unenclosed' patio and porch and then to also add as allowable things that can be erected, a terrace, stoop, platform, or landing place, and adding a 12ft height restriction; seconded by Mr. Cornog. Vote 7-0

7. Conditional Use Applications: None

8. Old Business: None

9. New Business: None

10. Public Comment: None

11. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 8:13PM.

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 Whitmarsh 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.