

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with Chairman Mr. Brown presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: BROWN, DICELLO, ROBINSON, BAKER, NEWELL, WEATHERLY, GOLDSTONE

Also Present: Township Engineer Lee
County Planner Narcowich

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Brown made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Baker to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting of May 27, 2025.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

PRESENTATION: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review an ordinance 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:

Mr. Kevin Van Horn, Zoning Officer for the Township, said in the past 12 months, 114 cases appeared before the Zoning Hearing Board for consideration of relief; only 28% of them asked for a special exception from Section 1908. Most of them are for roofs over a deck, a shed, or an addition with no need for a variance, and most of the cases have become cumbersome for the citizens. The citizens pay on average \$200-\$400 for each case that takes 60-90 days and receives 100% approval. Not only is it cumbersome for the citizens, but also for the Zoning Hearing Board as it takes up one third of their cases each month.

Mr. Weatherly asked about cases that do need a special exception from the ZHB.

Mr. Van Horn replied there were 18 cases that needed variances. This clause was to make sure that we do not permit overbuilt lots resulting in overcrowding. It was a safeguard put in place that has proven over time that it burdens citizens more than fixes the real problem.

The need for a variance for dimensional standards still exists and will be required for setbacks, building separation from lot-to-lot for fire reasons, and setbacks from the road.

Mr. Brown asked for any comments from members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Baker said he applauds this amendment. It is too much for the homeowner and then we may run the risk of them not applying for permits, so he supports it.

Mr. Brown asked for any public comment. There were none.

Mr. Baker made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Robinson to support this amendment change.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

Review an ordinance 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:

Mr. Van Horn said the marijuana ordinance was passed prior to his employment with the Township, and the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite of 2017 was enacted after the new zoning ordinance was in place, so the problem is that the language of the current marijuana ordinance refers to zoning districts that no longer exist.

On April 27, 2017, the new zoning rewrite Ordinance No. 2136 was enacted, and on May 4, 2017, Ordinance No. 2131 was enacted, so there is an ordinance that refers to zoning districts that no longer exist. We need to make sure we reference the correct zoning districts that are now in existence.

Mr. Brown questioned whether there have been any instances where this was problematic.

Mr. Van Horn replied yes. If a “Right To Know” request is made asking what districts a medical marijuana dispensary is permitted to be in, we don’t have an answer, so this needs to be fixed.

Mr. Brown asked for any comments from members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Baker questioned whether there will be any expansion of the districts for this use.

Mr. Van Horn replied there is no expansion of these allowable locations; however, there are some minor items in the ordinance that need to be cleaned up prior to the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. Brown said Mr. Narcowich provided a review letter noting there needs to be a parking requirement clarification; however, it does not affect the content of the ordinance.

Mr. Narcowich said as we consider future zoning changes, we may want to consider modifying the permitted locations, but not at this time.

Mr. Weatherly said regarding the “1 parking space for every 1,000 sq. ft. of gross leasable floor area devoted to industrial,” is that comparable with any other typical uses?

Mr. Narcowich replied yes, increasingly so.

Mr. Brown clarified that the parking requirements have been made tighter. Is that correct?

Mr. Van Horn replied yes, it is more restrictive to sites available by-right.

Mr. Narcowich said parking restrictions vary for medical use; however, for industrial, the requirement tends to be closer to “1 parking space for every 1,000 sq. ft.”

Mr. Goldstone asked why we are not looking at having restrictions in certain districts now.

Mr. Van Horn replied this needs to be passed immediately as there is a hole in our zoning ordinance, which would create the ability to negate other parts of the ordinance, so this specific part needs to be fixed.

Mr. Goldstone asked for clarification on language listed under Use D-18 - Medical Marijuana Grower/Processor as it refers to dispensing medical marijuana, which would be more distribution than dispensary.

Mr. Narcowich replied the state has enacted legislation addressing medical marijuana and there are specific laws for those entities.

Mr. Van Horn said that it is the same language as in the existing ordinance and based on the state’s recommendation.

Ms. Newell asked for the timeline for revisiting the zoning districts.

Mr. Van Horn replied he has not been provided with a timeline.

Mr. Brown said the proposed language needs to be updated to include “devoted to sales or office area.”

Mr. Brown asked for any public comment. There was none.

Mr. Baker made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. DiCello to approve the text amendment as well as updating the language to include “devoted to sales or office area” in the ordinance.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Goldstone for his service and wished him “Best of Luck” as he and his family will be moving out of the Township.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary