

March 19, 2019

West Vincent Township Planning Commission
729 St. Matthews Road
Chester Springs, PA 19425
via email to Erica Batdorf, Township Manager, ebatdorf@westvincenttwp.org

RE: KIMBERTON VILLAGE (KV) ZONING DISTRICT

Dear Planning Commission:

We submit this letter for your consideration in advance of the next meeting on March 21. This relates to the petition you received in the fall of 2018 from owners of land in the Kimberton Village (KV) Zoning District, asking that the KV Zoning District be rezoned to the R-2 Zoning (R2) Zoning District.

We signed the petition that was submitted. Our understanding was that the primary concern driving the petition is the conditional use in the KV district allowing for “two-family and multi-family residential building types,” provided that the lot is at least 5 acres and no unit is less than 20 feet wide (Section 802(B)(1) of the West Vincent Township Zoning Ordinance).

To be honest, we got caught up in the enthusiasm and the removal of the multi-family use and did not realize all the other additional uses that would be allowed here if our zoning was to change to R2. Now that we have investigated this further, we have serious concerns about changing our zoning to R2. While the R2 district does prohibit the multifamily dwelling on a 5+ acre parcel that is a conditional use in KV, it also allows a number of other uses that are not allowed in KV. We are extremely concerned that R2 opens the door to *more* potential development, as well as allowing a number of other new uses that are not allowed right now in the KV district.

Instead of changing the zoning from KV to R2, we propose an amendment of the KV district to remove the Conditional Use in question (specifically Section 802(B)(1) of the ordinance). The KV district is a special and unique zoning district that was created to maintain and promote a certain environment, resulting in this area that we all love. Once KV zoning district is gone, it is gone forever. It would be better to narrow the scope of the change to address the specific concern, rather than a wholesale change in the zoning to effect one change that would also bring about numerous unintended consequences.

It should be noted how small KV district is relative to West Vincent Township overall and most of the other zoning districts in WVT. The nature of KV district is primarily one of single-family detached homes in wooded/natural surroundings. It has a residential, neighborhood feel (the use of the term “village” is quite fitting), but with very close proximity to agricultural and farm uses. We seek to maintain the current rural-village nature and historic feel of KV district, and believe that the conditional use permitted by Section 802(B)(1) could destroy this. The KV district is small enough that a concentrated development on any of its parcels of 5 acres or more would dramatically change the feel of the area and greatly impact the adjacent property owners. There are other much larger zoning districts within WVT permitting various types of developments (e.g., Residential R-2, Residential R-3). The more commercial portions of “Kimberton Village,” as opposed to the KV district within WVT, are in

East Pikeland (Kimberton Whole Foods area). Also, as you know, WVT is a part of the Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee, along with the Townships of Schuylkill, East Pikeland, Charlestown and West Vincent. This provides for the sharing of land uses across municipal borders, such that there are many other surrounding zoning districts allowing higher density developments that are more appropriately suited for them. Among the stated purposes of this Committee are to protect unique resources of the region – of which the Kimberton Village district is one.

Finally, we understand that concerns were voiced at the last meeting about “spot zoning.” To clarify, we are not proposing any spot zoning. Spot zoning means changing the zoning of a particular parcel or parcels within a larger zoned area (like a donut hole). Spot zoning does not mean amending an existing zoning ordinance for the whole zoning district.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Regards,

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