

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with Chairman Brown presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:34 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: BROWN, DICELLO, BAKER, STRACKHOUSE,
WEATHERLY, GOLDSTONE
Excused: ROBINSON

Also Present: Township Engineer Lee
County Planner Narcowich

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Baker made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting of May 28, 2024.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

PRESENTATION: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review the Preliminary/Final Major Subdivision and Land Development for LD-23-03 – 1583 Rothley Avenue

Mr. Brown said the applicant proposes to consolidate the following existing two adjoining parcels; 1583 Rothley Avenue consisting of 6,008 sq. ft. containing the existing two-story masonry multi-use building; a portion of the four-foot high chain link fencing; a portion of the asphalt parking area; a retaining wall along the northern property line to the rear of the existing building; and the concrete steps, concrete wall with raised planters, and concrete area fronting the building off Rothley Avenue. Rothley Avenue land parcel consists of 6,225 sq. ft. containing the remaining portion of the existing asphalt parking area and remaining four-foot-high chain link fence that surrounds the rear of the property. Proposed is to consolidate and renovate the existing building and the total consolidated parcel will be 12,233 sq. ft.

Ms. Amee Farrell, Attorney representing the applicant, requested a recommendation of approval of preliminary as final plan for the Rothley Avenue project. This was a former industrial building that is in disrepair, and this is an opportunity to redevelop it into three townhouse units and improve the balance of the lot for residential use. A parking lot is proposed for the units as well as additional road improvements along the frontage. All zoning relief has been granted for this proposal, and the applicant has received review letters from the Township's consultants and has requested waivers.

Each townhouse will have individual HVAC units and there will be a trash enclosure for trash and recycling bins located away from the building, and regarding landscaping, the applicant will address comments made by the EAC.

Ms. Maggie Greenberg, Project Engineer representing the applicant, said all site areas will flow to an underground seepage bed in the parking lot, and for some of the larger storms, there will be minimal flow to an outflow pipe in a curb cut that will be moved to the other side of the handicapped ramp, so there will be no ponding.

Mr. Narcowich said the parking area appears to be the same grade as the units and he wants to be sure there will be no chance of flooding.

Ms. Greenberg replied everything slopes away from the units and the 100-year storm will be mostly contained within the seepage bed.

Waivers requested by the applicant –

Section 146-9. A (1) and (2) - Preliminary and Final Plan Stages

Section 146.11. B (7) – Utilities

Section 146.11. J – Recreational Facilities Plan

Section 146-33. C – Drainage Location

Section 146-33. D – Drainage Size, Grade and Type

Section 146-43 C (a) – Cut and Fill Slopes

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

Mr. Weatherly clarified that it will be a 4:1 slope, and all pipes will be privately maintained. Is that correct?

Ms. Greenberg replied that is correct.

Mr. Baker said this will be an improvement to the property and suggested the applicant consult with the Shade Tree Commission on the type of plantings to help with erosion on the steep slope.

Mr. Weatherly questioned whether there is any upland flow to this property.

Ms. Greenberg replied yes, and it was considered in our calculations.

Mr. Brown asked about exterior work that will be done to the façade.

Ms. Farrell replied it will be a substantial renovation to the interior and exterior of the building.

Mr. Weatherly asked will the pipe discharge upstream or downstream of the proposed ADA ramp?

Ms. Greenberg replied currently, the plan shows that it will be upstream, but it will be moved to the other side of the handicapped ramp so it will then be downstream.

Ms. Farrell continued that the plan shows a fence for screening along the northern property boundary; however, following discussions with the neighbor who indicated that he would not be able to park in his driveway as it abuts the building edge, so we will not put a fence there as it is not required by zoning or SALDO. We will work with the neighbor on an easement so he will be able to park there as well as put a note on the plan.

Mr. Narcowich asked about planting a tree instead of shrubs near the eastern end of the parking lot for shade.

Ms. Greenberg replied the applicant's landscape architect recommended not planting a tree there due to the proximity of the parking area and the grade slope, so shrubs will be planted.

Ms. Allison Lee, Township Engineer, said the applicant has addressed most of the outstanding review comments; however, there are sanitary sewer comments in which the applicant will need to comply. We support all waivers requested by the applicant based on the scale and scope of the project.

Mr. Brown asked for any public comment.

Essie Roberson, resident, expressed concern about stormwater flooding her yard located at the corner of Rothley and Hamilton Avenues.

Ms. Greenberg explained that it is required by Abington Township to reduce the volume and rate of the stormwater and we will meet those requirements by reducing the flow and capturing it in the seepage bed located under the parking lot.

Keith Szczesniak, resident, questioned whether there will be windows on the building facing his side of the property line.

Ms. Farrell replied there will be windows on the second floor and the kitchen and powder room will be on the first floor and no windows will be installed there.

Louise Twyman, resident, said she welcomes a new building on Rothley Avenue as it is currently an eyesore. Will these apartment units be open for just senior citizens, or can anyone apply?

Ms. Farrell replied there is no age restriction.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that these people have been living with blight for 10 years and we need to do better with enforcement. This building should have been demolished and the two lots returned to the proper theme of the neighborhood.

Venesa Barnaby, resident, expressed concern about the type of activities occurring at the existing apartment buildings located near this build site, so what type of tenants will be occupying the new units, and there should be better screening of applicants.

Ms. Farrell replied no decision has been made whether it will be for sale or rent, and we cannot restrict who applies, but it will not be an age restricted community. We can screen, but only in accordance with the law.

Mr. Weatherly made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Strackhouse to recommend approval of the preliminary/final major subdivision and land development plan for LD-23-03 – 1583 Rothley Avenue, and to approve all waivers requested by the applicant, and recommend the applicant address comments as listed by the Shade Tree Commission and EAC.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary