

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 6, 2024**

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chairman Philip Wert; Vice Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Members Daniel Horman, Cody Rhoads, Kacie Rodriguez, and Jennifer Bressler; Zoning Officer and Code Department Manager Chad Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Member Zanna Leiendecker was unable to attend.

Visitors

Steve Ware, Derck & Edson, LLC

Kendel Baier, Derck & Edson, LLC (via Zoom)

Chairman Philip Wert called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. noting that review of a zoning appeal application for 400 Walnut Street has been postponed until next month as requested by the applicant.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the February 7, 2024 minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Rhoads.
Motion carried.

New Business

- a. **Downtown Zoning District Permitted Use Discussion** – Review continued of the table provided by Derck & Edson, LLC of existing and proposed uses by zoning district beginning at Accessory Uses. Mr. Ware shared an updated regulating plan that removed building frontages from the Tulpehocken Avenue and Court Street area near the traffic circle. Another revision to the regulating plan included Eighth Avenue, across from the existing grocery store, that is an access way devoid of any frontages. Also, facades have been wrapped around the corners, extending 30' onto the side streets. Mr. Ware requested feedback on renaming the proposed "Eastern Gateway" frontage to avoid confusion with the new Gateway District.

Ms. Rodriguez shared her thoughts on the undesirable use of games of skill, noting issues experienced in Philadelphia. Mr. Moyer noted existing stringent regulations that pertain to amusement rooms and the need to clarify these regulations for enforcement purposes.

The following zoning district uses were reviewed with Mr. Ware:

1	TABLE OF USES/ Existing Uses	Existing Zoning Districts & Allowable Uses							Proposed Uses	Proposed Zoning Districts & Allowable Uses									Comments	
2	Orange Cells highlight uses to be simplified and merged with others	Central Business	General Business Overlay	General Business	Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment Overlay	Light Industrial	Institutional	Residential/ Professional	Proposed Changes	<div><div>P</div> Permitted Use</div> <div><div>C</div> Conditional Use</div> <div><div>SE</div> Special Exception Use</div> <div><div>X</div> Prohibited Use</div> <div>Use Removed</div>	Retail Frontage Overlay	Office Frontage Overlay	Central Business	General Business Overlay	General Business	Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment Overlay	Light Industrial	Gateway	Residential/ Professional	
90	(2) Industrial operations involving the production, packaging, fabrication, processing, assembly, manufacture, compounding and bottling of foods, goods and materials, provided that all such activities shall be carried on within a building, shall be permitted in the Light Industrial District portion of any redevelopment site, but not within any portion of the redevelopment site located in any other underlying district.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Industrial operations involving the production, packaging, fabrication, processing, assembly, manufacture, compounding and bottling of foods, goods and materials, provided that all such activities shall be carried on within a building, shall be permitted in the Light Industrial District portion of any redevelopment site, but not within any portion of the redevelopment site located in any other underlying district.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	The recommendations for items 90 through 99 were found to be acceptable.
91	Academic clinical research centers subject to the condition of 455-125	X	X	X	X	X	C	X		Academic clinical research centers subject to	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	X	
92	A. Research, experimental, or testing laboratories.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Research, experimental, or testing laboratories.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	C	X	
93	B. Manufacturing or assembling from prepared materials of the following: musical instruments, clocks or watches, toys or novelties, electrical appliances, electronic devices, light sheet- metal products, machine tools and machinery not requiring the use of a punch press over 100 tons rated capacity or drop hammer, or office equipment.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Manufacturing or assembling from prepared materials of the following: musical instruments, clocks or watches, toys or novelties, electrical appliances, electronic devices, light sheet- metal products, machine tools and machinery not requiring the use of a punch press over 100 tons rated capacity or drop hammer, or office equipment.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
94	C. Manufacturing, compounding, processing, or packaging of food and food products and cosmetics, toiletries, and pharmaceuticals, not including fish and meat products, vinegar, yeast, and rendering or refining of fats and oil.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Manufacturing, compounding, processing, or packaging of food and food products and cosmetics, toiletries, and pharmaceuticals, not including fish and meat products, vinegar, yeast, and rendering or refining of fats and oil.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
95	D. Manufacturing, compounding, or assembling of articles using the following prepared materials: bone or shell, cellophane, fur, glass, leather, plastics, precious or semiprecious metals or stones, rubber, textiles, or cloth products; tobacco, and wood or wood products.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Manufacturing, compounding, or assembling of articles using the following prepared materials: bone or shell, cellophane, fur, glass, leather, plastics, precious or semiprecious metals or stones, rubber, textiles, or cloth products; tobacco, and wood or wood products.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	

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96	E. Light metal processing such as metal machining, finishing, grinding, and polishing; metal stamping and extrusion of small products (such as costume jewelry and kitchen utensils); and the manufacture of light metal products, tools, and hardware (such as hand tools, bolts, and nuts).	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Light metal processing such as metal machining, finishing, grinding, and polishing; metal stamping and extrusion of small products (such as costume jewelry and kitchen utensils); and the manufacture of light metal products, tools, and hardware (such as hand tools, bolts, and nuts).	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
97	M. Accessory buildings, structures, and uses on the same lot and customarily incidental to the permitted uses, including dwellings used as a residence for caretakers, watchmen, or custodians and their immediate families, and retail sales of products manufactured on the premises or at other locations by the owner of the premises or the owner's tenants of the premises or portion(s) thereof.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	Accessory buildings, structures, and uses on the same lot and customarily incidental to the permitted uses, including dwellings used as a residence for caretakers, watchmen, or custodians and their immediate families, and retail sales of products manufactured on the premises or at other locations by the owner of the premises or the owner's tenants of the premises or portion(s) thereof.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
98	O. Shop of a carpenter, electrician, metal worker, cabinet maker, upholsterer, plumber, mason, painter, home builder, heating contractor or similar skilled tradesman. [Added 7-16-2019 by Ord. No. 1113]	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Shop of a carpenter, electrician, metal worker, cabinet maker, upholsterer, plumber, mason, painter, home builder, heating contractor or similar skilled tradesman. [Added 7-16-2019 by Ord. No. 1113]	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
99	P. Wholesale businesses, trucking terminals, warehousing and distributing of manufactured foods, goods and materials, except bulk storage of chemicals, petroleum products and other flammable, explosive, or noxious materials not to exceed 25,000 square feet of warehouse space, excluding any bathroom facilities. [Added 7-16-2019 by Ord. No. 1113]	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Wholesale businesses, trucking terminals, warehousing and distributing of manufactured foods, goods and materials, except bulk storage of chemicals, petroleum products and other flammable, explosive, or noxious materials not to exceed 25,000 square feet of warehouse space, excluding any bathroom facilities. [Added 7-16-2019 by Ord. No. 1113]	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
100	Accessory Dwelling Units								Add definition to further define	Accessory Dwelling Units	X	X	P	X	P	X	X	X	P	Mr. Ware noted that this is not currently addressed in the existing code. Information will be provided next month to nicely incorporate this use. Mr. Moyer noted a number of recent requests to create an in-law type suite for their children.

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102 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USES									LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USES											
103	Artisan Production - The production of small-scale art, craft, baked goods, prepared and packaged foods for consumption off-site and similar products produced and/or sold on the premises, including but not limited to arts and crafts, micro-breweries, musical instrument makers, toy makers, and custom furniture makers. Artisan Production does not include industrial-scale mass production.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Consider allowing small low impact uses	A. The production of small-scale art, craft, baked goods, prepared and packaged foods for consumption off-site and similar products produced and/or sold on the premises, including but not limited to arts and crafts, micro-breweries, musical instrument makers, toy makers, and custom furniture makers. Artisan Production does not include industrial-scale mass production.	X	X	P	X	P	X	P	P	X	Artisan Production was recommended to be incorporated into the ordinance.
104	A. Wholesale businesses, warehouses, trucking terminals, and similar non-processing storage and distribution uses, except bulk storage of chemicals, petroleum products and other flammable, explosive, or noxious materials.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X	Consider making LI uses permitted by right	Wholesale businesses, warehouses, trucking terminals, and similar non-processing storage and distribution uses, except bulk storage of chemicals, petroleum products and other flammable, explosive, or noxious materials.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	It was recommended to keep this as a Conditional Use to address items such as flow of traffic, etc.
105	B. Commercial laundries.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Commercial laundries.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	Mr. Moyer indicated that this is a duplication already covered under item 73.
106	I. Mining or mineral extraction.	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X		Mining or mineral extraction.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
107	C. Vocational and trade schools involving operations of a light industrial nature.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X	Institutional use - should be allowed in I district	Vocational and trade schools involving operations of a light industrial nature.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	It was recommended to allow as a Conditional Use in both Institutional and Light Industrial Districts.
108	D. Public utility installations.	X	X	X	X	C	X	C		Public utility installations.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	C	It was recommended to allow as a Conditional Use in the Light Industrial and Residential Professional Districts.
109	E. Railroad rights-of-way terminals, repair yards, and related facilities.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Railroad rights-of-way terminals, repair	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
110	F. Manufacturing of ceramic products and building materials using only previously pulverized clay and kilns fired by electricity or gas.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Manufacturing of ceramic products and building materials using only previously pulverized clay and kilns fired by electricity or gas.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
111	G. Building material sales yards, including the sales of rock, sand, and gravel as an incidental part of the main business, and contractor's equipment storage yards and plants.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Building material sales yards, including the sales of rock, sand, and gravel as an incidental part of the main business, and contractor's equipment storage yards and plants.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	

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112	H. Motor vehicle, trailer, or mobile home, farm equipment, and marine sales and service; motor vehicle manufacturing or assembling, including farm equipment, but not including salvage.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X	Consider making LI uses permitted by right	Motor vehicle, trailer, or mobile home, farm equipment, and marine sales and service; motor vehicle manufacturing or assembling, including farm equipment, but not including salvage.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	The feasible Light Industrial use items 110 through 118 were thought to be best permitted via Conditional Use to regulate items such as flow of traffic in these areas that are in close proximity to residential uses.
113	I. Manufacturing and sales of precast concrete products, stone cutting, and monument manufacturing and sales and the manufacturing and sales of soap and sodium compounds.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Manufacturing and sales of precast concrete products, stone cutting, and monument manufacturing and sales and the manufacturing and sales of soap and sodium compounds.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
114	J. All uses permitted in this district where outdoor storage of materials and/or outdoor commercial motor vehicle parking are provided.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		All uses permitted in this district where outdoor storage of materials and/or outdoor commercial motor vehicle parking are provided.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
115	M. Self-storage facilities.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Self-storage facilities.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
116	N. Kennels.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Kennels.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
117	O. Pet day care or pet play-care establishments.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Pet day care or pet play-care establishments.	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
118	Q. Growers/processors for medical marijuana subject to the provisions of § 455-122.1A. [Added 11- 20- 2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	X	X	X	X	C	X	X		Growers/processors for medical marijuana subject to the provisions of § 455-122.1A. [Added 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	
119	A. Adult-oriented uses.	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	Institutional use - should be allowed in I district	Adult-oriented uses.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	This is a duplication of item 86.
120	B. Schools.	X	X	X	X	SE	X	C		Schools.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	C	
121	C. Hospitals, care facilities, clinics, and related residential uses.	X	X	X	X	SE	C	X		Hospitals, care facilities, clinics, and related residential uses.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
122	E. Communications towers and antennas.	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X		Communications towers and antennas.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	
123	F. Junkyards.	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X		Junkyards.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	
124	G. Places of worship, quasi-public or semipublic use and related residential uses. [Amended 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	X	X	X	X	SE	C	SE		Places of worship, quasi-public or semipublic use and related residential uses. [Amended 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	C	SE	
125	H. Halfway house.	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X		Halfway house.	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	

Mr. Moyer referred to last month's discussion on mixed use developments, questioning why these uses would not be allowed in the frontage overlays. Mr. Ware noted that the mixed-use form pertains to building type.

A review of the existing Zoning Standards versus proposed Frontage Type Standards was discussed. Mr. Ware indicated that there was very little difference between the Commercial and Eastern Gateway Standards, which have been modified. It was noted that the Commercial Standard should provide a 2-story minimum, and the Eastern Gateway Standard should provide a 1-story minimum. The Eastern Gateway Standard for façade within façade zone minimums should provide 30% for the front and 20% for the side street. Mr. Wert noted several new standard regulations that have been created through this process.

Mr. Lincoln noted that maximum lot coverages have increased from 75% to 80% in the Main Street and Main Street Transition Standards.

Mr. Lincoln inquired as to the distance between entries allowing one entry per use and requested consideration of side or dual entries, as currently exist, for the same use. Mr. Ware indicated that this would be reviewed.

Mr. Lincoln inquired as to Clear Glazing Minimum Standards that are set forth for safety and architectural purposes applying to entry doors with side lights. Mr. Ware indicated that this would be addressed separately as an entry condition.

Renaming of the Eastern Gateway Frontage Type Standard, previously referred to as the Chocolate District, was given consideration to be renamed Redevelopment.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m. by Ms. Rodriguez and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary