

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, June 12, 2025 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:02 p.m.

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

Excused: Commissioners DiPLACIDO, BOLE

Also Present: Township Manager Christman
Township Solicitor Gallagher

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that the Board of Commissioners held an Executive Session this evening to discuss a personnel matter and real estate issues.

President Hecker recognized Mr. Tim Clark for his career that was full of distinction, service, leadership, and dedication to the Township and community. Tim has been a friend and an incredible mentor and asset to the community. We are grateful for his 34 years of service, and we thank him for a job well done and wish him the best in his retirement.

President Hecker presented Mr. Timothy G. Clark with a Citation in recognition of his 34 years of dedicated service to all people of Abington Township and his numerous achievements and with this formal expression of gratitude, thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and the Manager of the Township of Abington on this 12th day of June 2025.

Environmental Advisory Council Annual Report:

Ms. Karin McGarry Rosen said the EAC is comprised of seven volunteers and associate members, and our purpose is to advise the Township and promote education about management, use protection, and conservation of our natural resources. We work with staff and other Township committees and collaborate with environmental organizations and neighboring EACs as well as participate in statewide EAC network.

The EAC was honored by the NAACP for their work in October 2024.

2024 accomplishments included energy, climate and sustainability issues; water quality/stormwater management; and resource protection and public education.

2025 goals are to improve our community's health and environment; respond to public and BOC concerns; pass the plastic bag ordinance; implement DEP Composting Technical Assistance Plan; incorporate electric vehicles into the township vehicle replacement plan; support the Township to improve energy efficiency through grants; complete Climate Action Plan; and advise sustainable development to expand best practices.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern that Jefferson Hospital created a lucrative income stream from their food trucks. Food trucks guarantee more plastic bottles, food wrappers and plastic forks on the street. Will Abington Hospital be paying for needed Street Department employees? Also, she was concerned that the same dumpsters have remained open for four and a half years; food trucks will benefit the hospital at the health and expense of citizens; unreadable street signs are a health hazard; and why is tax money being utilized to fix sidewalks on Easton Road that belong to WAWA; and blight-creating property owners.

Joe Rooney, resident, asked how many of the members of the Economic Development Corporation are lawyers? We had an Economic Development Committee, and we've changed that into an Economic Development Corporation, so "how does a bunch of wealthy lawyers represent the people of Ardsley or Willow Grove or Roslyn better than an Economic Development Committee would?" How was that decision made and how can we expect to get better representation?

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the EDC process because it does not represent how a community is supposed to work, and they have not shown any economic development. It is crushing that we've spent over \$1 million dollars to get to the point of nothing being done and no promise of showing any return. Regarding wastewater, radiation and an expired certificate; she does not recall that coming to any other meeting, so it should not be voted on and taken off the agenda tonight.

Maria Copeland, resident, asked how the Commissioners communicate with the residents of their ward?

President Hecker requested that Ms. Copeland provide Ms. McIlvaine with her contact information so we can get her plugged into the 15 different ways to be updated monthly on what is happening in the Township as well as put her in contact with her commissioner.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve Items a. – e. as listed under the Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of May 8, 2025.

To adopt 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 and adopt Resolution No. 25-018.

To adopt Traffic Safety Ordinance No. 2228 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 Hemlock Circle east side (north bound) 51 feet south of Canterbury Road, 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 authorize the advertisement of Ordinance No. 2231 revising the Volunteer Service Tax Credit Program originally established pursuant to Ordinance No. 2143, enacting Tax Credits for Volunteer Members of the Volunteer Fire Companies of the Abington Township Fire Department and nonprofit emergency medical service agencies.

To authorize release of escrow #2 for LD-17-02, LD 20-02, LD 21-05, Rydal Waters Tract (Philadelphia Presbytery Homes, Inc. a/k/a Humangood Pennsylvania) escrow release No. 1 in the amount of \$1,708,962.28.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-06-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to hire the next three (3) qualified candidates from the 2025 Civil Service Eligibility List.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-07-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to reject all bids for the 2025 Storm Sewer Inlets and Manhole Structures Bid.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-08-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to reject all bids for the Abington Township Transfer Station Bid and authorize rebidding of the project.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bowman asked for the status.

Mr. Mike Jones, Director of Public Works, replied that when the bids came back there were some fatal flaws, so we request that the bids be rejected and to be authorized to rebid the project.

Commissioner Bowman questioned whether we are still packing trash from smaller trucks onto bigger trucks.

Mr. Jones replied yes.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-09-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to consider 90-day extension of the Township's Solid Waste Disposal Services Contract between Abington Township and Covanta Sustainable Solutions, LLC now known as Reworld Waste, Inc. at the same terms and conditions set forth therein.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-10-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 25-019 authorizing the Township Manager to execute the required Additional Surety Bond by the PADEP for the transfer station.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-11-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to approve Natural Land's proposal in the amount of \$27,600 for the Abington Township Invasive Plant Management Plan.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-12-061225:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to appoint Jill Graziano and Gregory Lare to the Economic Development Corporation to fill a term ending 4/31/2030.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-061225:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the April 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$2,917,827.51 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,423,433.93 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 July 2025.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adele Kubel, resident, commented that \$12 million dollars was put into Parks and Recreation so why was the Briar Bush Center defunded. The new walkway to the Bird Observatory ends with the Observation Cabin that has been shut down due to trees and wind damage and hasn't been maintained for years. The Bird Observatory should be made operational immediately; the Butterfly House has six butterflies and there are no plans to replenish them. There are no butterfly bushes or native plants in the vicinity to lure butterflies to the area, which is barren. The indoor bird exhibit and three aquariums are long gone, and children's resources are desperately needed.

