

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, January 7, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Chairman Don Marquardt presiding.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Commissioner KLINE  
Planning & Zoning Official PENECALE  
County Planner NARCOWICH

Commissioners SPIEGELMAN, SANCHEZ,  
DiPLACIDO  
Zoning Hearing Board Members ECKEL,  
DiPRIMIO  
EAC Chairperson SHERWOOD

**PLEDGE OF ALEGIANCE**

Mr. Marquardt read agenda Item PC1 into the record and noted that the Planning Commission has scheduled the next presentation of the Draft Zoning Ordinance for Monday, January 26, 2015 with a scheduled start time of 7:00 PM. This meeting will be held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor boardroom of the Abington Township Administration Building.

Commissioner Kline said tonight, we will continue to review of Draft Two Zoning Ordinance dated, November, 2014, and we will discuss the CS Community Service District; the MS Main Street (MS-H, MS-L & MS-VC Districts) ; BC Business Center District; SI Suburban Industrial (SI-G and SIW) District and RC Recreational Conservation District.

At the Planning Commission meeting on December 4, 2014, we discussed the Planning Commission's role in the review process. There was an overview of the zoning map changes. We reviewed definition changes and additions; use regulation changes and additions; changes to the Residential District (R1-R-4) as well as the Apartment/Office (AO).

Our next meeting will be Monday, January 26, 2015 at 7 PM.

**Community Service (CS) District:**

Permitted Uses:

The new permitted uses are as follows: Community Center, which was moved from accessory use; Place of Worship Class #2 and Class #3; School/College; Laboratory & Testing; and Conservation/Recreational.

Accessory Uses:

Existing uses - Commercial Antennas and Roof/Struc. Mtd Telecom was put into separate categories and Fences and Walls uses will be in most of the districts.

New uses added were Chapel, Chickens, Club House, Day Care Child, Day Care Adult, Dining Facilities, Outdoor Dining, Outdoor Recreation, Play Structures, Residential Accessory Structure, Swimming Pool, Tennis/Sports Court, Bank, and Medical Clinic.

Community Center was removed and put into permitted uses.

Special Exception Uses:

Existing – Day Care, Adult and Day Care Child – these uses can be accessory uses to a community center or to a place of worship, but if they are the primary uses, they will require special exception approval.

Emergency Service use remains and Medical Clinic use was removed.

Proposed Conditional Uses:

It was noted that the difference between special exception uses and conditional uses are that special exception approval is by the Zoning Hearing Board and conditional use approval is by the Board of Commissioners.

Existing uses – Hospital, Library, Museum, Cultural Center, Life Care Facility, Municipal Complex, Nursing Home and Recreation Outdoor.

New uses added – Farmers’ Market – Seasonal, Community Service Planned Development, Place of Worship Class #1 and Art Gallery/Museum.

Special Development Regulations:

**Rt. 611 Frontage**

Mr. Penecale said existing regulations that have not changed are that there is a five acre minimum as well a lot width, lot depth, front, side and rear yard setbacks, impervious coverage, building coverage and building separation.

Maximum building height has been increased to 65 ft. for a hospital use, but with greater setback requirements. Maximum building length remains the same; however, the required offset was increased to 10 feet.

**Other Road Frontage**

Mr. Penecale said existing regulations that have not changed are that there is a five-acre minimum as well a lot width, lot depth, front, side and rear yard setbacks.

Maximum building coverage has been decreased from 30% to 25%. Maximum building height has been increased to 65 ft. for a hospital use, but with greater setback requirements. Maximum building length remains the same; however, the required offset was increased to 10 ft.

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

Ms. Gauthier clarified that the Community Service District is not being expanded just slightly altered. Is that correct?

Mr. Penecale replied that is correct. The two areas are Willow Hill and an area near SPS where the parking lot was zoned CS Community Service, so now the parking lots will be rezoned to SI Suburban Industrial and the parks that were zoned R-4 will be rezoned to RC-Recreational Conservation.

Ms. Gauthier asked is the impervious surface increase to accommodate some additional parking for commercial service uses that need on-lot parking?

Mr. Penecale replied no. The existing requirement for the Community Service District is that 70% coverage is permitted if there is frontage on Old York Road and it is 38% coverage if the property fronts on any other street in Abington Township. 38% seemed like an odd number, so we increased it to 40%.

Commissioner Kline added that we decreased building coverage and increased impervious coverage because of the parking requirements, so that it is more realistic for when proposals come into the Township and there will be fewer issues with parking requirements.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether consideration could be given to rezone existing churches to the CS District.

Commissioner Kline replied we considered that they would become CS – Community Service pockets throughout the Township and, because they are existing nonconforming in one way, shape or form, they would still remain nonconforming and would operate under the same process as they do now.

However, it is an issue worth discussing further and he feels the Board of Commissioners will provide more input than what members of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee did because they live in the areas where these churches are throughout the entire Township. We will put that on our list of recommendations for future consideration.

Mr. Marquardt questioned whether the maximum building length required offset of 10 feet was based on anything specific.

Mr. Penecale replied currently, within the zoning ordinance the requirement for an offset is three foot or five foot, and as a committee, we felt that was not adequate and we were looking at a second break.

