

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, February 27, 2018 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Chairperson Lucy Strackhouse presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:34 p.m.

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

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

Introduction:

Ms. Stackhouse said on behalf of the Planning Commission congratulated Cathy Gauthier on her reappointment to the Planning Commission and welcomed two newly appointed members Mr. Daryl Baker and Mr. Stephen Boff.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Agenda Item PC1 - Mr. Arthur B. Herling & ABH Builders, Inc:

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

Arthur B. Herling, ABH Builders, Inc. 775 Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike, Blue Bell, PA., 19422, said he is proposing a two-story, four-unit apartment building-townhouse-style on a vacant lot on Easton Road. He received staff review letter dated, February 7, 2018 and most items are a will comply. Presented was a rendering of proposed plan showing Easton Road with one common entrance for the four dwelling units and a parking lot in the rear of the site. Each unit is set up as a townhouse as opposed to over/under apartment building because at point of sale they could be sold as separate units to individual homeowners. Interior layout is still being worked on and each unit will have a porch. Also, a condominium association would be created for common area maintenance, etc.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any comments/questions by members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Rosen questioned the target market for these units and expected rent?

Mr. Herling replied anyone who qualifies and depending on construction costs it could be \$1,300 to \$1,600 a month.

Ms. Strackhouse asked how many bedrooms will the units have?

Mr. Herling replied two to three bedrooms. There will be hardwood floors, granite countertop, nine-foot ceilings, and for two-bedroom units, each will have its own bath and first floor powder room. First floor will have living room, dining room and kitchen with an island and rear door with backyard access and full basement with a common sidewalk out front to get to parking area, and proposed are 11 parking spaces.

Mr. Penecale said four units require six parking spaces. What about laundry service?

Mr. Herling replied laundry will be on the second floor.

Ms. Gauthier asked about stormwater management plan for the parking area and also about tree removal.

Mr. Herling replied there are two seepage pits proposed; one will be in the parking lot and water will drain to that inlet and the second seepage pit will be in the actual driveway to control runoff. The larger pit in the driveway is an actual inlet across the width of the driveway, so any water coming down driveway will be captured by the pit and will not run onto Easton Road.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether that would connect to Township system along Easton Road.

Mr. Herling replied yes, if there is a system there.

Ms. Gauthier asked for the proposed slope for the driveway.

Mr. Herling replied we are cutting into the hill.

Mr. Penecale added apron width is 368, and at the driveway common grade is 376, which is a seven to eight foot elevation change, so 4% grade.

Ms. Gauthier asked for the height of the retaining wall along the side property.

Mr. Penecale replied its highest point will be out by the driveway apron, so it will be a four foot elevation change as well as it will travel up the site from Easton Road towards the rear parking area.

Mr. Rosen expressed concern about sightline.

Mr. Penecale clarified that the applicant will be installing sidewalks. Is that correct?

Mr. Herling replied yes.

Mr. Penecale said once drivers back off of the curb line there will a 24-inch strip of lawn and signage and then a four-foot wide sidewalk and then the start of the retaining wall. Staff's recommendation for installation of sidewalks was for pedestrian access/safety and it will push retaining wall back six feet providing a clear sightline without retaining wall obstructing view.

Mr. Rosen asked will there be a need for any signaling or Stop signs?

Mr. Penecale replied no, this was reviewed by Traffic Safety Officer Freed. There is a signalized intersection at Edge Hill and Easton Roads and a signalized intersection at Susquehanna and Easton Roads.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether any other roadway improvements would be needed.

Mr. Penecale replied no, if plan is approved, it would be standard street opening for utility installation and standard permit from engineering department for curb/sidewalk installation.

Ms. Gauthier asked about the materials of the retaining wall.

Mr. Herling replied it would match the stone on the building, possibly E.P. Henry.

Mr. Baker clarified that the sidewalk would stop where the retaining wall is up against the street. Is that correct?

Mr. Penecale replied yes, there is about a six inch differential between the face of the curb and the front façade of the retaining wall.

Ms. Strackhouse asked about size of parking spaces and whether relief is needed by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Herling replied there will be 11 parking spaces, 10 feet wide, so it complies without the need for a variance.

Ms. Strackhouse asked how that will affect stormwater runoff.

Mr. Penecale replied original stormwater management plan was designed with a 5% overage and that is based on sediment. Total increase if parking remains at 11 spaces is 198 sq. ft. and that will require the seepage bed to be increased by 18 cubic feet. Impervious coverage is within limitations with the additional 200 sq. ft.

Ms. Gauthier said there is a striped island between driveway and the five parking spaces closest to building, will that be a planted island.

Mr. Herling replied that was going to be paved over.

Ms. Gauthier suggested that it would make a nice planting area adding more green to the site.

Mr. Herling replied proposed is landscaping on the right side of the driveway to buffer the property.

Ms. Strackhouse noted that Township staff suggested planting street trees in that planting area as they would work better there and be out of the sightlines.

Mr. Herling agreed.

Mr. Narcowich commented that he would plant street trees at the street to shade the sidewalk.

Mr. Penecale replied there is eight feet between the covered porch and balance of the retaining wall along front of property. So instead of it being centralized to the property, planting trees between the edge of the building and the property line where it is free and clear.

Ms. Gauthier said condition of approval should include a landscaping plan. Also, regarding the Woodland Preservation standards, she did not see the amount of trees proposed to be saved.

Mr. Herling replied he will save as many trees as possible, but some will be removed for building and parking.

Mr. Penecale said Township requires a landscape plan that details number of trees, the type of trees and size of them being removed because zoning ordinance requires certain percentage of tree canopy that can be removed, and in addition to that, for trees being preserved onsite, the landscape plan would provide details about tree protection screening and notes added to the plan for protecting trees from any excavation drip line and storage of any equipment underneath those tree canopies.

Ms. Strackhouse asked about parking lot lighting and trash containment.

Mr. Herling said in regards to trash containment, he does not like dumpsters so residents would have their own cans located in the rear of the building, and then on trash day, they would take the cans down to the sidewalk and be responsible for taking them back.

Ms. Strackhouse commented that would be a lot of trash cans as there are three per home and they are large cans.

Mr. Penecale agreed that he would not want to see a dumpster because the site does not allow for a dumpster pickup. There are apartment complexes that have municipal trash collection service and four apartment units may not need four separate mixed recycling/trash containers, but possibly just two larger cans.

Mr. Rosen questioned whether placements of trash containers present an issue with sightlines.

Mr. Penecale replied there is enough of a pitch in the roadway, so between grade changes from one side of the site to the other there is enough room with a 100-foot frontage for the trash cans.

Mr. Herling said in regards to parking lot lighting, each unit will have LED light at their front door and backdoor and parking spaces will have some sort of lamppost for sufficient lighting in the rear.

Ms. Strackhouse asked will the lighting be on dawn to dusk and there should be no lighting shining onto neighboring properties.

Mr. Herling replied he could put in solar lighting or put LED lights on unit #4 towards second story to not bother any neighbors.

Ms. Gauthier said there is existing encroachment from the neighboring property, will there be an easement?

Mr. Herling replied that will be removed.

Mr. Rosen expressed concern about the issue of the location of trash cans.

Ms. Strackhouse commented that a dumpster may be a better idea.

Mr. Narcowich suggested decorative screening for the trash cans.

Mr. Penecale suggested that the applicant speak with David Manzinger, Superintendent of Refuse Department of the Township about the issue of the location of trash cans.

Mr. Herling agreed.

Mr. Boff said when sidewalks are completed would someone be able to walk from those units to train station on a sidewalk?

Ms. Strackhouse replied no, they will not.

Mr. Narcowich recommended that a driveway-crosswalk be added as there is more than one unit and to continue sidewalks that will be constructed.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any public comments.

Marilyn Bilger, 1922 Guernsey Avenue, asked how many parking spaces will be handicapped?

Mr. Penecale replied requirement is that for one to 25 parking spaces onsite, one parking stall needs to be ADA accessible.

Waiver Requests -

Waivers requested by the applicant were voted on separately as follows:

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to approve waiver request from Section 146-11.A – Property Identification Plan – The plan is required to supply the tax parcel information, owner’s names & lot area for all properties within 400 feet of the site involved in this application.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to approve waiver request from Section 146-11.B – Existing Features Plan – the plan is required to plot the location of all utilities onsite and within 400 feet of the property involved in this application.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Strackhouse to approve waiver request from Section 146-11.C – Proposed Layout Plan – the applicant is required to provide detail on the type, size, depth and location of all utilities. **Note:** Plan will show that encroachment of neighboring property will be removed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to approve waiver request from Section 146.11.L – Architectural Plan – the applicant is required to submit tentative architectural plan of the proposed new building. These plans are required to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 1007 of the Zoning Ordinance. Applicant provided a rendering, but not an architectural plan and there is no development proposed with this application.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Strackhouse to approve waiver request from Section 146.11G. – Utility Plan – the applicant is required to provide detail on the type, size, depth and location of all utilities.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Strackhouse to **DENY** waiver request from Section 146.11 H – Landscaping & Shade Tree Plan – The applicant is required to submit a landscaping plan that plots the location of all trees proposed to be removed. The plan should also plot the location of tree protection methods to be used and the size, type and location of all proposed plant growth to be installed.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Gauthier to approve waiver request from Section 146.11.J – Recreational Facilities Plan – no portion of this pending development is proposed to be offered as public open space.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

Applicant submitted Act 537 Plan Exemption Mailer that has been received and reviewed by Mr. Wrigley, Director of W.W.T.P., and that exemption mailer is currently under review by DEP.

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Robinson to approve application of Mr. Arthur B. Herling & ABH Buildings, Inc. for property located at 1043 Easton Road, Abington, PA, including approved waiver requests and subject to the following conditions:

1. The items listed within Township staff review letter dated February 7, 2018 are to be taken under consideration and addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington.
2. If application is approved, the Township of Abington is unable to record the approve plan until such time that the sanitary sewer connections have been approved by DEP.
3. The applicant must install a crosswalk at base of the driveway to connect to the newly installed sidewalks.
4. Parking lot lighting must comply with requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. The street trees are to be installed within the side yard areas and not between the front building façade and the proposed retaining wall.

6. The portion of the hashed area within the rear parking lot not used for the required ADA parking stall should be converted to green space/landscaped island.
7. Install a sidewalk behind the building to connect all the rear entry doors from the parking lot to public sidewalk. This walkway should also be large enough to store the unit's trash cans.
8. Revise the onsite stormwater management system to include the increase in impervious coverage from the added walkways and trash can pads.
9. The applicant should schedule a meeting with Township's Refuse Department to discuss the best way to handle waste collection from this site.
10. The plan must be revised to comply with the zoning requirements as listed in the Township staff review letter.
11. Existing paving encroaching from the neighboring property will be removed by the applicant.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Gauthier made a MOTION, seconded by Ms. Strackhouse to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of January 23, 2018.

MOTION was ADOPTED 6-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary