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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December 6, 2018

Mr. Richard Manfredi, Manager
Abington Township
1176 Old York Road
Abington, Pennsylvania 19001-3713

Re: MCPC #18-0273-002
Zoning Text & Map Amendment: Abington Terrace
Abington Township

Dear Mr. Manfredi:

We have reviewed the above-referenced zoning text and map amendment in accordance with Section 609 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on November 23, 2018. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

BET Investments, Inc., proposes a zoning text and map amendment to expand and modify the AO Apartment Office District and create a new land use called "Senior Apartment Units", which would be permitted by conditional use in the AO Apartment Office District. The amendment would rezone 4.64 acres from the CS Community Service and R3 Medium Density Residential District to the AO Apartment Office District. The maximum density allowed, when qualifying for bonuses, would be 36 dwelling units per acre.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The proposed zoning map amendment is generally consistent with *MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision, The Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County*. The proposed zoning text amendment would affect an area where the future land use categories "Community Mixed Use and Services", "Town Residential" and "Town Center" converge; all of which are growth areas.

Multifamily uses are envisioned in these areas by MONTCO 2040, provided that development is "compatible with residential areas," that it has residentially-scaled buildings next to residential areas, and that it emphasizes the importance of an adequate buffer.



RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) recommends approval of the proposed zoning text and map amendments, however, in the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and Township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval:

REVIEW COMMENTS

STREETSCAPE

- A. Street Wall. For buildings in the AO Apartment Office District that front on Old York Road:
1. Build-to-Zone. We recommend that a build-to-zone apply, as with the build-to-zone requirement of the Main Street and Business Center Districts [see Figure 10.18: MS-H Main Street-High Dimensional Requirements table]. It should be noted that the bonus in the proposed zoning text amendment for parking located to the side and rear conflicts with the requirement in the AO District that all parking be located to the side and rear. In the case of conflict, the more stringent provision would apply [Article XXI: Use Regulations §2100. Article and Section Purpose].
 2. Street Wall. Where buildings are not constructed in a build-to-zone, we recommend that a street [§2500: Street Wall] wall be required, as with the street wall requirement for the Main Street and Business Center Districts [see Figure 10.18: MS-H Main Street-High Dimensional Requirements table].
- B. Wide Sidewalk and Verge. High-density development in walkable areas should have wide sidewalks, and should have a verge comprised of landscaping or decorative paving, consistent with the Old York Road Corridor Improvement Study. We recommend requiring that the provisions of §2504: Sidewalks and Crosswalks requiring wide sidewalks for the BC, MS and CS Community Service Districts also apply to the AO District frontages on Old York Road.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- A. The applicant's renderings show the attractive stone wall preserved along the sidewalk on Old York and Susquehanna Roads. Should a development for this site move forward, we hope that the Township will work with the developer to encourage preservation of the stone walls, possibly through the bonus called "Community Heritage Preservation."
- B. The two bonuses related to historic preservation will require careful review by the Board of Commissioners and Township Solicitor to ensure that an applicant requesting credit for the bonus adequately meets the zoning requirements for these bonuses as well as and subsequent conditional use agreement.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC supports the proposed zoning map and text amendments, but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the Township's planning objectives for multifamily development.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body adopt this proposed zoning ordinance amendment, Section 609 of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that we be sent an official copy within 30 days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Narcowich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" being more prominent than the last name "Narcowich".

Mike Narcowich, AICP, Principal Planner II
mnarcowi@montcopa.org - 610-278-5238

- c: Lucy Strackhouse, Chair, Township Planning Commission
- Michael P. Clarke, Esq., Rudolph Clarke, LLC; Township Solicitor
- Amy Montgomery, P.E., Township Engineer

Attachments: Proposed Zoning Map Change



