

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, July 28, 2026 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with Chairman Nicholas Brown presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Planning Commission Members BROWN, WEATHERLY, NEWELL, NUSSER, RUTHERFORD
Excused: DiCELLO, ROBINSON

Also Present: Township Engineer Kerr
County Planner Narcowich

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Brown made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Weatherly to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting of April 28, 2026.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

PRESENTATION: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

Review of LD-26-03 - 1919 Easton Road (Taco Bell) Preliminary Minor Land Development Plan:

Mr. Brown said this is a final minor land development application, and under this submission, the applicant is proposing to convert an existing 3,006 sq. ft. bank into a Taco Bell fast food restaurant, along with associated site improvements, including but not limited to a drive-thru, a concrete walkway, an ADA parking space and ramp, and a trash enclosure.

Mr. Mike Molly, Attorney representing the applicant, said we received a review letter from the Township Engineer dated July 20, 2026. The site is in the old Willow Grove Park where Citizen's Bank used to be, which is now closed and has been vacant for about a year. The parent company of Taco Bell is in West Conshohocken, and they own 200 Taco Bells as well as the land underneath them. The owner, Joe DePasquel, is present this evening to answer any questions.

Mr. Brian Cleary, Project Engineer representing the applicant, said the former Citizens Bank property received building permit approval, and it is in the process of being converted. This is just for improvements to the land associated with the building conversion.

Currently, the bank has two drive-thru lanes that will remain but modified slightly to allow for a menu board and ordering canopy and they will be converted into a single pickup lane where the existing drive-thru window is generally located on the building.

We also added a door, some sidewalks, and a new ADA parking space in front of the property. There are two trash enclosures to the rear, and we will combine them into a single split face trash enclosure.

The improvements are minor; however, we are requesting 16 waivers from the ordinance, which most of them have to do with larger developments, and since this is so minor, we feel the information provided in the plans as well as the associated documents is sufficient.

Waivers as listed in the applicant's waiver request letter dated June 5, 2026:

1. A waiver from providing parcel information for parcels within 400 ft.
2. A waiver from providing elevations based upon Abington Township Sanitary Sewer Datum.
3. A waiver from providing adjacent roadway information.
4. A waiver from providing adjacent roadway information.
5. A waiver from providing parcel for parcels within 400 feet.
6. A waiver from providing utility information within 400 feet.
7. A waiver from providing an elevation datum.
8. A waiver from providing locations of temporary storage of site soils and materials.
9. A waiver from providing an E&S narrative.
10. A waiver from providing stormwater management plan.
11. A waiver from providing sanitary sewer profiles.
12. A waiver from providing ownership information of existing utilities.
13. A waiver from providing a landscaping plan.
14. A waiver from providing ownership information from existing utilities.
15. A waiver from providing land development.
16. A waiver from providing water volume control requirements.

The applicant has no comments on the Township Engineer's review letter except for the waiver requests.

Mr. Brown asked about the existing windows of the building.

Mr. Cleary replied the plan is to keep the windows in place.

Mr. Brown asked how the applicant will be reducing impervious surface.

Mr. Cleary replied it is a minor reduction. We are adding grass back to where the trash enclosure is located.

Mr. Brown asked will the Cherry Tree that is up against the building be impacted by the site improvements?

Mr. Cleary replied if it is impacted, it will be replaced with a Maple Tree and there will be a note on the plan.

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

Mr. Rutherford clarified that a parking stall is being converted to an ADA accessible space and is the physical space ADA compliant? And the island between the two drive-thru lanes is being removed and replaced with striping. Could that be landscaped versus impervious?

Mr. Cleary replied based on the survey, it appears to be ADA compatible. The striping is a preference of the developer as well as a traffic mitigation measure, because if there is a stacking issue when placing an order at the menu board on the outside lane and customers are taking too long and the inner menu board is moving along faster, this would allow traffic to go to the inner menu board and vice versa, but if there was a physical barrier, traffic could not move between the lanes.

Mr. Weatherly said regarding waiver #8; the applicant anticipates they will not need any temporary storage onsite. Is that correct?

Mr. Cleary replied there will be storage right next to the building but there will be no impact on the rest of the property.

Mr. Weatherly suggested a narrative for the temporary storage area be included in the plan. Also, he does not support waivers #9 and #10, because although it is under the 5,000 sq. ft. threshold, if we do not continue to improve our water quality of our Township with every small piece, it will compound over time, and we will never have that opportunity again for this site. Also, he clarified that information has been provided for water volume control based on the site. Is the correct?

Mr. Greg Kerr, Township Engineer, replied we strongly encourage that some stormwater management be provided as there may not be another opportunity for this site. He suggested there could be a small depression raingarden area where the grass is to the left of the building.

Mr. Cleary replied that our concern is that since we are close to the 5,000 sq. ft. threshold, we would then have to disturb more land, which then puts us above 5,000 sq. ft., and we would have to meet most of the stormwater ordinance requirements. In addition, we discussed possibly doing something underground behind the building where all the utilities are located.

Mr. Weatherly said we will defer to the Township Engineer to navigate that.

Mr. Kerr said if the applicant goes over 5,000 sq. ft. threshold, they will need to provide more stormwater management other than this small section.

Mr. Rutherford said the larger striped out area between the pickup window and the bypass lane appears to be disturbed with full-depth pavement replacement. Is there a reason for the pavement area instead of permeable surface?

Mr. Cleary replied part of it is full depth asphalt and another portion is undisturbed, so if we converted that, he does not know if we would still meet that requirement.

Mr. Rutherford suggested that a condition be placed so that during post construction, a depression will be made to keep this project clean.

Ms. Abbey Cover, MCPC, suggested adding site element screening between the drive-thru and the street. There are a lot of parking spaces, perhaps more than what is required for a shopping center, so turning these parking spaces into green space could be a way to provide stormwater management and green space for the community. Additionally, she suggested repainting the parking spaces as the existing ones are not very visible.

Mr. Narcowich added that the sidewalk and streetscape design should connect buildings and parking areas to the street through pedestrian connections. There is an opportunity to improve connectivity by installing a parking-lot crosswalk from Easton Road to the proposed building as well as improve connections from Davisville Road into the shopping center.

Mr. Weatherly clarified with the Township Engineer that there is nothing additional besides the bollards and evaluating ingress/egress post construction possibly changing it to an exit-only. Is that correct?

Mr. Kerr replied there is nothing else from TPD's report; however, we recommend a post-development observation of the drive-thru be conducted on a Saturday peak period to determine whether the existing driveway along Davisville should be limited to an exit-only.

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

Mr. Brown said unless there is any objection, the applicant should remove waiver #15 as the plan meets the definition of a land development project.

Mr. Cleary agreed to remove waiver #15.

Mr. Weatherly made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Brown to recommend granting approval of the final minor land development plan including approval of the waivers requested with the exception of waivers #8, #9, #10, #15 and waiver #16 unless the applicant works with the Township Engineer on meeting the volume control requirements that is satisfactory to the Township.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Review of the Conditional Use Application by Abington School District for the location at 2056 Susquehanna Road and 970 Highland Avenue, Abington. PA 19001:

Mr. Brown said under this conditional use application, the applicant is proposing to consolidate the existing 970 Highland Avenue and 2056 Susquehanna Road parcels (total combined 59.24 acres) and construct a new 3-story, approximately 245,000 sq. ft. middle school building while keeping the existing middle school open for learning during the construction phase of the new school.

The applicant intends to demolish the existing school following the occupancy and transition to the new school building. Along with the new middle-school construction, additional improvements such as new parking lots, athletic fields, stormwater management, and utility improvements are proposed as part of this project.

The Planning Commission previously reviewed a sketch plan for this project and tonight is to review the conditional use application.

Mr. Andrew Freimuth, Attorney representing the applicant, said we made a full land development application to the Township and filed a Zoning Hearing Board application about the project, and variances were granted and now we have filed a conditional use application.

The rendered site plan was presented of the project based on the master plan that was submitted with the conditional use application. The two access points of the middle school will remain intact as part of this project. Improvements to the athletic fields will be new synthetic turf fields where the existing middle school is located that will stay open as the new building is constructed.

The new building will be located to the rear of the site, which is closer to the high school, and it will be 3,045 sq. ft., three-story building.

The new middle school building will accommodate the student and faculty population as well as have the capacity of 2,200 students and 265 faculty members. The new school is intended to serve the current population with that projection.

Conditional use is required as the ordinance says it is needed if we add 3,000 sq. ft. of new floor area for E-14 use. The school use has been on property since the 1960s and the existing building is more than 30,000 sq. ft. today and it will serve the same student and faculty populations.

This application meets all the specific criteria that apply to this use that is contained in the zoning ordinance, albeit modified by the variances requested by the applicant from the ZHB.

A traffic impact analysis was submitted with the land development plan application that shows no increase in traffic during am/pm peak hours, and all intersections will continue to operate at an acceptable level of service.

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

Mr. Weatherly said the ballfield looks like it overlaps a setback by a little bit.

Mr. Freimuth replied it will not be in the setback area. The intent is to maintain that setback and provide required buffering. We submitted a landscape plan that will be reviewed and discussed before the Planning Commission when we come back for the land development process.

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

Mr. Weatherly made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Brown to recommend approval of the conditional use application.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary