

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: BROWN, ROBINSON, ROSEN, COOPER, BAKER, STRACKHOUSE, WEATHERLY
Excused: DiCELLO

Also Present: Township Engineer Lee
County Planner Narcowich
Director of Wastewater Utilities Dept. Wrigley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Baker made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Robinson to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting of June 27, 2023.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

PRESENTATION: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review and approve the Sewage Facilities Planning Module Component 4a for 365 Cedar Road Land Development:

Mr. Brown said the applicant for 365 Cedar Road is seeking approval for the Sewage Facilities Planning Module Component 4a.

Mr. Lawrence Byrne, representing the applicant, said he prepared the plans and component 4a is part of the overall planning module that needs a recommendation of approval by the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners to then be forwarded to PADEP for final approval.

This planning process has been ongoing for over a year and approvals from Aqua were needed because sewage is conveyed through Cheltenham Township as well as the Philadelphia Water Department, and we have obtained all approvals.

Mr. Brown clarified that this proposed development involves seven individual residences. Is that correct?

Mr. Byrne replied yes. Previously, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the plan, and then the Board of Commissioners granted preliminary plan approval several months ago.

Mr. Rosen asked for further clarification on component 4a.

Mr. Bryne explained that as part of any land development, sewer approval is needed from the Township as well as PADEP, and this project required a planning module with numerous parts and component 4a is one of them.

Mr. George Wrigley, Director of Wastewater Treatment Utilities Department, added that he has worked with the applicant on behalf of the Township, and when Aqua purchased Cheltenham's sewers, he was the link between Abington Township and DEP.

Cheltenham Township had difficulties with their Interceptor A, which was replaced, and they have a connection management plan to inform DEP on how many EDUs are needed for each project. Fortunately, Abington Township still has 92 EDUs available that we can tap into for projects such as this one. DEP requires municipalities to submit a planning module for any land development projects of two properties or greater.

Component 4a checks comprehensive planning, continuity, consistency with municipal land use planning, any known historical/archaeological resources, and municipal ordinances. Once the Planning Commission signs off, it is then sent to the Board of Commissioners who need to pass a resolution and then the final package is sent to DEP.

Mr. Rosen questioned whether there would be any reason not to sign off.

Mr. Wrigley replied there are no irregularities whatsoever.

Mr. Narcowich commented that the County's Environmental Planners have reviewed it and recommend approval.

Mr. Byrne said he sent component 4a to Mr. Wrigley with all boxes checked as applicable and there are no issues with the planning module or the plan.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve the Sewage Facilities Planning Module Component 4a for 365 Cedar Road Land Development.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

Review the Preliminary/Final Major Subdivision and Land Development for LD-22-05 – Penn State University (PSU) New Academic Building:

Mr. Brown said this land development application involves four (4) existing parcels. Under this application, the applicant is proposing to consolidate the four (4) existing parcels, which will yield a gross area of 47.99 acres with lot consolidation of four parcels, and the entire site will be surrounded by roadways on all sides. Proposed is construction of a new three-story 74,100 sq. ft. academic building with associated parking areas located adjacent to the new building. Also, new curbing, sidewalk, walkways, landscaping, and stormwater management facilities are proposed as part of this land development.

Mr. Marc Jonas, Attorney representing the applicant, said in November 2021, the Board of Commissioners passed two separate ordinances to pave the way for a new academic building on campus. The zoning ordinances include the rezoning of three small abutting parcels on the campus side of Cloverly Lane as well as Ordinance #2186 to amend the CS-Community Service District to create a university use.

The applicant has responded to the Township's consultant's review letters and will comply, although one of the comments by the Township's Traffic Engineer was to create an additional pedestrian circulation on campus, and that has been completed and a sketch plan provided. He requested a recommendation of approval for the preliminary/final land development plan that includes waiver requests.

Mr. Eric Clase, PE, representing the applicant, presented a rendering of the proposed academic building with the proposed parking lot in the front of the building with access from Cloverly Lane. There will be several underground stormwater management basins that will capture impervious surface runoff; the sidewalk connection for pedestrians will have a more direct connection for students; and the applicant will comply with all items as listed in Township consultant's review letters.

Ms. Stacy Thomas, representing the applicant, said the academic building is proposed for the southwest corner of the campus with one new driveway off Cloverly Lane, and towards the right of the building will be the larger parking area and the small parking lot is an extension of the existing lot that runs along Cloverly behind the Woodland and Rydal buildings.

The building is proposed as a three-story building, but the topography of the site is such that the higher elevations are around the perimeter of the campus, so it slopes down towards the center of the campus while keeping a two-story volume facing the public street.

Also, there is generous green space proposed in front of the building along Cloverly, and the trash, equipment areas and loading dock are proposed on the southern end facing the campus that will be screened on all sides using masonry sidewalls, and all air-handler equipment will be inside the building within rooftop penthouses.

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

Mr. Baker questioned whether the issue of the minimum distance requirement from residential was resolved.

Mr. Jonas replied that Ordinance No. 2186 addresses setbacks and dimensions from the neighbors.

Mr. Narcowich said in his last review letter dated July 2022, there were no issues with setbacks, and since then, the plan has been finalized.

Mr. Brown said he understands there is compliance; however, the requirement is a minimum of 300 feet away from other homes. Is that correct?

Ms. Thomas replied the closest point on the north side of the building is the corner at 154.4 ft. from the property line, and the 300 ft. dimension was listed in the 2017 zoning ordinance, but the amendments changed it to a minimum of 100 ft.

Mr. Weatherly asked how stormwater peak rate control is being addressed.

Mr. Clase replied all stormwater management design requirements meets Township ordinances as well as DEPs requirements for volume control, infiltration, and rate control. The waiver requests are only for stormwater management to cover some storm pipes within the property.

Mr. Brown questioned whether all outstanding items listed in Pennoni's review letter dated July 14, 2023 have been addressed.

Mr. Clase replied that the latest review letter from Pennoni is dated June 29, 2023, and those items have been addressed.

Ms. Allison Lee noted that Pennoni's executive summary is dated July 14, 2023, and the Township Traffic Engineer submitted a review of the revised plan and all comments have been addressed by the applicant.

Mr. Clase added that the site distance for the plan meets the requirements.

Mr. Narcowich asked about a pedestrian connection going out of the site in the direction of Huntingdon Athletic Fields, and a waiver was requested for installation of sidewalk along the street frontage. Is that correct?

Mr. Jonas replied the Township agreed that connection to the fields is an offsite issue and not part of campus land development, and there is a waiver request.

Mr. Narcowich encouraged the applicant to consider safe pedestrian transit between Lions Gate, the Huntingdon Athletic Fields, and the main campus in the future.

Mr. Brown acknowledged that there are review letters from the Shade Tree Commission and the EAC who provided guidance and support for the project.

Mr. Jonas said that the applicant appeared before the Shade Tree Commission and the EAC on July 28, 2022 resulting in their support of the project.

Waiver requests –

Section 146-9. A – Application Stages – a waiver to consider the current subdivision and land development submission to be a combined preliminary/final application.

Section 146-10. A (1) – General Requirements, Drafting Standards; Section 146-11. A (4) – Property Identification Plans; Section 146-11. B. (3) – Existing Features Plan and 146-11. B (7) - Existing Features Plan – the applicant shows certain features, but not everything within 400 ft., and Township Engineer supports the waiver requests.

Section 146-24. D (3) – Streets, Cartway Width and Section 146-27 - Sidewalks and Curbs relate to street cartway width, and Township Engineer supports the waiver request.

Section 146-33 C – Drainage – Township Engineer supports the waiver request.

Mr. Clase said waiver from Section 146-33 C is subject to vehicular loading and the waiver agreement will be that the manufacturer agrees that the loading can handle HS-25 loading standards, which is the Township's requirement, so it will be subject to the vehicles, but we will meet Township's loading requirements.

Section 146-33 D – Drainage – Township Engineer supports this waiver if stormwater runoff is safely conveyed and routed and that the applicant shows the limiting layer on their BMPs and dewatering calculations, and the applicant will comply.

Waiver from Section 146-39. B (3)(a)(1) – Landscaping, Off Street Parking Areas - waiver request was withdrawn by the applicant.

Section 146-43.C (3)(a) Erosion and Sediment Control – Township Engineer supports this waiver request due to existing site conditions.

Section 146 – 302.B (2)(b)(5) – SWM Site Plan Requirements – Township Engineer supports the waiver request.

Waiver from Section 142- 409. A – Stormwater Peak Rate Control and Management Districts – waiver request was withdrawn by the applicant.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Cooper to approve the waiver requests as listed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

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

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Robinson to approve the Preliminary/Final Major Subdivision and Land Development for LD-22-05 – Penn State University (PSU) New Academic Building including the waiver requests as listed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary