



# Whitemarsh TOWNSHIP

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## BOARD of SUPERVISORS

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Richard L. Mellor, Jr.  
Township Manager

June 13, 2019

The Board of Supervisors has had an opportunity to review the matter of the zoning change that was included in the housekeeping amendment adopted in October 2018. Housekeeping amendments occur every few years in an effort to make changes allowing for more clarity to definitions, consistency to zoning districts as well as general updates to the Zoning Code.

The parcels along Butler Pike and Skippack Pike were zoned VC-4 in 2013, which included many of the uses from the other Village Commercial Districts (VC-1, 2 and 3). In order to create consistency with the other VC Zoning Districts, the housekeeping amendment added the same 11 conditional uses to the VC-4 District that were already permitted in the other VC Districts. Because the uses were added to the ordinance after the ordinance was recommended for approval by the Township Planning Commission, the Township Solicitor was consulted and advised that the ordinance was not legally required to go back to the Township Planning Commission to review these uses in conjunction with the overall amendment. The Board of Supervisors was not made aware the complete ordinance did not go back to the Township Planning Commission for review.

The final version of the housekeeping amendment, which included the new uses in the VC-4 zoning district, was sent to the County Planning Commission, which had no comment, and to the Law Library for public inspection. It was also advertised twice in the Times Herald newspaper in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and made available at the Township Building for public review. The public hearing for the housekeeping amendment was held on October 25, 2018. The Board approved the amendment in its entirety at that meeting.

The Board and staff recognize that, while the process followed complied with law, there are improvements that can be made going forward. Those include sending all ordinance changes back to the Township Planning Commission, even if not required by law. All substantive changes to the Zoning Code will not be referred to as 'housekeeping' but rather Zoning Code Amendments. Also, prior to the advertisement of a public hearing, the Board will review Zoning Amendments as a discussion item at a public meeting to provide additional opportunity for public engagement.

It is important to the Board that we continue to find more ways to engage the public above the legal requirements. Whether it is at a Township Planning Commission meeting, Board of Supervisors meeting or providing a written comment, we want the public involved in the process. That said, we have instructed staff and the Township Solicitor to draft a new ordinance removing the 11 conditional uses from the VC-4 Zoning District and to send that ordinance back to the Township Planning Commission for its review and comment.

We, as a Board, appreciate all the public comments related to this matter and we will continue to listen to any issue pertaining to Whitemarsh Township.

*Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors*

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