Mr. Narcowich added that he feels it could be larger because Community Service buildings are typically more bulky and the intention was to have a significant offset. It will help buildings in Main Street Districts and to fit in more with surrounding area.

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

### **Main Street District:**

#### Overview

Commissioner Kline continued that the Main Street District is one of the major changes incorporated into the revised zoning ordinance. Main Street Districts are primarily small commercial districts and were formerly known as the (TC) Town Commercial, (SC) Special Commercial and (M) Mixed Use Districts.

These areas are concentrated in neighborhood centers and on Easton Road and many of these areas such as Roslyn, McKinley and Keswick have main street plans/revitalization plans. Most of these small commercial areas are slammed up against residential districts and closely resemble property sizes and how they are connected to residential neighborhoods.

In the Main Street District, there are sub-districts that have common standards, and added to those common standards based on specific areas of the Township are Main Street – Low Intensity (MS-L), Main Street-High Intensity (MS-H) and Main Street-Village Center (MS-VC) Districts.

Factors that determine sub-districts are existing uses; traffic patterns and traffic counts; relationship to residential neighborhoods and/or larger commercial districts; and size of properties.

Main Street MS-H map changes show Mt. Carmel Avenue, Edge Hill Road and Easton Road with train tracks running along properties and the properties along the south side of Mt. Carmel that are currently zoned Mixed Use would be rezoned to MS-H District.

There are a series of MS-H Districts in the northern section of Easton Road and Old York Road near the Willow Grove Park Mall. The MS-H is primarily where the Trolley Stop location is and a portion on Easton Road where the car dealerships are located and the northern section of Old York Road from Edge Hill Bridge north to Moreland Road.

Another section of MS-H is Rydal Park and the Noble Town Center. The northern section of this area up to Rydal Way will be rezoned from PB Planned Business to MS-H District.

#### Allowable Use- MS-H versus SC

Allowable Uses in MS-H compare to the SC Special Commercial District and new uses were added as listed.

Uses removed were Convenience Store, Veterinary Clinic, Assembly Plant, Distribution Center, Lumber Yard, Warehouse/Storage Facility, Wholesale Facility and Medical Clinic or Office, and Drive-Thru Facility.

#### Special Exception Uses – MS-H versus SC:

New uses were added such as Convenience Store, Veterinary Clinic, Medical Clinic or Office and Movie Theater (Small).

Uses removed were Automotive Service, Dry Cleaners (Onsite), Hotel/Motel/Inn, Place of Worship Classes 1, 2, & 3.

Conditional Uses – MS-H versus SC:

Three uses were added such as Telecommunication Towers and School or College-Public/Private.

Uses removed were Amusement Park, Movie (Small) Movie (Multiplex).

Dimensional Changes – MS-H versus SC:

Lot area for SC was 10,000 sq. ft., and in the MS-H there are two classes: Class I is 15,000 sq. ft. and Class II is 30,000 sq. ft.

Density calculations; the SC District currently allows for no residential and for the MS-H the density calculation is 10 units per acre and for the twin dwelling unit that would be eight dwelling units per acre.

Lot area went from 10,000 sq. ft. to 15,000 sq. ft in the MS-H Class I and Class II 30,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Marquardt asked what is the difference between Class I and Class II?

Commissioner Kline replied the classes are based on the size of the property, so 15,000 sq. ft.-30,000 sq. ft. is Class I and 30,000 sq. ft. or above is Class II.

Permitted residential uses - for multifamily dwellings a minimum of 7,500 sq. ft. per unit on the property and for twins 3,750 sq. ft. of property per unit is required.

Lot Width – 100 ft. for Class I and Class II is 150 ft.

Lot Depth – currently is 100 ft. and in the new regulations we do not designate the lot depth.

Green Area goes from 20% and for Class I will be 25% and Class II will be 35%. For residential area except for multifamily, the green area goes to 55%, and for multifamily the green area goes to 10%.

Maximum separation currently is 30 feet and we reduced it to 20 feet.

The large building on lot must have at least 50% of its front façade located on the build-to-zone.

The MS Districts allow for a street wall possibility and, if there is a street wall, a setback of 70 feet is permitted.

Mr. Marquardt asked for a clarification on the meaning of “street wall.”

Commissioner Kline explained that in most of the commercial districts specifically in the smaller commercial districts we want to encourage pedestrian traffic and, in doing that, we want the buildings closer to pedestrian traffic as opposed to the parking lot.

If redevelopment proposes to put the building within the build-to-zone the building would be closer, but if that is not possible, there would be the ability to put in a street wall, which separates pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk and the parking area.

Mr. Narcowich added that it is stipulated that it has to be a low decorative fence or wall with specifications of what decorative means with landscaping on the street side.

Mr. Weggel asked is there a range of heights for the fence/wall.

Mr. Narcowich replied yes, 2 ½ feet high, but there is a range of 36 to 42 inch high street wall. It is intentionally low so as to be an informal definition between the street and the property that helps the pedestrian feel more protected and also screens headlights.

Commissioner Kline continued that front yard setbacks are not applicable in the new district and side yard setbacks going from 20 feet in the SC District to MS-H Class 1 to 15 feet and 30 feet in Class II. Rear yard setback going from 25 feet in the SC and for the MS-H it will be 20 feet in Class I and 35 feet in Class II.

