

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, May 8, 2025 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, LANEY-MARTIN, BROWNE, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, YOUNG-GERTZ, SPIEGELMAN, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioners BRODSKY, BOLE

Also Present: Township Manager Christman
Township Solicitor Clarke

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUCEMENTS:

Human Relations Commission Annual Report:

Ms. Michele Cooper, Chair of the Abington Human Relations Commission, said it is her honor to share the work we have done over the past year to advance equity, inclusion and mutual respect in our community.

Tonight's video created by our fellow member Ms. Kristen Chapin gives a glimpse into the events and initiatives from responding to acts of hate and to building spaces for connection and learning. We continue to take a stand against bias such as in May, when antisemitic flyers were left at residents' homes, we issued a public statement that was featured in Glenside Local to make it clear that hate has no home in Abington.

In November, we also distributed a flyer reminding residents of their rights and protections against voter intimidation ensuring everyone can access the ballot box without fear.

A video was presented by the Abington Township Human Relations Commission – "Year in Review 2024" that included their mission; roles of the HRC members; partnering with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in hosting the Building Pennsylvania's Beloved Community; joining the Abington Township Board of Commissioners in raising the Progressive Pride at the Township Building in honor of Pride Month; participating in the Abington Township's Police Department's Pre-Night Out Block Party as well as the LGBTQIA+ Resource Fair to share information on services available through the HRC; and hosted a workshop to build skills for "disagreeing better" facilitated by Braver Angels.

HRC information can be found on their website, Facebook and Instagram.

This past January, the HRC in partnership with the Abington Free Library hosted the “Human Library” encouraging everyone to read one another’s lived experiences. The event helped to foster empathy and conversation across differences and was covered by the WHY? TV channel.

We continued this momentum with issuing statements of concern following the recent executive orders that dismantled DEI initiatives in public agencies and education, an alarming trend that demand vigilance and advocacy.

In March, the HRC hosted “Who Pays the Price” a panel discussion exploring the human cost of Medicaid cuts and Senator Art Haywood and Chad Lassiter, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission were panelists.

In the wake of a racist incident caught on video at a local store, the HRC joined with the Abington Township Board of Commissioners, the Abington Police Department, and the Willow Grove NAACP to release a unified statement condemning hate in all forms.

We are proud of the work that we have done, but we know there is more ahead. If you would like to learn more or get involved, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We are always eager to partner with those who care about building a stronger, more inclusive Abington.

Solicitor Clarke said regarding the Consent Agenda Item BOC-05-050825 authorizing advertisement of the proposed museum; the applicant’s attorney requested that item be pulled to discuss it further internally.

President Hecker said Item BOC-05-050825 will be pulled from the Consent Agenda and considered at a later date.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern about food trucks going into parking lots in commercial areas near where people live, the trash and dumpsters should be closed. Also, she was concerned about the minutes and her questions not being answered.

Liz Kerr, resident, expressed concern about a private citizen being able to have an agenda item to change the zoning for a “vanity” project of a museum in his backyard. She suggested donating the art to the Abington Art Center. Also, a driveway for a museum on those roads would be costly.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that the Toll Brother thing does not show every property that would be affected, and a use by right would not need residents' opinions, and by conditional use, the residents would have a right to speak up for more things that will make a difference.

Also, she was concerned that the chart was removed, and the Toll Museum should go to the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee first before advertising for a hearing. Also, nothing should be open until 10 p.m. in a residential neighborhood.

Michele Dibello, resident, commented that she is opposed to changing the R-1 code. She is part of a neighborhood group that was formed to go against a nursing home that is trying to get built at the end of her street and that was from an amendment to the R-1 code to include nursing homes. The G-3 amendment seems to be tailored to a single citizen and the adjacent neighbors will not know about it until there is a conditional use hearing for the museum. Keep R-1 as residential and there are plenty of places in Montgomery County where artwork could be shared. Also, this could also be used to host parties and fundraisers that would invite traffic affecting neighborhoods and adjacent neighbors.

CONSENT AGENDA:

President Hecker clarified that Item e. has been removed from the Consent Agenda and the restriction as listed under Item c. regarding Hemlock Circle and Canterbury Road will be removed from that item.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve Items a. b. c. (with the removal of Hemlock Circle and Canterbury Road) and Items d. and f. as listed under the Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of April 10, 2025.

