

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, August 25, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Chairman, Mr. Don Marquardt presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: SPEARMAN, COOPER, GAUTHIER,
STRACKHOUSE, ROSEN, RUSSELL, MARQUARDT
Excused: WEGGEL, ROBINSON

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Marquardt expressed his personal sorrow for the loss of Mr. Charles Carter as he has known Charles for many years and he was a good man.

Agenda Item PC1 – Application of Penn State University:

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

Marc Jonas, Attorney with Eastburn & Gray, P.C., Suite 302, 470 Norristown Road, Blue Bell, PA., representing the applicant, Penn State University, said the Planning Commission previously had a microscopic view of the plan and there have been no changes in the building layout or key details of the plan.

The applicant is in receipt of a Township staff review letter dated, July 29, 2015 as well as a transportation review letter in which we feel all outstanding issues have been resolved, so we will comply with those review comments. We also received a review letter from the MCPC (Montgomery County Planning Commission) dated, August 12, 2015.

Also, Mr. Craig Bryson along with Dr. Karen Wiley Sandler, Chancellor for Penn State University as well as Mr. Matteo and Mr. Penecale met with reps of Temple Beth Am Synagogue to discuss their concerns about angle parking on the spur road, which is a Township road. Proposed are 40-50 additional parking spaces that would be for the use of the synagogue with no overnight parking and needs Township approval as it would be in the Township's right-of-way.

Craig Bryson, Engineer with Pennoni Associates, representing the applicant, provided a power point presentation of the elevations of the site plan and how the shuttle will run in terms of the stops it will make both campus-related and community-related.

The applicant will comply with comments listed in Township staff review letter dated, July 29, 2015; the review letter from MCPC dated, August 12, 2015 as well as a review letter from Township's Traffic Engineer, Traffic Planning & Design dated, July 21, 2015.

However, the applicant is in the process of discussing with the Fire Marshal about the fire lane in which he will work on a detailed plan, and that the only change to the plan from what has been reviewed previously.

In regards to stormwater management system; there are five stormwater management devices onsite, and they were shown on the plan. There is are underground basins with one main being a recharge that will recharge the two-year storm from pre-to-post development and the other one is rate control making sure the water does not race off of the site faster than it currently does.

One of the items listed in the transportation letter was that there should be a map identifying all shuttle stops that is provided by the campus and students will be assured of that shuttle service.

The shuttle will loop around every half hour and there will be two shuttles to offset each other and will run approximately every 15 minutes during peak hours for students to get to class. That may be adjusted when classes are not as full so no empty shuttles are running around town.

The remaining outstanding item listed in the transportation review letter was the sidewalk issue when students do want to walk and how they will get from primary sites to campus. Two routes were shown on the plan and both have sidewalks and crossings to campus. Literature to students will indicate these are the primary walking routes to the campus as the idea is to deter them from the spur road as there is no sidewalk there.

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

Ms. Gauthier asked is there a way to cut thru the Penn State field from Abington School District?

Mr. Bryson replied there is a sidewalk provided and then they can walk on the lawn, but when they get to a certain point, there is no sidewalk. However, though master planning efforts they are looking at possibly putting in a crossing at this location.

Mr. Matteo clarified that sidewalks could be installed there in the future working with the Abington School District. Is that correct?

Chancellor Sandler replied that is correct.

Mr. Marquardt commented that the safety concern is students walking at that intersection on Susquehanna Road.

Mr. Rosen questioned whether there has been any contemplation given to using university personnel or resources to make sure the students take the safest route.

Chancellor Sandler replied we will try our best to educate the students.

Ms. Gauthier asked for the location of the closest fire hydrant.

Mr. Bryson replied there is one proposed right in front of the site.

Ms. Gauthier asked about additional parking on the spur road.

Mr. Bryson replied the idea is to work with reps of the synagogue to develop the Old York Road spur road to accommodate organized parking for the synagogue, which will be code compliant.

Ms. Strackhouse commented that students will still take the shortcut on Old York Road.

Mr. Bryson replied we are anticipating a 20-25 walk to campus, so if we keep the shuttles running every 15 minutes, the logical thing would be to take the shuttle as they would get to school faster.

Ms. Strackhouse suggested that at some point in the future, she asked that reps of the university consider having a crossing guard there during high traffic time.

Chancellor Sandler replied that the shuttle schedule will be set up per semester and will correlate with class times.

Ms. Strackhouse said in regards to the garden in the middle of the campus; it was discussed that water collection systems will be installed along with vegetation and she asked that there be a maintenance plan for that garden.

Mr. Bryson replied we do have a maintenance plan for it and also the Township will have the right to inspect it.

Mr. Marquardt commented that he, along with his neighbors had concerns about the location of the trash containers being on the side of the building where the neighbors reside and the noise associated with trash collection.

Mr. Jonas replied we are prepared to regulate the hours of trash collection to alleviate concerns by the neighbors.

Ms. Gauthier referred to Item #28 listed under Planning & Zoning Office in the Township staff review letter and clarified that the applicant will comply. Is that correct?

Mr. Jonas replied we cannot alter the location of the trash dumpster and placement of the emergency generator, but we can control the hours of trash collection. We can also control the hours of when testing of the generator occurs weekly.

Ms. Gauthier commented then the applicant cannot comply with all comments listed in Township staff review letter as previously stated.

Mr. Penecale replied condition of approval could be stated that the items listed in Township staff review letter, dated July 29, 2015 are to be taken under consideration by the Board of Commissioners, which would address the ongoing map issue in terms of EDU's; the issue of the fire lane; and the generator and dumpster issue, etc.

Mr. Cooper commented that at some time in the future, the university will need to solve the safety issue where students will be crossing at Susquehanna Road.

Mr. Penecale noted there are four waivers requested by the applicant as follows:

1. Section 146-11. A – Property Identification Plan
2. Section 146-11.B – Existing Features Plan
3. Section 146-11. F – Recreational Facilities Plan
4. Section 146-11.K – Planning Module

Staff is in favor of the waiver requests; however the applicant and Township are still working on the number of EDU's needed for the project.

Ms. Gauthier noted there was a comment listed in the MCPC review letter regarding plan information that should be shown on the plan and should that be included in the waivers?

Mr. Penecale replied no, because the steep slope is being controlled by the installation of a retaining wall that the applicant is installing.

Also, perimeter buffer of the development site will include a substantial number of plants and that information was forwarded to the Shade Tree Commission for review.

Each waiver request was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0.

Mr. Penecale summarized that there was discussion tonight about a walkway from the Huntingdon Road Sports Complex to the campus and also that the applicant and reps of Temple Beth Am continue to work on public parking on the spur road.

Ms. Gauthier asked about bus stop signage on Memorial Island.

Mr. Matteo replied that we will look into it.

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

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to recommend approval of the application subject to the conditions as previously stated by Mr. Penecale as well as comments listed in Township staff review letter dated, July 29, 2015 be taken into consideration by the Board of Commissioners and also to recommended approval of waivers requested by the applicant as listed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary