

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 as a Zoom webinar and teleconference with Ms. Lucy Strackhouse, Chairperson presiding.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:31 p.m.

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

Also Present: County Planner NARCOWICH  
Township Engineer MONTGOMERY  
Engineering Consultant PRUGAR  
Administrative Manager WYRSTA

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting of February 25, 2020.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Agenda Item PC1 – Application of JSF Management, LLC – property located at 1538-1546 Easton Road, Abington, PA, 19001:

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda Item PC1 into the record, and asked the applicant to present their plan.

Mr. Matthew McHugh, Attorney, Klehr, Harrison, Harvey, Branzburg, LLP, representing the applicant, introduced Mr. John Alejnikov, P.E. Bohler Engineering and Ms. Bailey Gaffney, Mr. Randy Jones, and Mr. Beau Gunn of Johnson Development, and stated that this is a lot consolidation and proposed development of a 90,000-plus sq. ft. self-storage facility on two existing tracts located at 1538-1546 Easton Road. The applicant appeared before the Zoning Hearing Board last year and received variances relating to height, foundation plantings and loading area, and since then submitted land development plans that have been reviewed by Boucher & James and the revised plans are presented before the Planning Commission this evening.

Mr. Alejnikov presented aerial photo showing existing structures; accessory structure in the rear and parking area. Also presented was a rendering of proposed building with office area on the lower level.

Mr. McHugh noted there are existing nonconformities and we will be significantly improving a number of them. Also, granted by the ZHB was a height variance up to 45 feet.

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

Mr. Cooper questioned whether the building will be four or five stories.

Mr. Alejnikov replied it is four stories above-grade with additional one floor below grade. There is a substantial grade change from the back of the site to the front. Site rendering showed the highest elevation point at 295 and grade falls across the property to proposed entrance at an elevation of 279.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether retaining walls will be needed as well as will the entire first floor be underground or just a portion of it?

Mr. Alejnikov replied the building will be used as a retaining wall. The entire first floor will be located underground.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for the percentage that the impervious surface will be decreased.

Mr. Alejnikov replied slightly under 20% and a lot more green area will be provided than what is there today. Rendering showed buffering, landscaping, street trees along the front and shrubs planted along the building as well as around the trash enclosure. A variance was granted for foundation plantings along the frontage at the entrance, but because they would not thrive there, a buffer was added on the opposite side and the plantings would be placed elsewhere onsite.

Ms. Strackhouse noted the Shade Tree Commission recommended planting Dogwood Trees.

Mr. Alejnikov replied as part of the NPDES permit we will use native species.

Ms. Gauthier said the Shade Tree Commission recommended three Honey Locusts in the front and she prefers that the Sourwood Tree remain as proposed as it is an under-story tree. Also, will the fence in the back by the Center School be replaced?

Mr. Alejnikov replied he does not believe the fence is on the applicant's property. There is a portion of retaining wall that will be removed. If the fence is damaged during construction, it will be removed.

Mr. McHugh said the applicant submitted revisions and will comply with items listed in Boucher & James' review letter, and there are also waivers requested. The Fire Marshal's review letter dated December 18, 2019 is a will-comply by the applicant.

Mr. Baker questioned the grid shown on the back of the property.

Mr. Alejnikov replied that is pervious paver's area for fire truck access in the rear of the property and the Fire Marshal indicated there should be access from three sides of the building, and that is being counted as pervious surface.

Mr. Baker clarified that the height of the building will be 46 feet at the front, which will be twice as big as any other property, and he is glad to see how the front façade is being handled. Also, the applicant received a waiver to move the dumpster closer to the building and he suggested noncombustible construction behind the dumpster, if not, then some type of rated construction.

Ms. Gauthier said she does not see any of the Fire Marshal's issues addressed on the plan. Also, the applicant requested a waiver from a radius of 20 to 15 feet and the trucks need to be able to maneuver around the building.

Mr. McHugh replied we will comply with the Fire Marshal's review letter.

Mr. Alejnikov added that truck turning templates were provided to the Fire Marshal who reviewed it.

Ms. Montgomery said she will reach out to the Fire Marshal for confirmation.

Mr. Narcowich said an island is required to separate inbound/outbound lanes and it can be flat to serve as a visual cue for traffic safety.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether the island could be constructed using different pavers.

Mr. Narcowich replied yes.

Mr. Alejnikov agreed to provide a flat island.

Ms. Gauthier asked about security or fencing onsite.

Mr. Alejnikov replied there will be no gate at the entrance to the driveway as the building is completely contained.

Ms. Gaffney added that all units will be contained inside the building and there will be surveillance of each of the entry/access points. Each customer is required to have an access code to get into the building. Hours of operation – office hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Sunday and access hours for customers are from 6 a.m. – 10 p.m.

Waivers requested by the applicant as follows:

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Russell to approve waiver request from Sections 146-11A (4); 146-11B (3) and 146-11B (7) - showing improvements within 400 ft. of the site.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Russell to approve waiver request from Section 146-35C 2 to permit use of PVC pipe for sanitary lateral in-lieu-of ductile iron pipe.

Ms. Prugar noted that PVC pipe is typical for sanitary sewer.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Strackhouse to approve waiver request from Section 146-41B (5) (a) – to permit proposed trash enclosure to be located three feet from the building in-lieu-of required 15 feet.

Mr. Alejnikov said the plan shows where the trash enclosure can fit onsite.

Mr. Narcowich asked about a self-latching gate on the trash enclosure, which is a zoning requirement.

Mr. McHugh replied the applicant will comply.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0 – conditioned upon that the trash enclosure has self-latching gate.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Russell to approve waiver request from Section 146-43 ( c ) (3) a – to propose grades of 33.33% referred to as 3:1 slope in-lieu-of the maximum permitted 15%.

Mr. Alejnikov said using 3:1 slope will allow for additional retaining walls around the perimeter of the property.

Mr. DiCello questioned whether 3:1 slope would cause a problem for a fire truck extending its ladder.

Mr. Alejnikov replied no. There is a graded flat area onsite at about six or seven percent slope as shown on the plan.

Ms. Gauthier asked about reducing runoff and whether a green roof is proposed.

Mr. Alejnikov replied there will be no green roof. There is an underground detention basin for reducing runoff from the site.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Waiver listed as No. 5 in the Bohler Engineering letter dated February 20, 2020 as revised February 24, 2020, is from Section 146-25 D to permit curb line to have a rounded tangential arc of radius of 15 feet in-lieu-of required 20 feet. This has been reviewed by the County as part of their HOP process and they did not oppose it.

Ms. Prugar said this waiver is not needed. After further review of the ordinance, this section applies to street intersections and not a driveway intersecting a street.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Russell to approve waiver request from Section 146-41 B D – to permit a building three or more stories and to not have two means of access of a minimum of 25 feet in width from the roadway to the building.

Mr. Alejnikov said the Fire Marshal indicated that he could get to the building from the street, side and rear of the building.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0. – conditioned upon that the Fire Marshal concurs.

MCPC Review Letter dated January 31, 2020:

Mr. Narcowich said the front door is required to face the street, so was a variance obtained?

Mr. McHugh replied no variance was obtained and the applicant will review that from a design perspective.

Mr. Alejnikov added that building design has not been finalized yet; however, if a door needs to be added, we will comply.

Mr. Narcowich said proposed species of street trees are decorative, and although there are spatial constraints, it is recommended that the applicant consult with the Shade Tree Commission. Also, the STC indicated there is room for shade trees.

Ms. Gauthier noted the plan shows Honey Locusts and Red Buds.

Mr. Narcowich said in regards to street furniture; benches and trash/recycling receptacles shall be provided every 100 feet; bicycle racks shall be provided every 200 feet and planters shall be provided every 50 feet. At least half of the bike racks should be covered or consist of bike locks.

Ms. Gauthier commented that there is a Roslyn Revitalization Plan of 2009.

Mr. McHugh said we will look to see what is recommended for this area as it is a zoning requirement.

Mr. Narcowich said the Abington Master Bike Plan notes Easton Road as one of the bike routes, and for this section, wayfinding signs are recommended along the segment and that should be coordinated with the Township as to whether bike signage is required at this site.

Ms. Gauthier suggested recommending to the Board of Commissioners that a fee-in-lieu-of be provided by the applicant as a contribution as opposed to installing signage.

Mr. McHugh commented that we would be willing to put a note on the plan to defer until the Township indicates when that is necessary.

Mr. Narcowich suggested deferring to the Township as well as Township Solicitor.

Mr. Russell clarified that the island is also a requirement in addition to the front door location. Is that correct?

Mr. Narcowich replied yes. The island shall separate ingress/egress, which can be flat.

Ms. Gauthier clarified that items for condition of approval include fencing in the back of the building; street furniture; front door facing the street; self-latching gate for trash enclosure and that placement of trees do not block emergency exit.

Mr. Baker asked about a lighting plan.

Mr. Alejnikov replied we will comply with Township requirements and the plan shows internal lighting for the site.

Mr. Rosen said lighting is very important for an isolated building with bad sightlines from the street as there is the potential for access late at night, so from a liability point of view and not just compliance, he recommended more lighting than what is required.

Mr. Narcowich noted there are seven light fixtures shown on the plan.

Mr. Alejnikov replied we will design it to comply with requirements of the ordinance and we will look at providing extra lighting to provide a safe experience.

Ms. Bailey added that the entire building will be alarmed and a camera can be installed facing the fenced area for security purposes.

Mr. Russell noted that rendering shows a cobra-head street light, and there is an existing black wrought-iron pedestrian-scale light that aligns with the entrance of existing building that does not appear to be in conflict with any proposed driveways, so the applicant will want to protect and maintain it.

Mr. Alejnikov agreed.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any public comments. There were none.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve the application of JSF Management, LLC property located at 1538-1546 Easton Road, Abington, PA, 19001, subject to conditions that the Fire Marshal approves of the radius of curve into the lot; that the applicant obtain a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board in regards to requirement that the front door faces the street or revise the plan showing that the front door will face the street, which needs to be resolved; install an island to separate two lanes of traffic into the driveway; street furniture; benches, trash/recycling receptacles shall be provided every 100 feet; bicycle racks shall be provided every 200 feet and planters shall be provided every 50 feet. At least half of the bike racks should be covered or consist of bike locks; and the applicant will defer to the Township and Township Solicitor in regards to the Abington Master Bike Plan regarding wayfinding signage to be posted onsite. Also, waivers were approved as listed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 8-0.

Agenda Item PC2 – Upper Moreland Township – Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan Review:

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda Item PC2 into the record.

Mr. Narcowich said the draft would be Upper Moreland's first adopted plan by its Board of Commissioners. As it relates to Abington, it recommends to plan cooperatively on strategic areas such as economic development; potential revitalization; pursuing grants together and the potential for going out to bid for a business association that crosses municipal lines to obtain greater critical mass for the good of the Willow Grove downtown area; also coordinating bicycle routes.

Ms. Gauthier commented that Abington is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan and that should be included in Upper Moreland's draft. Also, she suggested the mapping overlap with Abington and other communities and that the boundary lines of Abington and Upper Dublin should be clearer on the maps.

The Planning Commission supports recommendations of cooperative planning where there are shared interests with Upper Moreland Township and to include Abington's updated Comprehensive Plan in its draft plan.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary