

The stated Working Session of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, November 13, 2025 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:52 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, LANEY-MARTIN, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, YOUNG-GERTZ, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioner BROWNE

Also Present: Township Manager Christman
Township Solicitor Clarke

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the minutes from the Working Session of September 11, 2025.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Presentation of LD-25-03 Noble Town Center South Parking Improvements Preliminary/Final Land Development Plans:

Mr. Khal Hassan, Township Engineer, said before the Board tonight is an application submitted as preliminary/final land development for the Noble Town Center Parking Improvement Project. The applicant proposes redeveloping an existing building of 36,289 sq. ft. and complete improvements within the parking lot. As a result of these improvements, there will be a decrease of 860 sq. ft. of impervious surface as well as installation of curb/sidewalk, planting islands, retaining wall, stormwater inlets, and subsurface stormwater management basin.

The applicant is not requesting any variances as part of this land development application. The applicant brought this project before the Planning Commission on September 28, 2025, and they provided a recommendation of approval for the preliminary/final minor land development plan.

The applicant proposes installing a retaining wall that varies in height between 6-8 ft. and the code requires the wall not to be more than 6 ft. high, so the plan will need to be revised. The applicant proposes modification to some parking areas and the dimensions need to be revised to comply with the zoning code. There are several areas of landscaping and buffering that the applicant will need to submit a plan showing compliance.

From a traffic standpoint, due to the newly proposed tenant spaces, the applicant should anticipate peak hour calculations associated with the application, and we recommend that a traffic safety evaluation be completed for the site driveways on Old York Road and The Fairway to determine if any turn restrictions are warranted as well as identify any recommended signage and pavement marking modifications.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified that Mr. Hassan recommends not allowing final approval pending these other modifications and plans. Is that correct?

Mr. Hassan replied yes, the applicant will need to comply with all comments as listed in his review letter prior to the next Board of Commissioners' meeting, and we can then make a recommendation to move forward.

Mr. Brian Conlon, PE, representing the applicant, said the main building has three levels of stores and we will bring the lower level of the parking lot to the level of the three new tenants. The parking lot will be raised and there will be a slight decrease in impervious coverage. The retaining wall will go around the perimeter of the site and will be brought to grade to 6 ft., in compliance with the ordinance. We will meet all Township standards for stormwater management for quantity and quality control. There will also be a few new sewer laterals for the new building, including a grease trap.

We will comply with all comments as listed in Township Engineer's review letter including all the landscaping, and we have two waiver requests from Section 146-11. B. (7) – Existing Features Plan - Utilities and Section 146-28. A. - Off-Street Parking Areas. The ordinance requires 10X20 spaces and we propose 10X18, which exists today. The applicant will need to provide in writing all items they will comply with.

Commissioner Bole asked about pedestrian safety in terms of parking on the second level and how they will get into the shops safely.

Mr. Conlon replied there will be striped areas, a cut-thru from the new raised parking area to the storefront, and we will add crosswalks with "Yield to Pedestrian" signs in the parking lot.

Commissioner Schreiber clarified that there would be no changes to the far side where Stein Mart used to be. Is that correct?

Mr. Conlon replied that is correct. We are adding a new transformer at the back, and two parking spaces will be modified, but that's it.

Commissioner Schreiber said currently there is a cut-thru for cars; will that be changed?

Mr. Conlon replied the only change to the circulation is that we would be adding access that is not there today and closing one that is closer to the driveway.

Commissioner Young Gertz clarified that a stormwater basin will be below the newly raised parking area. Is that correct?

Mr. Conlon replied yes, and the grade will be raised with soil approximately 6 or 7 feet.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked about the height of the retaining wall from 8 ft. to 6 ft., which will be a substantive change. Also, he asked about the entrance for the new tenants, and the timeline for completing the parking lot.

Mr. Conlon replied we are still evaluating options and may have a dual wall system. The three new tenants will be facing the lower parking lot, and it will be approximately three months for the site work to be completed.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked about the design of the retaining wall.

Mr. Conlon replied the wall has not been finally designed yet; however, it will be an aesthetically pleasing block wall that matches the architecture of the building.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified with Mr. Hassan that he will need to review design plans for the 6 ft. wall, the landscaping plan, and the traffic and peak hour information prior to the applicant coming back before the Board. Is that correct? And what about the lighting?

Mr. Hassan replied that he reviewed the design of the retaining wall and will make sure it is structurally sound and meets the requirements for a maximum of 6 ft. We need written confirmation that the applicant will address all comments and meet the requirements. He asked the applicant to provide the waiver requests in writing to the Township.

Mr. Conlon agreed. Also, there are two lights in this area that will match the existing and no other change is proposed.

President Hecker said there is a path for this to be on the December agenda if the applicant meets the requirements to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer, and the Board will be advised by Mr. Hassan.

Items b. and c. –

An ordinance of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article V of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance of 1991 to amend Section 146-51 to permit a waiver from the Land Development Plan approval process for a partial nonconforming structure restoration.

An ordinance of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article VI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance of 2017 to amend Section 1904 to allow partial reconstruction of a nonconforming building or structure for a permitted use.

Solicitor Clarke said after the SPS catastrophic fire, we were contacted by the attorney of SPS about their desire to rebuild on the site. At that time, we discovered an anomaly in the zoning ordinance. The amendment does not apply to a use-nonconformity, it only concerns dimensional nonconformities.

So, not just for SPS, but any other business that may suffer a catastrophic loss that has some nonconformities, we will create a system where they can rebuild while not expanding the nonconformities and can rebuild up to 75% of the gross floor area. The amendment to the zoning ordinance will allow them to rebuild after a catastrophic failure in a much more orderly manner.

The SALDO amendment will address the catastrophic losses and will allow an applicant to seek a waiver of land development at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners. The waiver would allow the applicant not to have to go through every one of the steps or studies required for a land development project. The plans will still be reviewed by the Township Engineer as well as the Board of Commissioners.

No action will be taken tonight as it will be before the Board in December and this will provide an opportunity for members of the public to review before any action is taken.

Vice President Vahey said this will require an applicant to be in compliance with all other dimensional requirements of the code. It will also require a smaller size footprint of the building and will hold SPS to the renderings they present when they request a waiver from land development. We should really consider this as an improvement to the entire Township in allowing these waivers to make the land development process more efficient.

This has been a burden for his neighbors as well as for his family as he lives only a block away, so by moving this along quickly, it will be in everyone's interest. This will remove some of the unnecessary hurdles SPS would otherwise need to go through despite being there for 100 years. He is very comfortable with these proposals and appreciates the skillful work on these ordinances and hopes everyone will support them.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked what exactly will be considered at the December meeting?

Solicitor Clarke replied it will be the approval of these two ordinance amendments. Then on a future agenda, the Board will see the request for a waiver from land development along with the plans from SPS, and they will need to comply with all requirements and dimensional variances regarding height, setbacks, etc.

President Hecker asked for any public comment.

Lora Lehmann, resident, questioned whether the stormwater requirements back then were like they are now, and there is an area that floods right over the borderline from SPS into Cheltenham, and some of it has been mitigated, but most of it has not. Her concern is the need for stormwater management is being eliminated for buildings that were built with no stormwater management and certainly not by today's standards. She is opposed to this ordinance that allows exceptions to the rules, and stormwater management for SPS is very important and they need to comply.

Also, these ordinances were brought to the meeting without any proper review and will be sent to the voting meeting without any proper committee review, and she is against them being passed.

Solicitor Clarke said if the Township Engineer determines that stormwater management needs review on any property in the Township, there will be one as well as any other type of review.

Commissioner Zappone asked Vice President Vahey, as he lives there, if there is any flooding across from SPS?

Vice President Vahey replied no, there is not.

Commissioner Bowman noted that in Jenkintown across the train tracks there has been a lot of flooding in the low-lying train track area.

Commissioner Young Gertz read from the ordinance that says, "A landowner seeking a Partial Nonconforming Structure Restoration (as defined by Article XIX, Section 1904 of the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance) shall be permitted to apply to the Abington Township Board of Commissioners for a waiver of the Land Development Approval process where all of the following criteria are satisfied: Section 1 (4) - The reconstructed building and associated reconstructed improvements must comply with current stormwater management regulations."

ADJOURNMENT:

8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary