

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, April 14, 2022, via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, THOMPSON, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, BOLE, SCHREIBER, HECKER
Excused: Commissioners CARSWELL, SPIEGELMAN, BOWMAN, VAHEY

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD OF PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Township Manager introduced Mr. Karl Lukens as the new Director of Parks of Recreation for Abington Township.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the consent agenda items and requested that the item of HGACBuy be removed, and she asked why it was not sent out for bid.

Manager Manfredi replied that Item BOC-01-041422 as listed on the consent agenda authorizes Township Administration to enter into a cooperative purchasing agreement where the Township would “piggyback” on this company’s bidding process resulting in reduced pricing for equipment for the police department’s Records and Information Center.

Mike Tobin, resident, said if the Township enters into that agreement are they always required to purchase through the consortium or can they purchase outside of that company.

Manager Manfredi replied that the Township purchases from wherever we can get the best price and there is no requirement to purchase equipment through this consortium; however, the police department performed an evaluation on specific equipment and they can get a lower price through this company.

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to approve Items a.- c. as listed under Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes of the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of March 10, 2022.

To approve a cooperative purchasing agreement with HGACBuy for equipment upgrades in the Records and Information Center.

To approve Resolution No. 22-013 authorizing the DCED Delegation of Signing Authority due to the change in chief elected officials.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-03-041422:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to approve the Minor Land Development Plan for Hollywood Tavern located at 700/710 Huntingdon Pike.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Rothman asked for further explanation on this item.

Mr. Khal Hassan, Township Engineer, explained that the applicant proposes to remove existing concrete walkway and portions of the vegetation located along the front of the building and construct an 825 sq. ft. patio for outdoor dining; additional site improvements include underground stormwater management basin; new accessible concrete walkway as well as landscaping surrounding proposed concrete patio.

Township Engineer supports the following waiver requests by the applicant:

Section 146-11. A. (4) – Property Identification Plan - A waiver is requested from requiring a Property Identification Plan that contains tract boundaries with tax parcel numbers, owner's names, and approximate acreage of lots surrounding any portion of the site for a distance of 400 feet.

Section 146-11. B. (3) – Existing Features Plan - A partial waiver is requested for the Existing Features Plan that shall contain the location of property lines and names of landowners within 400 feet of any part to be subdivided or developed.

Section 146-11. B. (7) – Existing Features – Utilities - A partial waiver is requested for the Existing Features Plan that shall contain the location, size, and ownership of all underground and above ground public or private utilities, on the site and within 400 feet of any portion of the site, including waterlines, sanitary sewer lines, storm sewer lines, electric lines, telephone lines, gas mains, fire hydrants, and streetlights.

Section 146-33. D – Drainage – Size, Shape and Type - A waiver is requested from requiring a minimum internal diameter of 15 inches and a minimum grade of 0.5% of reinforced cement concrete pipe.

Section 146-43. C. (3) (a) – Cut & Fill Slopes - A waiver is requested from requiring slopes not to be 15% or steeper.

Reviewed were traffic and access from the parking lot that is near Shady Lane, Gibson Avenue and Fox Chase Road and that location serves the site in the best way possible and no additional improvements will be needed. Any relocation of the parking lot would affect public parking on either side of Gibson Avenue and Fox Chase Road.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner DiPlacido said regarding waiver request from Section 146-11. A. (4) – Property Identification Plan, does this waiver mean that the applicant does not need to work with Township staff or the Zoning Hearing Board in sending notifications to neighbors located within 400 ft. of the site?

Mr. Hassan replied that the applicant does not need to notify the neighbors as they did not appear before the ZHB seeking any zoning relief.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

Item BOC-04-041422:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to approve a request for a waiver from the land development process for the Baederwood Shopping Center's interior retail renovations.

President Hecker called on Manager Manfredi.

Manager Manfredi noted that currently there is no provision within SALDO to waive the land development process.

Township Solicitor Clarke added that the applicant is putting up walls allocating space and they are not constructing any buildings, so it would be appropriate to grant a waiver from the land development process. Going forward, he will be working with Township staff on memorializing a waiver from the land development process within SALDO.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad commented that he has no objection to this waiver request as it is a simple partitioned wall, and he agreed that the SALDO should be changed so that a waiver from the land development process would not be required.

Commissioner Zappone clarified that permits are still needed to do this work. Is that correct?

Solicitor Clarke replied yes, permits are needed for all internal work.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

Item BOC-05-041422:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to ratify the authorization for the Solicitor to sign onto the Amici Curiae Brief of Local Governments and the Pennsylvania Municipal League in support of the City of Philadelphia's Petition for Review on behalf of the Township in the matter of Rashad Armstrong v. City of Philadelphia.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

Item BOC-06-041422:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to approve, and ratify the authorization for the Township Manager to execute the agreement with the Cohen Law Group ("CLG") for legal services to assist the participating municipalities of Montgomery County ("Montgomery County Consortium") in a franchise fee audit and cable franchise renewal negotiations with Comcast of Pennsylvania, LLC ("Comcast").

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Township Treasurer's Report:

Township Treasurer Jay W. Blumenthal reported that Real Estate Taxes collected in March 2022 was \$7,302,085 representing an increase of \$2,660,573 over last year; YTD \$8,474,039; balance to be collected of \$24,810,215. Monies received from various departments deposited into Republic Bank for March 2022 was \$11,873,648 as compared to last year of \$8,128,198 representing an increase of \$3,745,450; YTD \$5,615,299.

Item FC-01-041422:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to approve the February 2022 expenditures in the amount of \$2,181,509.80 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,047,388.86 and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of May 2022.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 11-0. Commissioners Carswell, Spiegelman, Bowman, and Vice President Vahey were absent during roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Marlene Kessler, resident, said regarding the Comp Plan, the DVRPC projected a population increase; however, a more reliable source would be the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit organization whose census indicated that population in 1970 was 63,625. She expressed concern about proposed development in Willow Grove that does not address affordable housing because they are luxury units.

Lora Lehmann, resident, asked about the bidding process when buying through a consortium; also, she expressed concern about the waiver approval process as well as notification to neighbors.

President Hecker replied it is approval of a cooperative purchasing agreement where the consortium sends out for bids to secure the best possible price.

Mike Tobin, resident, commented that regarding the Comp Plan, which says there will be affordable housing, but it will not be for low-income. The majority does not want high-density housing because traffic will increase and so will the carbon footprint. He does not understand how a plan can be put together where the core demographic numbers are wrong and the plan is missing Chapter 8 – Infrastructure, so we do not know what our infrastructure can handle. Also, he expressed concern about the survey not being sent out yet.

Manager Manfredi replied regarding Chapter 8 - Municipal Services and Infrastructure, during draft review, it was noted that many changes are underway, and we want the chapter to have current and accurate information, and that review will be finalized and released soon.

Commissioner Thompson added that in terms of population projections, what was sent to the DVRPC was an analysis of current zoning and approved applications as well as what the zoning code is capable of, but not a true population projection based on birth rates, fertility rates, migratory rates, death rates and other data.

DVRPC previously posted a full population projection report in 2016 that projected from 2015 to 2050 and that is currently incorrect because the 2020 Census exceeded those figures, so we are working with the DVRPC to try and figure out where we are going as a population. The DVRPC is an independent commission from the Township, and they do their work as they so choose. Also, the survey is an item listed on the CPDT's agenda for next Tuesday evening.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

Resolution No. 22-013 was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on April 14, 2022.