Lisa Mallon, resident, expressed concern that Mr. Toll wants to build a museum on his property, and if that property becomes partially nonprofit, then he would get a tax reduction, and that will increase the burden on Abington taxpayers. Also, it would create spot zoning and "open a can of worms" by allowing something that does not belong in an R-1 Residential District, so please think about that and vote against it.

Bob Jasinowski, 927 Urban Road, said the structure and events that would be held at the Toll museum would significantly impact on the surrounding area particularly increasing traffic on Susquehanna and Meetinghouse Roads.

The viable solution is the Linwood Hall Preservation Foundation, which is looking to restore Lindwood Hall that houses two large art galleries. The restoration plan includes utilizing natural light from the sun rather than electric dimmers and they intend to revive the gardens and the grounds as well as aid in fostering traditional trades.

With Toll's funding, the first floor of Lindwood could be restored promptly, and a museum in an R-1 Residential area would cause issues for decades similarly to what happened to Lindenwood Castle in Ambler. The Toll museum will face limited uses when their heirs eventually sell off their art. This proposal presents a far more sustainable beneficial solution than a "McMansion" museum. Thank you for your consideration.

Joe Rooney, resident, thanked the police for all their great work. God Bless our Custom and Immigration officers, and the average person in every one of our wards in Abington Township appreciates the hard work they do to defend our country every single day. And the political flag flying is larger than the American flag and he would like it to be measured as it is in violation of the U.S. Flag code.

Also, there are a lot of important things that happen in America that Abington Township should recognize such as Memorial Day, VE Day, D-Day, Father's Day and Flag Day and the 250th Anniversary of the U.S. Army's founding.

And has there been an update on the tax implications on SPS shutting down?

Steven Kline, resident Washington Lane, commented that it is wonderful that the Township raised the flag to celebrate acceptance and freedom in our country. This is an important gesture for our Township while we watch the proliferation of hate throughout our country. This flag not only celebrates the LGBTQ+ community but provides a glimmer of hope to combat the hatred and intolerance that permeates our country and our neighbors. Thank you and remain strong.

Ross Abel, resident Washington Lane, with Jenkintown Abington Neighbors and Bike Montgomery County, asked for the status of the ARLE pedestrian improvement application and what is being pursued for the Evergreen and Jenkintown crossing.

Ms. McIlvaine replied PennDOT provided comments on the ARLE application, and they did not disqualify any of the locations identified, so we are going to modify our application based on their feedback and will submit it by June 30th. We will be installing a high visibility crosswalk with pedestrian pushbutton and flashers as well as ADA ramps. Also, the access point to the Manor was closed for a period of time, but it is now open.

Mr. Able asked about the entrance to Alverthorpe's trail, which had been closed for a long time.

Ms. McIlvaine replied she would look into it.

Mr. Able asked that the pedestrian entrances be opened to Alverthorpe for residents and let us use and enjoy our park. Also, he asked the Township to pursue an active ongoing transportation study and create a citizen and Township-led traffic calming committee as cut-through and dangerous driver behavior are getting worse every day and make mandatory traffic-calming zones around our schools making sure kids can get to/from school safely.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the MS-L zoning for a duplex at the Crestmont Country Club where all the zoning is R-4. Also, she was concerned that it is in a floodplain and that they are building a duplex when only a single is not allowed. Also, building six apartments on a nonconforming foundation seems purposeful.

Robin Elyse Wechterman, resident Bockius Avenue, thanked the Board of Commissioners for all the hard work they do for the people in this town. She expressed concern about increased ICE activity and the havoc it is creating among the immigrant community of Montgomery County. 9% of the population of Abington is foreign-born and these families have a right to live in peace and safety with the guarantee of due process that is provided for all people in our constitution.

She knows we cannot prevent ICE from acting in this area; however, there are things that can be done within the law such as enact policies that prevent Township employees, including Township police from cooperating with ICE beyond what is required under a judicial warrant, and prevent the collection and sharing of information on residents' immigration status beyond what is necessary.

She firmly believes those who break the law and make mistakes should be held accountable, but it is not the role of our Township police and personnel to be the prosecutor, judge and jury on immigration cases. She will forward sample policies drafted by the ACLU of Pennsylvania to the Board of Commissioners that work within the law to help make Abington a safer place for our immigrant communities.

Commissioner Bowman said regarding comments made by Ms. Kubel on Rt. 611 traffic, the Township does not own that road, and when there are traffic issues in the Township, the police department conducts studies and brings it to the Board's attention.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

The following ordinances and resolutions were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2025:

Ordinance No. 2228

Ordinance No. 2230

Resolution No. 25-018

Resolution No. 25-019