

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, October 22, 2019 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Chairperson Lucy Strackhouse presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: BROWN, GAUTHIER, COOPER.
DiCELLO, RUSSELL, ROSEN, ROBINSON,
BAKER, STRACKHOUSE

Also Present: Planning & Zoning Officer PENECALE
Office Manager WYRSTA
County Planner NARCOWICH

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES:

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Agenda Item PC1 - Application of Willow Grove, PA Retail, LLC:

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda item PC1 into the record and called on Mr. Penecale.

Mr. Penecale said Mr. Kaplan was notified that the application/plan will be reviewed and processed as a typical subdivision application. Township Solicitor’s Office informed that the standards contained within Section 1109 of the Zoning Ordinance do not apply to the plan as submitted.

Following review of the plan without exemptions from Section 1109 of the Zoning Ordinance, there are dimensional issues and others items to be addressed by the applicant as noted in staff review letter dated, September 19, 2019.

Mr. Craig Robert Lewis, Esquire, Kaplin/Stewart, 910 Harvest Drive, Suite 200, PO Box 3037, Blue Bell, PA., 19422, representing the applicant Willow Grove, PA Retail, LLC, said that his client is the owner of property located at 2620 West Moreland Road immediately adjacent to Willow Grove Park Mall, the former K-Mart site in which that building has been vacant for a number of years. In June 2019, applicant’s engineer submitted application seeking approval of a financial subdivision that is not bound by typical setback requirements as it is the overall tract that matters.

There was some back and forth between Mr. Penecale and Township Solicitor and ultimately the applicant was directed to process the application as a minor subdivision rather than in accordance with Section 1109 of the financial subdivision provisions. The property is approximately 9.5 acres located in the BC District and lawfully nonconforming with respect to many of the BC District's requirements such as impervious surface, setbacks, etc. Application proposes no physical improvements to the parameter and proposed is to create a second lot onsite to help attract a new tenant ultimately developing the corner fronting on Moreland Road. The new lot has cross access easement with the old lot and draft of the cross access easement has been reviewed and approved by Township Solicitor in which there will be sharing of parking to provide new lot with additional parking for potential new tenant.

The site itself is nonconforming in terms of impervious surface and we can maintain that through the subdivision process so long as the two resulting lots maintain the same level of impervious surface; however, the problem is almost all of the green space is located on Lot 2. At Home Store installed parking islands in the parking lot, so now Lot 1 is consistent at 91.4% impervious surface, and due to the amount of green space on Lot 2, its impervious coverage ratio dropped.

MCPC indicated their support of their plan and recommended that the applicant construct sidewalk/crosswalks connecting to existing sidewalks in this location, and the applicant will comply.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any comments from members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Baker asked what is the current total amount of impervious surface?

Mr. Lewis replied 91.5% with no stormwater management controls.

Mr. Baker asked for the maximum allowed per code?

Mr. Lewis replied 70%.

Mr. Baker clarified that the new subdivision Lot 1 will remain at 91%, what about Lot 2?

Mr. Lewis replied that is correct. Lot 2's new baseline will be 85.3%, although when the applicant comes in for land development process, that number will change.

Ms. Gauthier clarified that the plans will be revised to show those numbers. Is that correct?

Mr. Lewis replied yes. One of the comments listed in staff review letter is that the applicant must update zoning tabulation chart showing all nonconformities and conditions once subdivision is in effect.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether existing parking spaces are in compliance.

Mr. Lewis replied there are a total of 482 parking spaces and 360-370 are required, so it is in compliance and proposed Lot 2 under current configuration shows 85 parking spaces and cross access easement will provide an additional 19 spaces.

Ms. Gauthier suggested that since Lot 1 of existing At Home Store has approximately 100 extra spaces maybe some of that could be converted to green space to be more compliant with zoning ordinance.

Mr. Lewis replied that will be considered when land development is proposed and as soon as the applicant is able to invest in Lot 2 that will open opportunities to consider adding more green space.

Ms. Gauthier clarified that Lot 2 will be standalone. Is that correct?

Mr. Lewis replied yes. Bohler Engineers has looked at models to see what could fit on proposed Lot 2.

Ms. Gauthier noted that in the BC District the building placement should be on the corner.

Mr. Lewis replied that in terms of a retailer as well as the topography that is probably the best location.

Mr. Russell said due to the surplus of parking on Lot 1 are there any plans to further subdivide in the future?

Mr. Lewis replied he is not aware of any plans to subdivide the lot any further.

Ms. Gauthier said in regards to lot width from a public street, the BC District requires 300 feet and it looks less than that on West Moreland Road.

Mr. Penecale replied the applicant is exempt from dimensional requirements for the combination of both lots to be conforming.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether cross access easement should be delineated on the plan.

Mr. Penecale replied cross access easement was submitted to Township Solicitor's Office for review and was found to be acceptable.

Waivers requested by the applicant were as follows:

- Section 146-11.A – Property Identification Plan
- Section 146-11.B – Existing Features Plan
- Section 146.-11.C – Proposed Layout Plan
- Section 146.-11.D – Grading Plan
- Section 146.-11.L – Architectural Plan

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve the subdivision application of Willow Grove, PA Retail, LLC including all waiver requests as listed in Bohler Engineer's review letter, dated October 22, 2019 subject to conditions that the applicant provide a copy of proposed plan showing existing features to the Board of Commissioners; update the zoning tabulation sheet of the plan to show existing impervious surface; install sidewalk/crosswalk connection, and that the applicant review parking and green space such as removing some of the existing parking to provide additional green space.

The applicant agreed to provide proposed plan showing existing features as well as install sidewalk/crosswalk connection as long as it does not require a PennDOT HOP; and also agreed to review the amount of parking/green space.

MOTION was ADOPTED 9-0.

Vision 2035 – Abington's Comprehensive Plan:

Mr. Narcowich provided a copy of the upcoming Comp Plan Public Workshops that will be held from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. on November 7, 2019 at the Edge Hill Fire House; November 12, 2019 at the Crestmont Club House; November 18, 2019 at the McKinley Elementary School and December 9, 2019 at the Rydal Elementary School. Topics to be addressed include Vision, Major Themes and a Preserve-Enhance-Transform exercise.

He requested that members of the Planning Commission participate in any of the four workshops.

The Planning Commission agreed to participate.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary