

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 as a Zoom webinar and teleconference with Chairperson Lucy Strackhouse presiding.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: BROWN, DICELLO, GAUTHIER, ROBINSON, ROSEN, COOPER, BAKER, RUSSELL, STRACKHOUSE

Also Present: County Planner NARCOWICH  
Administrative Manager WYRSTA  
Commissioner THOMPSON

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Russell to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting of December 16, 2020.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

**PRESENTATION:** None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The newly reappointed Planning Commission members from the Board of Commissioner's meeting last week are:

- a. Lucy Strackhouse
- b. Ronald Rosen
- c. Glenn Cooper

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to reappoint Ms. Lucy Strackhouse as Chairperson and Mr. Dale Russell as Vice Chairman of the Abington Township Planning Commission.

There were no other nominations. Nominations were closed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Application by PREIT to amend Abington Township's Zoning Ordinance:

Ms. Strackhouse announced that the petitioner for PREIT has requested that this matter not be heard at the January 26, 2021 Planning Commission meeting and to be postponed to the February 23, 2021 meeting.

Agenda Item - Land Development Application LD-20-01 – Applicant, ABP Investments, Inc. for property located at 1051, 1053 and 1057 Easton Road at Tyson Avenue, Abington, PA. to demolish existing one-unit building and to construct proposed four-unit townhouses.

Ms. Strackhouse noted that the applicant, ABP Investments, Inc. is proposing to consolidate three existing parcels and subdivide into two new lots on the eastern side of Easton Road approximately 170 feet south of the intersection with Tyson Avenue at 1051, 1053, and 1057 Easton Road. Proposed Lot 1 will have an area of 13,098 square feet and will consist of a triplex (existing twin dwelling plus two attached apartments). Proposed Lot 2 will have an area of 17,823 square feet and will consist of a proposed four-unit townhouse building. Driveway access will remain between the existing triplex and proposed townhomes. The proposed land development will also include the construction of stormwater management facilities and storm sewer and the installation of landscaping.

Mr. Arthur Herling, owner/applicant, gave a presentation of proposed redevelopment noting that the existing stone building that consists of three apartments will be renovated and restored and new homes will be constructed in place of the existing single-family detached dwelling.

There will be a shared-parking arrangement with the 1043 Easton Road property, which is the development he built in 2019. Proposed is to eliminate two driveways off Easton Road, install sidewalk where there is none and build new homes. Photos of the site plan including existing features were presented including the townhomes built in 2019. There are a total of four driveways that will be reduced to two and parking will be added in the rear of the building for residents. There is no sidewalk in front of the twin homes, but there are sidewalks in front of the single-family home, although it is deteriorating, so proposed is to improve the curb and sidewalk including a decorative verge, add a bench or two, and the Shade Tree Commission recommended certain types of trees to plant.

Impervious surface will be reduced with installation of a stormwater management system to control stormwater onsite. Floor plans were presented, and the applicant is working on the outstanding miscellaneous items listed in Boucher & James' letter dated December 21, 2020.

Ms. Strackhouse thanked Mr. Herling for saving the existing stone building as it has been there for over 100 years. She asked for any comments from members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Rosen questioned whether this will be marketed for rental or sale, and if it is for rent, who is the target market; price of rent; term of lease and how many bedrooms/baths, etc.

Mr. Herling replied market rate rentals will be to whoever is interested. There will be two bedrooms each with a full bathroom on the second floor and a half-bath on the first floor. Price will fluctuate depending on the market; however, approximate rent will range between \$1,600-\$2,000 and snow removal and landscaping is included. Term of lease is negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Baker questioned whether any units will be handicapped accessible.

Mr. Nick Rose, P.E. of Protract Engineering, representing the applicant, replied that it was determined that individual units in a three/four-unit apartment building does not need to comply with ADA requirements, although there is one ADA parking space available as a courtesy to residents for any visitors.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether a fire escape would be needed for the second and third floors?

Mr. Herling replied there are none currently and that would be addressed during building permit stage.

Mr. Baker commented that no fire escape is needed just an escape and rescue window from the bedrooms.

Ms. Strackhouse questioned whether the existing White Pines and other deciduous trees on both sides of the stone twin will be remain.

Mr. Herling replied they are proposed to be preserved with tree protection and fencing during construction. There is also green space in the back of the property for residents.

Mr. Russell asked when the 1043 Easton Road property was developed, was this development contemplated at the time?

Mr. Herling replied no.

Mr. Russell said if a connection is built between the two lots will an access easement be required.

Mr. Herling replied yes, there would be a shared-parking easement required.

Mr. Russell said since there will be consolidation of three lots into two, does the access easement need to be shown on plan.

Mr. Rose replied proposed access easement is shown in pictorial view as well as noted on the plan as Note 11 stating that “By this plan, common access to driveways and parking is granted between Lot 1, Lot 2 and block 192 Unit 15.”

Mr. Russell asked has any consideration been given to making the loop a “one-way?”

Mr. Herling replied we looked at that but decided not to because there are no safety issues.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether a waiver is needed for width of driveways.

Mr. Herling replied yes, one driveway, in part, is 22 feet wide.

Mr. Russell asked the applicant to consider an ADA apartment unit.

Mr. Herling replied he will consider that for the end unit.

Mr. Baker asked about the elevation facing Easton Road and about proposed lighting for the site.

Mr. Herling replied three of the units face the driveway and the end unit faces Easton Road. Also, proposed are LED parking lot lights that turn on as the sun goes down providing safety for pedestrians and drivers.

Mr. Brown commented that he also appreciates that the stone twin home will remain, and he asked for further details on the units. Also, dumpster area enclosure shown on the plan looks nice, and how will the back of the building interact with the parking area?

Mr. Herling replied an architect will draft an as-built plan to assess the layout of the living space of the units. Regarding the trash enclosure, as part of the easement, all residents will be able to use the trash facility.

Mr. Narcowich clarified that the plan drafted in January 2020 that was last reviewed in April 2020 has been updated. Is that correct? Also, what about the streetscape?

Mr. Herling replied yes, the plan has been revised and we are working on items listed in the Boucher & James’ review letter. The plan has been revised to incorporate eight-foot-wide sidewalks in addition to a three-foot-wide verge and a bench or two is proposed. Trash enclosure will have decorative stone and trees around it.

Mr. Narcowich questioned whether there will be fencing or vegetation screening. Also, this area has been designated as an official bicycle route and he recommended that the applicant coordinate with Township staff on installation of wayfinding signage along the road as referenced in the Abington Master Bicycle Plan.

Mr. Herling replied the 1043 Easton Road property has fencing along the property line and that will be continued, and the vegetation in the rear will remain with additional plantings of species as recommended by the Shade Tree Commission. Also, he agreed to speak with Township staff about bicycle route wayfinding signage.

Ms. Gauthier clarified that the outstanding items listed in Boucher & James' review letter dated December 21, 2020 will be addressed by the applicant. Is that correct?

Mr. Rose replied yes.

Mr. Rosen asked about items listed in the EAC's review letter.

Ms. Strackhouse replied the EAC made recommendations in their review letter dated March 30, 2020 for BMP's for stormwater management as follows: "Stormwater Features - Proposed underground infiltration bed beneath new 13-space parking area and two smaller infiltration beds in front of structures to capture rooftop runoff and paved areas via shared trench grate. None include vegetative components. These systems are designed to capture required volume of runoff from site per Township stormwater ordinance. Due to reduction of overall impervious cover (reflecting new lot dimensions), development is exempt from stormwater ordinance's peak rate requirements, and this needs to be confirmed by Township Engineer."

Mr. Rose noted that the Boucher & James' review letter specified the exact same thing. Impervious surface is being decreased and the applicant will install a large detention system under the parking area and a smaller one to the south of the triplex.

Ms. Strackhouse questioned whether pervious paving has been considered for portion of the parking area.

