

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, July 10, 2025 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 ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, BROWNE, WINEGRAD, YOUNG-GERTZ, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, VAHEY, HECKER  
Excused: Commissioners BRODSKY, LANEY-MARTIN, HENRY, ZAPPONE, BOWMAN

Also Present: Township Manager Christman  
Township Solicitor Clarke

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **BOARD VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ceremonial Swearing In of Officers: Justin Colon, Michael Crescenzo, Patrick Dorsey, Samantha Landis, Ethan Medina, Tara Pepe

Chief Molloy said on behalf of the Abington Township Police Department, it is his distinct honor to welcome our newest members of the Abington Township Police Department family. Tonight, President Hecker will be swearing in five officers who recently graduated from the Montgomery County Police Academy and one veteran officer with nine years of police experience.

It has been decades since we have sworn in this many officers at one time, and he thanked Manager Christman, President Hecker and all the members of the Board of Commissioners for allowing this time to recognize these officers as they begin their careers by publicly taking the sacred oath to uphold the constitution, our values and carry out their duties in this most noble profession with both courage and compassion.

The recent academy graduates Justin Colon, Michael Crescenzo, Patrick Dorsey, Samantha Landis, Ethan Medina, Tara Pepe successfully completed a rigorous six-month training program at the Montgomery County Police Academy. Officer Patrick Dorsey joins us from Solebury Township Police Department bringing nine years of local law enforcement experience with him.

These probationary officers have just completed their in-house training and are now assigned to our Patrol Division where they will ride along with their field training officers for the next three months as they prepare for solo patrol duties in Abington Township.

President Hecker administered the Oath of Office to Police Officers Justin Colon, Michael Crescenzo, Patrick Dorsey, Samantha Landis, Ethan Medina, Tara Pepe of the Abington Township Police Department on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of July 2025.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

Adele Kubel, resident, questioned whether the Toll family been asked to partner with Lynnewood Hall. It would be a compliment to them to have their collection displayed at Lynnewood.

President Hecker said the Toll family has withdrawn their application, so it will not be moving forward.

Ms. Kubel expressed concern that the EDC is strategizing against average citizens, and the Keswick plan benefits wealthy real estate holders not small businesses. Briar Bush has been defunded, and the Butterfly House closed just after opening. Animals are not being adopted, and the lack of them undermines the center. \$12 million is going into parks and Briar Bush is getting nothing. Is the plan to close Briar Bush for apartment development?

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that the agenda item 2241 Old Welsh Road should have gone to the ZHB as advertised. Regarding the agenda item for Section 1908, we have a Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee that is required to review anything that would be a change to our zoning ordinance, and this would be a change. It was not properly advertised and not brought to a place where people could understand and make comments, and it would harm people because they will not be notified.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of June 12, 2025.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### Item BOC-01-071025:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve LD-24-01–2241 Old Welsh Road – Final Major Subdivision and Land Development plan and adopt Resolution No. 25-020.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Browne said he wants to make sure that all residents are aware, informed and approve the plan moving forward.

President Hecker agreed as he also spoke with the residents in the past two weeks.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item BOC-02-071025:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize advertisement of Ordinance No. 2232 amending the Code of the Township of Abington at Part II [General Legislation], Chapter 162 [Zoning] at Article II [Definitions]. Article XXI [Use Regulations], Article XXII [Parking and Transportation], and the Comprehensive Use Matrix to incorporate provisions for the C-39 [Medical Marijuana Dispensary] and D-18 [Medical Marijuana Grower/Processor] Uses.

Solicitor Clarke said this is a clean-up amendment to fix the confusion when the new zoning code and the original amendment were adopted back in 2018. It has also been revised to incorporate some of the comments from the MCPC. We removed the Main Street District for dispensaries as they will be permitted in the Business Commercial District and the Grower Processor will be permitted in the Suburban Industrial District. We also updated the parking requirements for both uses.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner DiPlacido referring to Section 2, Item 4 of the ordinance; is the medical marijuana dispensary allowed to advertise on billboards in the Township?

Solicitor Clarke replied yes, which is consistent with state regulations.

Commissioner DiPlacido referring to Section 2, Item 8; is the age 18 or 21?

Solicitor Clarke replied 18.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked can a grower and a seller operate on the same lot if it is over a certain number of acres?

Solicitor Clarke replied no, because they are not permitted in the same district.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item BOC-03-071025:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to authorize advertisement of Ordinance No. 2233 amending the Code of the Township of Abington at Part II [General Legislation], Chapter 58 [Animals] to add a new Article VII [Sale of Dogs and Cats].

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item BOC-04-071025:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize the advertisement of Ordinance No. 2234 amending the Code of the Township of Abington at Part II [General Legislation], Chapter 162 [Zoning], Article XIX [Nonconforming Uses, Structures, Lots and Signs] by amending and restating Section 1908 [Expansion of or Construction on a Nonconforming Lot] to revise provisions for special exceptions.

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

President Hecker asked that a link to the video of this meeting be sent to the ZHB, so they can see their recommendation has passed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item BOC-05-071025:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt 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 Non-Profit Emergency Medical Service Agencies.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Browne said he is ecstatic that this will be voted on tonight. This was an issue brought to his attention a few years back by Mark Hood of the Edge Hill Fire Company. We truly have an elite volunteer fire department in Abington Township, and they are very deserving of this program. If this helps to retain and recruit more qualified volunteers, then he is all for it in a full-throated manner.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item BOC-06-071025:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to award Phase 2B of the Abington Jenkintown Connections Project to G&B Construction in the amount of \$440,139.62 and to reallocate \$23,375 from line item 18-10780-430-250047 and up to \$75,000 from line item 18-10780-480-250027 to this project.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad thanked Township staff and the engineering department for moving this project forward. Many residents are looking forward to the improvements to Greenwood Avenue, and so is he.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked will phase 2B change the traffic pattern, and part of the plan was to close the cut-through, but it seems to be open, will it eventually close?

Ms. McIlvaine replied it will not change the traffic pattern. It is sidewalk, curbing, some stormwater connections as well as pedestrian crosswalk and a flasher across Greenwood Avenue. Phases 1-4 are complete, and now we have phase 2B, and then Phase 5 when we begin working towards closing that road and making the improvements at Meetinghouse Road that are necessary in order to do that.

Commissioner DiPlacido clarified that it still includes the turning lane. Is that correct?

Ms. McIlvaine replied yes.

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

Item FC-01-071025:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to consider the 2025-2029 CDBG Consolidate Plan, its associated 2025 Annual Action Plan, and a substantial amendment to the 2021 Annal Action Plan for submission to HUD.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item FC-02-071025:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to adopt the amended MissionSquare 457(b) Deferred Compensation plan document for the Secure 2.0 Act provisions.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

Item FC-03-071025:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the May 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$4,366,343.83 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$3,618,399.09 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 August 2025.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 10-0. Commissioners Brodsky, Laney-Martin, Henry, Zappone, and Bowman was absent during roll call.

**PENSION COMMITTEE:**

Item PC-01-071025:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to appoint Andre Berry to act as the salaried employee representative to the Abington Township Non-Uniformed Employees' Pension Plan effective immediately.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 10-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern that Briar Bush is being defunded and hundreds of thousands of dollars are going to a dangerous Jenkintown Abington Connection, and that is what developers want. The bike infrastructure has an extravagant and growing cost and will be a disaster. Vision Zero has no support from any local police department including Philadelphia. Developers support Vision Zero, which allows for tight and dangerous development with no parking, and we are paying for amenities that developers should be paying for. Abington will go bankrupt assisting the one percent to create a dangerous environment.

Primary streets are lined with rotting homes. Blight with increased taxes will drive Abington home prices down and developers will then buy more homes for less, and the worst Abington homes are available for rent by approved slumlords.

Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, resident, commented that she previously spoke about the role that Abington Township employees and police play in cooperating with ICE. ICE has been active in Montgomery County with 30 individuals taken and forced from their homes, mostly in Norristown, and none have been charged with a felony. She spoke with Chief Molloy who made it clear his officers will not cooperate with ICE on administrative warrants; however, they will do their job when it comes to criminal and judicial warrants, and she would not expect anything less.

She asked the Board of Commissioners to consider policies about what questions Township employees can answer and what information they can gather about residents they interact with. She sent a letter with sample policies, and she urged the Board to consider them as Abington could pave the way and be a model for making a welcoming community in this part of Montgomery County.

Ms. Katy, resident of Elkins Avenue, commented that she has many friends who are immigrants and former exchange students of her neighbor, and she worries that ICE will target her close friend. When she says freedom, she means freedom for all in this country. She is not asking to break any laws and avoid legally required actions, but she is asking that due process remains a hallmark to our judicial system.

She wants to be sure that Township employees and the police have the necessary guidance when responding to ICE requests. She asked how Township employees will respond when asked for private information such as immigration status, and she asked that the policies be enacted in the model ordinance provided by Rabbi Elyse.

Bernard Epstine, resident, 1421 Autumn Road, asked the Board to consider passing an ordinance that will prohibit Township employees from assisting ICE in obtaining information about immigrants. He has immigrant neighbors and many from other municipalities are fearing for their lives and being torn away from their families. He asked the Board to consider doing everything they can with their legal power to not cooperate with the horrific things we see happening across the country and surrounding municipalities.

Denis Efimov, resident, Corinthian Avenue, commented that he has been an Abington resident for over 10 years and a student in the Abington school system since third grade, but he was not born in this country, and he is not a natural U.S. citizen. He was naturalized at age 12 and many of his friends are also immigrants. The recent uptick in ICE activity is frightening and concerning.

It is important for Abington Township to recognize its strength as a community of diversity and one that openly welcomes immigrants, and he wants the Commissioners to heavily consider the policies that Rabbi Elyse has provided and looks forward to it being passed soon.

Victoria Krouse, resident, said she is here with her comrades standing in solidarity as a second generation American, and daughter of an immigrant, advocating for dignity among our immigrant neighbors. She asked about resources for renter advocacy and for those who cannot afford a lawyer as well as a communications committee about the Township.

President Hecker replied that Ms. McIlvaine has put together an information card that demonstrates how residents can connect with the Township to receive timely information, and that is provided to the residents.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that she has not received an answer Section 1908.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

The following ordinance and resolution were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on July 10, 2025:

Ordinance No. 2231

Resolution No. 25-020