To adopt Traffic Safety Ordinance No. 2227 amending Chapter 156 "Vehicles and Traffic," Article III – Section 25 "Parking Regulations," - "No Parking Here to Corner" to add the following restrictions: "No Parking Here To Corner" on Keswick Avenue., east side, move existing sign from 30' south of Oakdale Ave. to a point 70' south of Oakdale Ave., on Arnold Ave., east side, 30' north of Woodland Rd., on Pershing Ave., south side, driveway of 2428 Pershing Ave. to Arnold Ave. and "No Parking Here to Corner" on Oakdale Ave., south side 30' east from the intersection with Keswick Ave., and "Special Parking Zones" 1226 Hall Ave., "Handicapped Parking."

To authorize advertisement of Traffic Safety Ordinance No. 2229 amending Chapter 156 – “Vehicles and Traffic,” Article III – Section 25 “Parking Regulations,” - “No Parking Here to Corner” to add the following restrictions: “No Parking Here to Corner” on Thompson Road east side 30 feet south of existing “Stop” sign; on Thompson Road west side 30 feet south of the corner with Woodland Road; on Thompson Road east side 30 feet north of Woodland Road; on Woodland Road south side 30 feet west of Thompson Road; on Woodland Road south side 30 feet east and west of Wunderland Road; on Wunderland Road west side 30 feet south of Woodland Road; and on Wheatsheaf Lane west side 30 feet north of posted “Stop” sign at Susquehanna Road.

To appoint Michael Bova to the Vacant Property Review Board to fill the term ending on 12/31/2026 as recommended by the Vacant Property Review Board.

To authorize the advertisement of Ordinance No. 2230 amending the Code of the Township of Abington at Part II [General Legislation] creating Chapter 89 [Food Trucks and Mobile Food Vendors] to provide regulations for the operation of Mobile Food Vendors.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-07-050825:

Update on Crosswalk discussion -

Ms. McIlvaine said last month, many residents attended to speak about the needs in their community, so the Township considered what could be done and what opportunities there would be to address their concerns. Tonight, we will present a 2025 ARLE (Automated Red Light Enforcement Transportation Enhancements) Grant Program that the Township would like to apply for.

This proposal is for four intersections that will be for safe routes to schools and parks connection. ARLE is now open to local governments for safety and mobility projects and this project would fall under the vulnerable road user improvements such as crosswalks, rapid flashing beacons, and ADA accessibility.

Timeline for submission was a pre-scoping form due by April 28th in which the Township was able to get to PennDOT for review and feedback in which we expect to receive by the end of this month to gear up for an application that is due by June 30th.

This grant is unique in that there is no minimum or maximum grant award and no match requirement, so it is advantageous but very competitive.

Proposed improvements include rapid flashing beacons with push buttons, high visibility crosswalks, signage, sidewalk and curbing, ADA improvements, and trail connection.

The four proposed intersections are Easton Road and Fairhill Avenue; Edge Hill Road and Keith Road; Jenkintown Road and Evergreen Road; and Easton Road and Parkdale Avenue. These intersections were identified by the community and the Board of Commissioners. We worked with the Police Department, Public Works, and Construction Services to prioritize them based on safety and need, proximity to facilities, and competitiveness of a grant and funding opportunities.

The proposed cost for these four projects totals \$635,834 and \$557,433 is requested for engineering, equipment and related underground construction. We discussed this with Public Works and Construction Services, and they will do the above-ground installation, which would provide the Township with an opportunity to get an in-kind match of \$78,401 that would make our grant application more competitive.

Next steps is the submission of an ARLE grant application by June 30th. We are waiting for feedback from PennDOT from the pre-scoping form submitted for consideration. Also, a Traffic Safety Policy is being developed at this time that will encompass a formal procedure for collection and prioritization of intersections, and we will continue to look for grant funding and capital planning for continued improvements in the future.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman agreed that these intersections are worthy. Edge Hill Road and Keith Road border Highland Elementary and across the street is the Briar Bush Nature Center, and he and Commissioner Schreiber have been fielding concerns from residents from both of our wards. He clarified that only municipalities that have an active red-light camera program can apply for the ARLE grant. Is that correct or can anyone apply?

Ms. McIlvaine replied she believes it is open to anyone. In previous applications, we would get additional points for being an ARLE community, and she has been trying to confirm that and will report back on it.

Commissioner Schreiber questioned whether we could take it down to two intersections.

Ms. McIlvaine replied we originally had six, and after meeting with our traffic engineers from TPD (Traffic Planning & Design), they felt strongly that these four intersections would be competitive, and the cost estimate would make for a good application.

Item BOC-08-050525:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve an agreement with CivicPlus to develop and maintain a new Township website and provide agenda management services in the amount of \$64,000 and authorize the Township Manager to execute the agreement.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-09-050525:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the Cooperation Agreement among Abington Township, the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Montgomery, Holy Redeemer Health System and authorize the Township Manager to execute the agreements.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-10-050525:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to reject the 2025 Storm Sewer Inlets and Manhole Structures bid as opened on May 5, 2025 and authorize rebidding of the project.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-050825:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the March 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$3,828,010.26 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,476,708.68 and authorize the proper officials to sign and approve invoices and supporting documentation in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of June 2025.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 13-0. Commissioners Brodsky and Bole were absent.

Item FC-02-050825:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 25-017 authorizing the Township Manager and/or Finance Director to enter into an agreement with the Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust (PGLIT) and its' banking partner, BMO Harris Bank, to participate in the Payment Solutions P-Card Program.

Ms. Jeannette Hermann, Finance Director, explained that the PLGIT Program with the P-Card is offering the Township an opportunity to engage in a credit card program. There are no fees, but there are greater internal controls for the Township and for the Finance Office. It is an electronic system where employees can log their purchases, and it will replace the Township's current credit cards. In addition to having no fees, it offers a cash back reward at yearend, which is a bonus.

Commissioner Winegrad added that there are additional internal controls that the Township is undergoing, which is an excellent idea, and he supports it.

Commissioner Spiegelman said this was presented to the Finance Committee, and it is an impressive program with flexibility and protection, and he supports it.

President Hecker said he is supportive as well.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern about the yearly escalation of car crashes on Old York Road and The Fairway, which total 444 in 2024. She questioned whether Abington Hospital was asked to assist with funding bollards, which are an investment in protecting lives. Old York has six unprotected faded crosswalks and citizens have been killed numerous times. 1582 Edge Hill Apartments have yards of missing curbside. The light pole at Dunkin Donuts on Old York Road was hit over two years ago and the light pole at Roman Delight needs to be replaced.

Harry May, resident, thanked Township Manager Christman, Vice President Vahey and Ms. McIlvaine for their efforts on this very important project. Also, there is a "No Parking Here To Corner" sign on Sylvania Avenue that sometimes can be an issue when traffic is at the "Stop" sign trying to turn onto Keswick Avenue.

Ross Abel, resident, with Jenkintown Abington Neighbors and Bike Montgomery County, thanked Ms. McIlvaine for the ARLE the application. Regarding the Jenkintown Road crossing, the access point to Alverthorpe has been cut off, and the Parks and Open Space Plan advocates giving residents trail access through that side of the park and he wants to be sure there will be access to the park via that direction.

President Hecker replied he is not aware of that but will look into it.

Mr. Able continued that he has been advocating for a Traffic Calming Commission consisting of Township staff, our police department and residents, so we can continue advocating for traffic calming in areas that make sense. Has there been any consideration or discussion within the Township about such a thing?

President Hecker replied yes. We have been speaking with the Township Manager and the police department on the best approach to ensure that we will be as comprehensive as possible in our review.

Mr. Able added that he has also advocated for trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, and ADA accessibility for anyone who travels by foot and/or wheelchair, so they have ways to get around town.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that 1368 Valley Road is “one big hot mess” as well as the driveway, which is a Zoning Hearing Board decision. Also, the museum proposal should not have been on the agenda tonight because it cannot be advertised for a hearing until it goes to the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

Ordinance No. 2227 and Resolution No. 25-017 were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on May 8, 2025.