There are specific setbacks when a property abuts a residential property, and in the SC District it is 20 feet and has been increased in MS-H Class I to 40 feet and Class II will be 55 feet in order to create a greater separation between residential and commercial properties.

Trash enclosures will be regulated and will have to be 20 feet from any abutting residential property.

Maximum building coverage in the SC is 40% and this regulation will not be applicable in the MS-H as well as building footprint. There will be a minimum façade length of 20 feet and that is to provide some continuity of the properties in the commercial districts.

We also designated percentages for window area, which is percentage of windows for overall façade with the ground floor at 45% and upper stories need to be 25% and street facing facades above 12 feet have to be 25%.

Parking regulations – parking from street wall and landscaping has to be five feet. Maximum width parking between principal building and side lot is 70 feet. Parking setback from abutting residential has to be at least 20 feet and most of the 20 feet is taken by the new landscape buffer requirements. Minimum street access will be 25 feet.

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

Mr. Spearman asked is the regulation of 20 foot façade for a two-story building?

Mr. Narcowich replied yes.

Mr. Spearman commented that some of the permitted uses may not have two-story buildings, which complicates, and how was it calculated?

Mr. Penecale replied it is average grade to median point of a pitched-roof and average grade to the lowest level of the parapet for flat roof and there are height exceptions to allow for parapets, water tanks, elevators, staircase towers, etc.

Commissioner Kline said the front façade is classified from the lowest point along grade to either the eve line or the top of the parapet wall. From the commercial corridor standpoint, we felt that a little more in building height would allow for greater elements for design of the buildings and to create a more substantial commercial setup as opposed to smaller, lower buildings that could be construed as residential buildings.

It may be considered that a percentage of the building has to be a certain height as opposed to the entire façade.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she takes issue with “requiring residential in commercial areas and also about giving incentives such as in Baederwood.”

Commissioner Kline replied there is no requirement for residential in MS Districts. It is a permitted use and it is permitted as part of a mixed use building, but it is not a requirement.

Ms. Lehmann continued to express concern about building up to the street.

Commissioner Kline said this resident has previously brought this up at several Board of Commissioner meetings and this is something the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee did not consider lightly.

A zoning ordinance draft is not only a land use regulation, but also a policy decision for the Board of Commissioners to evaluate and make a determination as to whether or not to revitalize the Township’s commercial districts. In analyzing that, the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee decided, through education by our rep from MCPC and by our own experience, that a greater expansion of a well-thought-of mixture of uses for properties in both small and large commercial districts would be worthwhile for the Township.



It would afford property owners greater ability to invest in their properties and it would also give property owners greater ability to utilize their properties on multiple levels and, hopefully as seen in other locations, a tool for properties being maintained and commercial areas becoming more vibrant.

The Township is 98% built-out so the only way to achieve greater tax revenue from our commercial districts without affecting residential property owners is to find a responsible way to allow for greater expansion of the Township's commercial properties and hopefully bring in a larger share of commercial tax revenue while not burdening residential property owners in the future.

Regarding bringing buildings closer to property lines; we feel it promotes greater pedestrian traffic and a better connection to pedestrians. The requirement is not for all buildings to be closer, but 50% of them, and that would promote a better pedestrian experience instead of seeing parking fields in front of buildings.

Mr. Weggel said with respect to the build-to-line; how would the Township insure in this ordinance, that redevelopment does not end up like Jenkintown, but rather something like Chestnut Hill wherein both areas the buildings are close to the property line; however, one seems to work and the other does not.

Commissioner Kline replied there is a list of design standards such as brick-stone, gables, porches, canopies, etc., and some of those elements need to be incorporated in the façade design that will create some level of design as opposed to just a blank wall.

It's a fact that by maintaining vibrant commercial areas allowing for businesses to succeed and giving property owners greater flexibility will help to maintain occupancy; maintain employment; maintain potential for increased property values and all of that would equate to tax revenue for the Township; however, it was not our primary goal to raise tax revenue. The main objective was to create regulations to help those struggling commercial businesses move forward.

Mr. Spearman said it would be good to know whether it will be realistic for these areas that are now Old York Road and Easton Road to encourage transition to street fronts and street walls, and if so, over what period of time or do those tools ever apply to just a building center such as in Keswick where some of it is already in place.

Mr. Penecale replied the goal was to have the tools available in the event that those properties are redeveloped, but he does not know how many years it would take to implement.

Traditionally, over the 20-plus years he has been working for the Township, the human cry from the development-end has been that the commercial corridors are not deep enough. From the residential side from the abutting neighbors it has always been said to hold the line that they do want the commercial districts any deeper and not to encroach farther into the neighborhoods, so in his opinion, it made sense to try to accommodate both ends.

The objective is to try to pull the buildings forward so as to create vehicular traffic behind the building; for the parking lot to be more of a buffer; and increase the landscape buffering between the commercial and residential districts and add in elements for the berm, fencing and landscaping. So basically the activity that would be behind the building would be less intense than there is now.

Mr. Spearman asked is it expected that the Township would have to aggregate a number of properties along the street in order to do that?

Mr. Penecale replied we are seeing that now such as with the redevelopment of a professional office building (DJS Company) on Old York Road where several buildings were removed and one new building was built with ample offsite parking and egress/ingress off of a side street.

Mr. Narcowich said there is no timeline for how long it might take to cause the Main Street Districts to transition in the form that we envision. These types of design standards are being implemented in areas such as in Lower Merion, Bryn Mawr and Haverford.

It will be in transition where it will not happen overnight, but we see new uses being developed such as restaurants, banks, etc., and the parking is to the rear with decorative street wall and the feel is that the pedestrian is more respected. It is safer to walk and the design has better character and more interesting architectural features.

Mr. Penecale said collectively as a group, two of the things we spent ample amount of time on were recommendations from the Old York Road Corridor Study and also it is exactly what the Township has already designated as its goals and objectives as part of its Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Kline said the bottom line from the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee's deliberations are that we determined that the current structure of the zoning ordinance did not work, so this is our proposed solution and it may not be without changes or edits, but we feel it achieves the goals and objectives of the Township from numerous documents that have been created.

Ms. Gauthier asked Mr. Narcowich if he feels what Abington Township is proposing is consistent with State planning, Keystone principles and DVRPC and MCPC initiatives and their comprehensive plan.

Mr. Narcowich replied yes, it is part of the general transit planning to restore a sense of ways to preserve community character and make places walkable and also to be interesting places with real quality where you would want to spend time in.

Main Street District – map changes for MS-L:

Commissioner Kline continued that the area along Shady Lane and Huntingdon Pike where the Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center and the Hollywood section will become MS-L. There is also a section on Township Line near the hospital that will become MS-L. Also in the McKinley section where the fire house is located and the section that goes through Township Line Road.

The Ardsley area where Joe's Market is located and the area where the VFW is located and where there are condos will become MS-L.

The North Hills area on Mt. Carmel and Limekiln Pike that is currently zoned Mixed Use will become MS-L and the MS-H area is up against the train tracks.

In the Roslyn area on Easton Road where the Mt. Vernon Gardens is located will become MS-L.

In the Willow Grove area there is the section where Mad Max is located as well as the condo section and also sections east of the Dollar Store on Moreland Road. Also there is the section between the car dealerships and Willow Grove Park Mall and a small area that connects with the MS-H District where the car dealerships back into the Crestmont Train Station.

The only MS-L section on Old York Road is the southern end of the Noble/Fairway area where the Starbucks is located as well as the TD Bank and shopping center.

Mr. Marquardt questioned whether the Noble area-shopping center is a higher density area.

Mr. Penecale replied currently that area is zoned TC-Town Commercial, and because the existing uses are individual with no shared-parking complex or shopping center design element, we felt it was best to rezone it MS-L.

Commissioner Kline added that we also felt it transitioned to the Jenkintown area that has smaller properties.

Mr. Penecale said a lot of discussion took place about the zoning of MS-L and MS-H Districts with the individual Commissioners making sure they were comfortable with the uses and zoning proposed for these areas.

Allowable Use – MS-L versus M:

Commissioner Kline continued that some new uses were added that are consistent with less intensity zoning and some were removed as listed.

Accessory Uses – MS-L versus M:

Commissioner Kline noted that new uses were added as listed.

Special Exception Uses – MSL versus M:

Commissioner Kline noted that new uses were added and some were removed as listed.

Conditional Uses – MS-L versus M:

Commissioner Kline noted that new uses were added and some were removed as listed.

Dimensional Changes – MS-L versus M:

Commissioner Kline said there are similar changes for the lot area and class designations for the MS-L Zoning District such as Class I would be 10,000 sq. ft. and for Class II would be 20,000 sq. ft. These are the same calculations for dwelling units and required property space needed. Lot width is 100 feet and 50 feet for residential and 150 feet in Class II.

Green area is currently 45% for single-family dwelling and 25% for apartments in nonresidential, and for the MS-L, it is capped at 35% and 55% for residential uses and 25% for multifamily.

Minimum separation will be 20 feet similar to MS-H and building size (largest building on the lot) must have 50% of the front façade located in the build-to-zone.

It is the same requirements for MS-L as MS-H for the build-to-zone minimum and maximum 15 to 20 feet, respectively and 70 feet for buildings off of the curb line.

Front yard setbacks 10 feet or zero for sharing a party wall. There are similar regulations where we designated setbacks from residential properties with building setbacks of a minimum 40 feet where it used to be 20 feet and for any type of outdoor trash enclosure it is regulated as 20 feet.

Currently, there is a regulation of 45% building coverage and that requirement has been eliminated in the MS-L and it is designated by the actual maximum footprint of the building, façade height and parking requirements that designates an impervious coverage.

Window areas are slightly less than in the MS-H District.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any comments/questions from members of the Planning Commission. There were none.

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

Map changes – MS-VC:

Commissioner Kline said there are only two locations in the VC Village Center District and they are in Keswick Village where the Keswick Theater is located and also the Glenside/Weldon site.

In the Roslyn area, the VC straddles Susquehanna Road to Woodland Avenue and most of the VC District in Roslyn is covered in the Roslyn Revitalization Plan.

Mr. Penecale added that it is currently zoned Mixed Use and Town Commercial.

Allowable Uses – MS-VC versus TC:

Commissioner Kline said new uses were added mostly because they already exist such as shopping centers and supermarkets, but most will be eliminated due to size of the properties, and for the remaining existing uses we will continue regulating them. Hotel/Mote/Inn was added in this zoning district because possibly this would be a good location for a small boutique hotel.

Also the Apartment/Condo Building and Boarding House are existing permitted uses in this district.

Accessory Uses – MS-VC versus TC:

Commissioner Kline said the accessory uses are the same as they are throughout the entire Main Street District.

Special Exception Uses – MS-VC versus TC:

Commissioner Kline said these are similar as well and whereas the supermarket is now a permitted use.

Conditional Uses – MS-VC versus TC:

Commissioner Kline said new uses were added such as Telecommunication Towers, Service Station and School or College-Public/Private.

Dimensional Changes – MS-VC versus TC:

Commissioner Kline said the density calculations are the same as the others. Lot areas go from 10,000 sq. ft. in the Roslyn VC District to 3,000 sq. ft. on Keswick Avenue, but not the Easton Road portion of the Glenside VC District.

There are similar lot requirements for the residential density. For lot width; the TC District requires 50 feet and that is maintained in the VC District except it was reduced for Keswick Avenue. There are specific dimensional changes just for Keswick Avenue as there are existing buildings and we want to keep them in conformity with the new zoning.

A minimum for green area is 55% for twin home residential uses and 10% for multifamily.

Building separation is the same and building size and its relationship to build-to-zones, which are 15 feet and 25 feet and the maximum distance from a curb line if there is no building within the build-to-zone is 70 feet.

There is a specific ground floor designation of 45% and the lowest portion of the window must be at least two feet above grade and the highest portion must not exceed eight feet. We want to designate village center areas with more architectural regulations and designations. There are also similar parking requirements.

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

Ms. Gauthier clarified that 7,500 sq. ft. is the requirement for residential uses in the VC District. Is that correct?

Commissioner Kline replied that is correct.

Ms. Gauthier suggested making footnotes for Class I and Class II, so it is clear that they are based on lot size.

Also, in regards to the accessory use Drive-Thru; on Page 40 of the Comprehensive Plan says, "In the MS-VC District, drive-thru use is permitted for banks only," and they are permitted by special exception in all three of the Main Street Districts, so should it say banks permitted by special exception only?

Mr. Narcowich replied it should be consistent throughout, so he will review it in the next version of the draft zoning ordinance.

Ms. Gauthier suggested that the matrix be a separate page for each Main Street District in the draft zoning ordinance.

Mr. Cooper asked why a municipal complex is a permitted use in the MS-VC District?

Commissioner Kline replied it is permitted in almost every district to provide flexibility in having some presence if there is a need related to municipal functions.

Mr. Penecale added that we were thinking about the Roslyn Branch Library. We have also been approached by a Commissioner about setting up a small satellite library on the eastern side of the Township. Also, we are not sure what site PAL will be using for their functions, but one is being considered in the MS-VC District.

Commissioner Kline said two common uses throughout the commercial districts are municipal complex and community center.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane asked why is multifamily use required to have less green space?

Commissioner Kline replied it anticipates the greater need for parking requirements.

Ms. Lehmann expressed concern about fairness in property owners taking on their share of absorption and she feels 10% green space is too low and she asked for it to be considered to be made higher.

Also, she expressed concern about the hotel/motel/inn use by-right being near residential because it is a transient use. She asked for it to be a special exception with conditions.

Commissioner Kline replied he understands the concern, but all commercial districts about residential property in the Township. The market study done for the Old York Road Corridor Plan showed there is a market for a hotel in Abington Township, possibly two hotels.

Mr. Penecale said he made a note to consider that the hotel/motel/inn use should be permitted as a conditional use or by special exception.

Main Street District - Bonus System:

Mr. Narcowich said the bonus system is currently being used in the Township's FTD District, so we introduced them in the MS Districts because they provide flexibility and allows the Township to provide an array of elements they would like to see, but cannot require. So it gives the developer a chance to decide what bonus options they would like to choose from and it makes the developer create something extra to help the Township.

The applicant is not required to qualify for a bonus, but opportunity is provided. If the applicant decides to pursue a bonus, it must meet criteria from a list written by the Township such as design, sustainability features, pedestrian amenities, and shared parking. The Township would offer reduced or eliminated side yards and reduced green space requirements.

Main Street District – Design Standards:

Mr. Narcowich said the MS Districts share many design requirements, but the MS-VC has the strongest design requirements of the MS Districts since it applies to Keswick and Roslyn. The MS-H design accommodates mostly more intense development than in the MS-L.

There are critical design components and flexible design components.

Critical components consist of front door facing the street; roofs shall be pitched, have a parapet or projecting cornice; street wall – land developments are encouraged to locate parking to the side or rear, and if in the front, it shall be screened with a street wall; trash, storage, tanks and loading shall be located in the rear.

Windows must be located on walls facing public ways; parking garages shall be screened; multi-building lots – provisions ensure development is walkable; reasonable amount of development will be built to the street; curb cuts will be limited in size; and street furniture required.

Flexible designs components consist of bonuses to encourage attractive design and buildings with character and architectural features on facades to enhance appearance that include a long list of features such as: type of masonry, gables, porches, bays, awnings, etc.

Mr. Marquardt asked are dimensional requirements attached to the flexible design components.

Mr. Narcowich replied not at this time, but that is something we can consider.



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

Ms. Gauthier said regarding building facades in the VC District as noted in the draft zoning ordinance; there are four required features. For a bonus; the side yard can be reduced or be eliminated or reduced required open space, and is the VC District included in that bonus?

Commissioner Kline replied the side yard bonus is not available in the VC District.

Ms. Gauthier asked does street furniture include bus stop shelters and should solar panels be added or historic reuse or adaptive reuse be listed as a bonus?

Mr. Narcowich replied there are more options in the VC District.

Commissioner Kline replied we discussed in committee about renewable energy and decided to keep it out of the bonus system, but there is a new section in the zoning ordinance regarding renewable energy.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether separate bonus points should be given for shared vehicular access and shared parking.

Commissioner Kline said one of the main issues is that on the northern section of Easton Road and the northern section of Old York Road is the amount of curb cuts and, in order to take advantage of reducing curb cuts and have shared access that would be great for traffic and pedestrian access/traffic, we are also considering the mixture of uses and the amount of uses that a developer could incorporate into their property. It would be nice to see more shared parking, so we can take advantage of the some of the building spaces.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, expressed concern that she feels when there is shared parking the business can expand and the parking spaces can be shared with someone else.

Mr. Penecale replied shared parking already exists in Abington and it is not an issue.

Ms. Lehmann continued to express concern that she feels shared parking will increase the number of units in the building and the use of the building. She also expressed concern about reducing green space requirement, "which is not necessarily a bonus for the people of Abington because the bonus is to allow them to eliminate their side yards." She also expressed concern that she feels "it costs millions to take out I & I so development can take place."

Commissioner Kline replied shared parking does reduce parking requirements for uses and allows for reduction of parking, which has been an issue for the Township, in that proposals for development have decreased or did not get to an approval process because the parking requirements could not be met. The shared parking ability allows for a mixture of uses to have offset schedules that may be beneficial.

This resident would like there to be a direct connection between the cost of I & I and these zoning changes, but they are unrelated and there is no direct connection, and she is only speaking of her own opinion.

We believe the changes in the zoning ordinance give the Township a greater sense of control and we believe the changes in the zoning ordinance in the commercial districts gives property owners and the Township a greater chance for more viable uses and a more vibrant community.

He takes exception to this resident's comments and her vast objections to these ideas, and it should be made clear that it is only her who objects to these ideas and she is not speaking on behalf of anyone else.

**Business Center District:**

Overview:

Commissioner Kline said the Planned Business District will now be called Business Center District and there are five large commercial districts in the Township. They are located on south Old York Road; Noble/Fairway area; Abington Towne Center (Target); Willow Grove Park Mall; and Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center. We adjusted the use list to anticipate future development based on growth of the Township. We adjusted regulations to recognize redevelopment trend and developed pedestrian-friendly regulations. The bonus system will encourage changes that will benefit the Township.

South Old York Road – map changes:

Commissioner Kline said the map showing the south end of Old York Road where Township Line Road, Greenwood Avenue and Washington Lane are located as well as where the Pavilion and Plaza are and the front portion of the Colonade and a small shopping center are located.

Allowable Uses- South Old York Road:

Removed was the Laundry (Self-Service) use and added were uses as listed.

Special Exception Uses – South Old York Road:

Some uses were removed and three uses were added such as Drive-Thru Facility, Automotive Sales, Convenience Store, and Veterinary Clinic.

Conditional Uses – South Old York Road:

Removed was Amusement Park and Movie Theater (small) and added were Telecommunication Towers, Place of Worship (Class 3) and Apartment/Condo Building.

Dimensional Changes – South Broad Street:

Commissioner Kline said he will compare the PB-Planned Business Zoning District to the proposed dimensional changes, and density calculation for the Foxcroft area is 10 units per acre with a maximum of 13 units per acre. Floor to area ratio is 0.75 and 1.00 floor to area ratio with bonuses and this relates to the floor area of the total property space.

Lot sizes – the minimum is one acre and there is no maximum, and currently in the PB Zoning District is 15,000 sq. feet. We have specific requirements for any lots in the BC Zoning District that are less than an acre.

Lot width is a minimum of 100 feet. Lot depth is a minimum of 150 feet and those are compatible with existing PB Zoning District. For impervious coverage, currently for properties less than 30,000 sq. ft. it can be 80% and any other property above 30,000 sq. ft. can be 70%. In this area, it is consistently 70% of impervious coverage.

Expansion of nonconforming site, there is a maximum of 15% and the reason we designated this is because we allow developers to do expansions of redevelopment of up to 15% of total square footage. It causes the developer passed that 15% mark to make a greater investment in the overall redevelopment of the property.

Green area will stay at a minimum of 25% for all of the BC Zoning District. Public open space is 5% of first floor area of a building.

Build-to-lines – from a public street there is a setback of 60 feet from a main access drive or a private street and that requirement would be listed in the new build-to-zone.

With larger commercial districts such as the Wegman's Shopping Center in Warrington where there are internal streets, we wanted to be able to create setbacks from those anticipating the ability to use them as pedestrian walkways and additional traffic-ways within the property. So the dimensional requirements are based on whether the street is a main access drive or secondary drive.

We have building height regulations that require setback of the building façade as it gets closer to any main access drives and then step the building up to a higher elevation to give it pedestrian-character.

Mr. Narcowich said we designated certain priority street fronts and, when we thought of the big picture for each of these areas, we had to decide where we want the buildings to face and where do we want the development to fit in with the surrounding commercial districts. We took into consideration the characteristics of each site and drafted certain requirements and setbacks that apply to those priority street fronts.

We have a minimum and maximum build-to-line to the public street and, in the area of the Willow Grove Park Mall, the minimum is 20 feet; however, it is 50 feet on Moreland because it has a more residential character and on Old Welsh Road west of Reservoir the maximum is 50 feet, but 100 feet on Moreland west of Willow Grove Park Mall.

We took care of protecting Davidson and Williams with the Abington Towne Center development making sure height requirements are low because it is closer to residential neighborhoods.

Commissioner Kline said the general idea is to push the redevelopment closer to the main access streets or push them farther away or reduce height or position to residential neighborhoods because all BC Districts abut residential areas.

Mr. Narcowich continued that we also drafted requirements for a few areas such as Abington Towne Center and Willow Grove Park Mall where buildings must be built into them.

Map changes – Noble/Fairway Area:

Commissioner Kline said the Noble/Fairway area is where the Baederwood Shopping Center is located as well as the Plaza and the Triangle area is where the Noble Train Station is located and the new CVS store.

Allowable Uses – Noble/Fairway Area:

There are similar use regulations as compared with the south Old York Road area and new uses were added as listed.

Accessory Uses – Noble/Fairway Area:

There are similar use regulations as the south Old York Road area and new uses were added as listed.

Special Exception Uses – Noble/Fairway:

Two new uses were added such as Drive-Thru Facility (retail only) and Convenience Store.

Conditional Uses – Noble/Fairway Area:

New uses were added such as Telecommunication Towers, Movie Theater (small), Performing Arts Center and Apartment/Condo Building (not in Triangle).

Mr. Marquardt asked is the apartment use allowable in other areas?

Mr. Narcowich replied yes, but in the Triangle area, we are only permitting mixed use buildings with residential on top rather than permitting exclusive residential.

Dimensional Changes – Noble/Fairway Area:

Commissioner Kline said there is now a mixed use requirement dimensional regulations, and in the Noble area, there is a minimum of 20% residential and a maximum of 8% residential and a minimum of 20% retail and a minimum of 10% office. The density requirement is a maximum of 10 dwelling units per acre with a bonus up to 13. Floor to area ratio is 0.75 up 1.00 for the bonus.

In the Triangle area, it starts to go up slightly as it has been designated as a TOD because of proximity to the Train Station. The Triangle area will have more impervious coverage as opposed to other areas in that location and the green area stays the same at 25%. There is a public open space requirement and a build-to-line of 20 feet minimum and 30 feet maximum on public streets, and for main access drives, it is 20 feet minimum and 25 feet maximum.

Many of the regulations in the Noble/Fairway area are similar to the FTD Ordinance as well as what was incorporated into the TOD site.

Map changes – Abington Towne Center:

Commissioner Kline said map changes show location of London Road where the hospital and the Edge Hill Bridge are located and shopping center where Target is and where the previous Giant Food Store used to be.

Allowable Uses – Abington Towne Center:

New uses were added and existing uses will be maintained as listed.

Accessory Uses – Abington Towne Center:

New uses were added and as well as existing uses will be maintained.

Special Exception Uses – Abington Towne Center:

Two new uses were added such as Drive- Thru Facility and Automotive Sales.

Conditional Uses – Abington Towne Center:

Three new uses were added such as Telecommunication Towers, Place of Worship (Class 3) and Apartment/Condo Building.

Dimensional Changes – Abington Towne Center:

Requirements for Abington Towne Center are minimum retail and minimum office uses, and similar for minimum and maximum for residential and density drops, so now there will be four dwelling units per acre and six as a bonus. Floor to area ratio is the same and impervious coverage is 70% that can be increased to 0.75% with a bonus. Same requirements for nonconformity going to 15% and a minimum green are of 25% and a minimum of open space at 5%.

Build-to-lines – 20 feet on public streets such as London and Old York Roads, but on Davidson and Williamson it has be 70 feet.

Map changes – Willow Grove Mall:

The Willow Grove Park Mall located at Moreland, Easton and Old Welsh Roads will be rezoned to Business Center District.

Allowable Uses – Willow Grove Mall:

One notable change is that the Apartment/Condo Building use has been removed from allowable uses and it will also not be listed under conditional use or special exception for the Willow Grove Park Mall area or the Huntingdon Road Shopping Center areas. We are making a recommendation to eliminate residential development for these two areas because we do not see future residential development being incorporated.

Accessory Uses – Willow Grove Mall:

New uses were added as listed.

Special Exception Uses – Willow Grove Mall:

New uses were added as listed.

Conditional Uses – Willow Grove Mall:

Two new uses were added as well as existing uses as listed.

Dimensional Changes – Willow Grove Mall:

In the Willow Grove Mall location is where some internal street requirements become more significant because with any type of redevelopment in which we have seen newer mall designs such as Warrington Crossing that has internal street patterns and has smaller shopping areas.

Map changes – Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center:

Map of the Business Center District showed Huntingdon Pike and Rockledge Avenue where the Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center is located.

Allowable Uses- Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center:

The Apartment/Condo Building use has been eliminated from allowable uses and new and existing uses are listed.

Accessory Uses – Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center:

New and existing uses are listed.

Special Exception Uses - Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center:

New uses were added as listed.

Conditional Uses - Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center:

One new use was added along with existing uses as listed.

Dimensional changes - Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center:

Dimensional requirements are similar to the Abington Towne Center area. There are build-to-lines with a set back of 60 feet for any buildings on Vasant, Rockledge and Henrietta. There is a height restriction of 35 feet with a bonus of 50 feet for portions of the building and they have to be at least 100 feet away from a public street.

Mr. Narcowich added that there is a mixed use requirement, but it does not include residential, which is 20% retail and 10% office.

Commissioner Kline said because we are bringing these buildings to the build-to-zones, any driveway access out to the street has to be PennDOT required sight distances.

Mr. Marquardt suggested adding “sight triangle” to the definition section of the zoning ordinance.

Bonus System – Business Center District:

Commissioner Kline said the Township would offer eliminated side yard setbacks and an increase in height between 10-15 feet. The Willow Grove Park would be from 55’ to 65’ if setback is 100’ from district boundary. Noble area would go from 55’ to 65’. Abington Towne Center would go from 55’ to 65’ if setback is 150’ from Williams/Davidson Roads and setback 100’ from Old York Road. Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center would go from 35’ to 50’ and Foxcroft from 40’ to 50’.

Increased density would go from 10 to 13 DU/Ac. in the Foxcroft and Noble areas and four to six DU/Ac. in Abington Towne Center.

Increase floor to ratio (FAR) (building intensity) – Noble from 0.75 to 1.00, but 1.50 to 2.00 in the Triangle.

The applicant can earn points by public open space; community room or meeting space; preservation and reuse of designated historic buildings and environmental/sustainability features; wrap parking garage; road connection improvements; shared access; shared parking; pedestrian amenities; urban gardens and use incentives such as: movie theater or performing arts center.

Design Standards – Business Center District:

Priority street fronts designated at each location; access drives encourage pedestrian-friendly environment; buildings shall be constructed to build-to-zone of public streets, access drive or public streets. Front façade shall face all streets and access drives that the building abuts. Entrances shall be enhanced with at least one design feature chosen from the list of options. Roofs shall be parapet, pitched or mansard roofs to screen flat roofs, HVAC, and equipment.

Parking garages screening and façade treatment are required. Rear and side facades must match in color of front façade. Long facades over 100’ must be horizontal offsets, etc. Corner buildings must have entrance facing the corner. Windows has design standards as listed.



Transit Amenity – for each BC District lots greater than 10 acres must provide a large transit or shuttle shelter. Street Furniture is listed. Public open space is a minimum of 5% gross floor area etc. Trash, loading, utilities, and lighting have strict standards regulating these items as listed. Phasing plan is required for developments over 10 acres when initially proposed.

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

Ms. Gauthier said regarding historic preservation for a bonus that says, “One point is given if the developer preserve or reuses one of two properties,” and we are hoping to do an historic inventory in the future years, so can there be an addition of general language or other noteworthy historic structure deemed historic by the Township?

Commissioner Kline replied there is room to expand those buildings if deemed necessary through that historic survey and there should be criteria for how those buildings are designated.

Ms. Gauthier said in the Triangle area, the impervious coverage bonus goes from 80% to 85%, so there could not be 85% impervious and 25% green area and that should be noted.

Commissioner Kline replied it is closer to 90-95% impervious surface now, so we would increase the green space as compared to existing conditions and all stormwater facilities would need to be upgraded.

Mr. Marquardt said in regards to the Triangle area where the residential side is along the train tracks; what about stacking tall buildings toward the road?

Commissioner Kline replied any development envisioned for the Triangle area would not fit on those parcels on that side as they are too small and it would not support the uses. It is designated for the northern side of the train tracks and not the southern side.

Mr. Marquardt said the distance for build-to-lines for that stretch of the railroad tracks should be farther away from that back area.

Mr. Spearman said there was pushback when the study was done and the residents on the north side of the tracks did not want high density buildings in the Triangle area.

Commissioner Kline said we can look at the train tracks as a similar designation as a street, so it would require a building a certain distance away. The existing building height in that location is 55 feet for a property over 30,000 sq. ft. and in that location it goes to 65 feet with a bonus, so it is a five foot difference. We can discuss this further, but a certain amount of height is already permitted.

Mr. Narcowich added that there is a 1.5 height setback from a residential district, so for a 65 foot building, it would need to be setback by 100 feet.

Mr. Marquardt asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she feels that hotel/motel/inn use should have some sort of vetting process with the residents.

Ms. Gauthier thanked Commissioner Kline and Mr. Narcowich for their work on the draft zoning ordinance as they did a great job.

Commissioner Kline noted that another meeting will be needed related specifically to review of the draft zoning ordinance as we did not get to the SI Suburban Industrial and RC Recreational Conservation Districts, and we will coordinate that with the Planning Commission.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 10:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