Mr. Rose replied pervious paving is not recommended because it eventually clogs unless it is meticulously taken care of. It would be better to get the stormwater underground into the seepage bed as proposed.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether the EAC recommended rain barrels or other green areas.

Mr. Herling replied the EAC recommended raingardens, but instead, there will be an underground detention system.

Ms. Gauthier asked why the applicant is not proposing to combine all lots into one development.

Mr. Herling replied he considered that, but it is not permitted in this zoning district.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any public comments.

Susan Myerov, EAC member, commented that flowthrough planter idea is a common technique for rooftop runoff management while providing an ascetic component to structures like this one, and the EAC does support this infill development project. She recognizes the difficulty using pervious paving, but suggested it, because the entire parking area will be reconstructed, although it does require specialized maintenance, and she thanked the applicant for taking the EAC's suggestions seriously.

Lora Lehmann, resident, asked for the percentage of green space of the multiple properties; also, about fire truck access for the site.

Mr. Rose replied green area is split by units at 74%, 19% and 48% and the minimum is 10%. There is a loop road for fire truck access to get completely around the property.

Ms. Strackhouse asked about waivers requested by the applicant.

Mr. Rose replied waiver requests are listed as Note 10 on the plan as follows:

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve waiver request from Sections 146-11. A. (4) and 146-11. B. (3) – Property Identification Plan.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve waiver request from Section 146.11.B. (7) – Existing Features Plan.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve waiver request from Sections 146-11. G.1. and 146-11. G. 3. – Utility Plan.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve waiver request from Section 146-11. J. – Recreational Facilities Plan.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Russell made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve waiver request from Section 146-11. L. – Architectural Plan.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Baker made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve waiver request from Section 146-28. B. - and to permit driveway less than 24 feet wide as shown on the plan. The part of the sidewalk that is 22 ft. wide is in front of Units 2, 3, & 4 of the new building, which is away from the road. PennDOT permit approval is in progress at the current time.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Robinson to approve waiver request from Section 146-30. A. – Irregular Lot Shape - and to permit the proposed shape of Lot 2.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Mr. Cooper made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve waiver request from Section 146-33. C. – Storm Sewer Protection - and to permit less than 24 inches of cover over one stretch of storm sewer as shown on the plan.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve waiver request from Section 146-43. C (3) (a) – Cut and Fill Slopes – and to permit slopes up to 33% due to site limitations for grading.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve the Land Development Application LD-20-01- Applicant, ABP Investments, Inc. for property located at 1051, 1053 and 1057 Easton Road at Tyson Avenue, Abington, PA. to demolish existing one-unit building and to construct proposed four-unit townhouses subject to the applicant complying with the Abington Master Bicycle Plan and coordinate with the Township to determine the appropriate wayfinding signage and installation; subject to the applicant completing any outstanding items as listed in Boucher & James' review letter dated December 21, 2020, and all waivers requested by the applicant as listed were approved.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Comprehensive Plan Update:

Mr. Narcowich reported that the first round of public outreach has been completed with four workshops being held that assisted with the vision and goals. We drafted chapters on Introduction, Vision, History, Demographics, Existing Land Use, Municipal Services and Infrastructure, Historic Preservation, Housing and Environmental Management & Resilience with four chapters remaining such as Future Land Use, Transportation, Economic Development, and Implementation. Additional public outreach events will be held such as an online survey and another would be an interactive Zoom webinar. Approximate timeline for completion is by November 21, 2021, which is subject to change.

Penn State Abington:

Ms. Strackhouse announced that as of January 4, 2021, Penn State Abington has a new Chancellor, Margo DelliCarpini and she will reach out to the Chancellor to see about getting a dialog with the Planning Commission regarding updated Penn State news.

RCAP Grant:

Ms. Strackhouse announced that Meadowbrook Farm received a \$1 million RCAP (Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program) grant, and they will be replacing greenhouses with energy-efficient, state-of-the-art specialized growing facilities.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary