

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Chairman Don Marquardt presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: SPEARMAN, STRACKHOUSE, RUSSELL, COOPER, WEGGEL, GAUTHIER, ROSEN, MARQUART

Also Present: Director of Code Enforcement MATTEO
Planning & Zoning Official PENECALE
County Planner NARCOWICH
Commissioners KLINE, SANCHEZ

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Agenda Item PC1 – Subdivision and Land Development Application of PF Abington, Inc.

Mr. Marquardt read agenda item PC1 into the record, and asked the applicant to present their plan.

Denise R. Yarnoff, Esquire, Riley, Riper, Hollin & Colagreco, PO Box 1265, 717 Constitution Drive, Suite 201, Exton, PA., 19341, representing the applicant, owner of property located at 938 & 944 Old York Road in the PB Planned Business District. Currently, there is a bank building that is vacant on the property and the applicant, PF Abington, Inc., would like to develop an urgent care facility called, Patient First.

The bank building is proposed to be removed and the Patient First building would be built in its place and circulation and access points will remain the same. Previously, the applicant went before the Zoning Hearing Board and received approval for a number of variances that are shown on the plan, although, two variances were removed from the plan that were previously approved.

The applicant is requesting waivers including the shape of the lot and the existing adjoining lot is currently a “flag lot” that will remain the same; however, the frontage is proposed to be reduced from 50 feet to 25 feet. The main purpose is so that all improvements associated with Patient First would all be on one lot.

The applicant is in receipt of the Township staff review letter dated, February 2, 2015 and we will comply with all items listed.

Carl Right, PF Abington, Inc. said his company is the exclusive developer for Patient First in the Philadelphia and New Jersey markets. Our job is to find sites, buy them or ground-lease them and build the Patient First and enter into a 20-year lease.

Patient First is one of the largest urgent care providers in the country and privately held with 60 centers in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They are open every day of the year including all holidays from 8 a.m. - 10 p.m. They are walk-in with no appointment necessary. We will create 50-60 jobs for each project.

An architectural prototype was presented to the Board showing the Patient First one-story building, which is 7,000 sq. ft. with atrium windows.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any comments/questions by members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Rosen asked for the number of patients served by Patient First and does it consist mainly of uninsured patients?

Mr. Right replied primarily families, children and the older population, and 93%-94% of the patients have insurance.

Mr. Rosen questioned why patients would choose Patient First over Abington Hospital.

Mr. Right replied the average time in/out time for Patient First is about 53 minutes for patients with non-life-threatening conditions.

Mr. Weggel asked is most of the business for Patient First in the evenings/weekends?

Mr. Right replied peak hours are between 8-10 a.m. during weekdays and Mondays are the busiest.

Mr. Rosen questioned whether most major health insurance carriers pay this type of facility.

Mr. Right replied the main headquarters handles all negotiated contracts with various insurance companies.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for the difference between this clinic and several others in the Township that are in close proximity to the proposed clinic?

Mr. Right replied urgent care has been popular in a mature market such as in Virginia and Maryland where there are four or five urgent care facilities serving a population and are all successful.

Mr. Rosen asked how many physicians are staffed at each facility and what are their training credentials?

Mr. Right replied a minimum of two fulltime and four to six part-time physicians and they are highly trained family practice doctors.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for the reason why there will be a ground-lease.

Mr. Right replied we approached the property owner for a sale, but the owner wants to keep the land.

Ms. Strackhouse questioned what would happen if in 10 years the business did not produce the amount of return on investment, could the lease be assigned to someone else?

Mr. Right replied he has a 20 year obligation to his landlord and Patient First has a 20 year obligation to him.

Mr. Marquardt asked for the reason why the lot is proposed to be split in this way rather than combine it and request a change in zoning?

Mr. Right replied it is a separate parcel now and our intent is to takeover that parcel and clean up the lot lines.

Mr. Russell clarified that the applicant has no interest in the remaining flag lot. Is that correct?

Mr. Right replied that is correct.

Mr. Marquardt commented that the proposed handicapped parking area is too close to the entrance and movement there is not viable.

Ms. Gauthier agreed that those parking spaces could be moved down two or three parking stalls to allow for better use of them. Also, proposed landscaping is one of the better plans she has seen. In regards to the existing egress, there is a curve there and she wants to be sure exiting traffic coming out are not blocked by signage, trees, etc., and she would like to see a sight line for egress.

Paul Lepard, Registered Landscape Architect, representing the applicant, said the proximity of the handicapped parking spaces was in the spirit of ADA requirements placing them closest to the accessible door and it is also consistent with Patient First's site development program. Certainly, we will discuss moving them down one stall.

Also, it would not be a problem providing sight triangles making sure there is no interference of sight lines for traffic exiting the site.

Mr. Spearman noted there were comments made by the County Planner in regards to the buffer for residential and the building being closer to the street than what normal setbacks would require.

Mr. Narcowich replied the applicant is requesting a waiver from requirement to provide architectural plans, but this is a building close to Old York Road and closer than the required setback of 40-45 feet, so it will have an impact on Old York Road and he feels that waiver should not be granted.

Ms. Gauthier commented that she has questions about the façade as well.

Mr. Spearman asked Mr. Narcowich if he feels this building is consistent with the intent of the revised zoning ordinance.

Mr. Narcowich replied there are several features that are consistent such as reasonable amount of windows and doors to wall ratio and the building is relatively close to the street.

Mr. Rosen clarified that the building shown in the rendering is what the proposed building will look like. Is that correct?

Mr. Right replied yes.

Ms. Yarnoff added that the existing building is closer to the street than what the proposed building will be.

Ms. Gauthier suggested low lying shrubs to buffer the transformer in front of the proposed building. She also suggested additional landscaping in the triangle area where the sign is located as well as street furniture such as a bench.

Mr. Penecale said existing lot is a flag lot and the waiver listed for lot shape is because the existing nonconforming lot was being altered. The shape remains the same as a flag lot and the frontage is proposed to be reduced slightly.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether the entire flag lot is zoned PB or is some of it in the R-2 Residential District?

Ms. Yarnoff replied the front portion is located in the PB District and the back is in the R-2 Residential District.

Ms. Gauthier suggested that the zoning should be noted on the plan.

Ms. Yarnoff replied to accommodate requests made by the County Planner, we added the location of the zoning line as well as a bike rack and, if there is an appropriate place, we will add a bench. We will also add landscaping around the sign area.

Ms. Gauthier asked will the sidewalks going across the existing driveway remain the same or be dug up?

Ms. Yarnoff replied they will stay the same.

Mr. Leopard noted that proposed is a variety of seasonal plant material for the site.

Mr. Matteo added that Dr. Rita Stevens of the Shade Tree Commission reviewed the landscaping plan and she was in favor of it.

Ms. Gauthier asked for the timeframe of when the demolition will begin for existing building and fencing for the demolition area. She also asked about roof equipment.

Mr. Right replied three weeks and fencing for demolition will be submitted with the building permit. There will be roof equipment for both HVAC units and they will be screened.

Ms. Gauthier asked about lighting for the site.

Mr. Penecale replied the applicant submitted a lighting plan and lighting standards comply with requirements of the zoning code and there is also an alternate lighting plan that the applicant is considering, which will be decided at time of building permit stage. The alternate plan increases the number of fixtures onsite, but the height would be reduced and also the wall-mounted fixtures would be reduced.

The reason why the lighting plan was not brought before the Planning Commission tonight was because in three separate areas they do not have the required number of foot candles.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any public comments. There were none.

Mr. Weggel asked about plans for signage and questioned whether there will be any standalone signs in which the rendering indicates.

Ms. Yarnoff replied our plan to be submitted for signage will comply with Township's ordinance. The signage will be similar to the rendering.

Mr. Penecale noted that freestanding signs are limited to 20 feet in height and required to have a minimum separation between the bottom side cabinet and grade.

Ms. Gauthier asked that a bike rack be added to the improvements and also additional planting and ground level shrubbery within the front yard buffer.

Mr. Penecale noted that the applicant has requested waivers from Section 146.11.A. – Property Identification Plan; Section 146.11.B – Existing Features Plan; Section 146-11.F.b. – Street Plan; Section 146-11.I – Phasing Plan; Section 146-11.J – Recreational Facilities Plan; Section 146-11.L – Architectural Plan; and Section 146-30 – Lots. Staff is in favor of these waivers requested by the applicant.

Mr. Rosen asked that the applicant affirm that what has been presented tonight is essentially what will be built because an architectural plan is one of the waiver requests.

Mr. Right provided a rendering of a Patient First building for members of the Planning Commission to review.

The Planning Commission voted on the waiver requests as listed and each one was unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to recommend approval to the full Board subdivision and land development application of PF Abington subject to conditions that the applicant relocates the ADA parking stall down two to three stalls to allow for better used of these stalls and this can be completed without the loss of any onsite stalls. The applicant is required to submit a sight line diagram of the southern-most driveway that will include all of the proposed landscaping and signage.

This plan is to be reviewed and approved by the Traffic Safety Officer prior to the installation of any improvements; a bike rack will be added to the improvements; the applicant should be required to add additional planting and ground level shrubbery within the front yard buffer; and the Planning Commissioner recommends a bench and trashcan to be added in front of the proposed new building.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments:

Mr. Penecale said in summary, the Planning Commission over the past three months has reviewed the proposed comprehensive zoning amendments. Four separate meetings have been held and a review of all of the proposed amendments has been completed.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed amended zoning ordinance items as listed in the March 17, 2015 summary prepared by Michael Narcowich Principal Community Planner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

It is the understanding of the Planning Commission that any revisions to the amended zoning ordinance will be forward to the Planning Commission for review and comment prior to adoption by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington.

Commissioner Kline thanked the members of the Planning Commission for their hard work on the revised draft zoning ordinance.

Historic Resource Survey Project:

Ms. Strackhouse provided information about historic resource surveys to members of the Planning Commission for review. A Historic Resource Survey is the principal tool for identifying historic properties and placing them in the local, state and/or national historic context.

We have been trying to get a historic resource survey for Abington Township for about five years now, and a few years ago, tried to find grant funds for it, but were unsuccessful. However, at this point in time, we were able to identify grant funding and were approved by the State and the Bucks County Heritage Conservancy is holding the grant for us up to \$20,000 towards our historic resource survey. We are requesting that the Township match that with inconsequential costs such as providing meeting space and by making copies.

She, along with Cathy Gauthier will conduct the survey with volunteers, and we have met with reps of the Bucks County Heritage Conservancy multiple times. The Bucks County Heritage Conservancy has funding that was given to them when the Montgomery County Conservancy disbanded that is for work to be done in Montgomery County.

We were provided with a scope of services by the Heritage Conservancy and a copy will be provided to members of the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners. The work product will be a historical resource survey of Abington Township and will be a reconnaissance survey, which means we will not look at every building built before 1960.

Some detail work has already been done. We will divide the Township by ward and volunteers will gather data and provide it to reps of Heritage Conservancy, who will compile it and submit a document and copies of that document will be provided to the Township as well as the State of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Gauthier added that the EAC indicated they would partner with us on data entry.

Mr. Weggel made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Rosen to support the undertaking of a historic resource survey for Abington Township.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Planning Commission Meeting

March 24, 2015

ADJOURNMENT: 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary