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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311  
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311  
610-278-3722  
FAX: 610-278-3941 • TDD: 610-631-1211  
WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG

August 20, 2020

Mr. Jason Bobst, Manager  
West Norriton Township  
1630 West Marshall Street  
Jeffersonville, Pennsylvania 19403

Re: MCPC #20-0150-001  
Plan Name: Ordinance for Expiration Dates for Zoning Relief  
West Norriton Township

Dear Mr. Bobst:

We have reviewed the above-referenced zoning text amendment in accordance with Section 609 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on August 11, 2020. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

## BACKGROUND

West Norriton Township has submitted a draft text amendment for review that would amend **Chapter 27 - §27-1700 Administration** of the township zoning code to add **§27-1709 - Expiration of Conditional Uses, Special Exceptions and Variances**. The current code does not set any expiration dates for zoning relief measures approved by the governing body. The proposed new administrative section provides expiration deadlines for conditional uses, special exceptions, and variances approved by the township's Board of Commissioners and Zoning Hearing Board. These zoning relief approvals expire if the applicant fails to file a required subdivision and land development plan, or obtain a Use Permit, within twelve (12) months of the relief's approval date. The draft amendment also includes a provision whereby the governing body may grant (1) one extension for a maximum of (1) one year, if good cause for the extension is shown by the applicant and the associated zoning relief approval.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) supports the applicant's proposal without comment as we have found it to be generally consistent with other communities in both Montgomery County and the region. When compared to other municipalities that have codified expiration dates attached to grants of conditional use, special exception, or variance approvals, the applicant's proposal of a (12) month expiration date is comparable in duration. When provided in other municipality's codes, zoning relief expiration windows in the region range from six (6) months to two (2) years. Codification of relief approval with specific term expirations are important as they specify a term that can prevent future complications for governing bodies. Similarly,



unbounded or longstanding grants of relief can impede a community's vision for future development, as conditions in a community may change over time leaving the approval outside the most current vision for the community's development. We support the applicant's proposal as problems can arise when grants of zoning relief are unbound by any such controls on their expiration.

## CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal and supports the township's ongoing efforts to amend their code of ordinances to ensure that it reflects clear administrative standards, sound planning, and West Norriton's current vision for future growth.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body adopt this proposed zoning ordinance amendment, Section 609 of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that we be sent an official copy within 30 days.

Sincerely,



Michael Lowrey, Community Planner  
mlowrey@montcopa.org - 610-278-3887

c: Dan Grieser, Esq., Township Solicitor  
Bruce Shoupe, Chair, Township Planning Commission