

## **A Change in Plans: Abington Terrace to Be Replaced by CHOP Specialty Care**

Prepared on **April 15, 2019** by **Ward 11 Commissioner John Spiegelman** ([spiegs@abington.org](mailto:spiegs@abington.org)) and **Ward 7 Commissioner Stuart Winegrad** ([swinegrad@abington.org](mailto:swinegrad@abington.org))

**OVERVIEW:** There is a probable significant change in plans for the redevelopment of the **Abington YMCA** property when the Y relocates to Willow Grove in October. **BET Investments** has shelved its plans for the Abington Terrace age-55+ apartment complex. Instead, they have entered into an agreement with **Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)** to build the latest of CHOP’s small number of specialty and urgent care outpatient centers, which will function similarly to CHOP Specialty Care, Princeton at Plainsboro (<https://www.CHOP.edu/locations/specialty-care-princeton-plainsboro>).

**COMMUNITY MEETING:** On **Wednesday, April 24 at 7:00PM**, both BET and CHOP will welcome neighbors and other residents to a **community meeting at the Abington Y** (1073 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001), where more information—including preliminary renderings of the new redevelopment plan—will be provided and questions answered.

**Q&A:** In advance of the community meeting, we are using the following Q&A to share what we know at this point:

- 1. When did this change of plans happen, and did the Board of Commissioners know about it when the Abington Terrace zoning was approved?** CHOP approached BET with this development request only recently, and they came to an agreement well after the Board approved the zoning changes on January 31. The Board of Commissioners had no knowledge of this change of plans before the zoning vote. Commissioners Spiegelman and Winegrad learned of this new plan only two weeks ago or so, and we have been using that time to arrange for the community meeting and gather the information for this announcement.
- 2. There was over a year of meetings before the Abington Terrace zoning vote—does everything go back to square one now?** No, not at all. In January, the Abington Y property was rezoned to Apartment Office (AO), and this CHOP building—a medical office building—is a use by right in the AO zoning district, per the Township Zoning Ordinance.
- 3. So what happens now as far as the Township is concerned?** BET is hoping to submit CHOP Center land development plans to the Township (for review by the Administrative Code and Land Use Office) in mid-May. The next step after that review is for BET to present the land development plan to the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and then BET will come before the Township Planning Commission at a public meeting. The Planning Commission will review, comment, and ultimately vote on the land development plan, and then BET will come before the Board of Commissioners for a public land development hearing. As soon as all of the relevant dates are known, we will share them right away.
- 4. Will the funeral home still be part of the redevelopment?** Yes. That parcel will likely be used for parking.
- 5. How big will the CHOP building be, and what will it look like?** BET will share preliminary renderings at the community meeting, but here’s what we know so far: The height, building mass, and building coverage (that is, the footprint) of the CHOP building will be significantly smaller than the previously planned Abington Terrace. In fact, the total building coverage will be smaller than the current YMCA: BET will demolish 23,000 square feet of Y building and construct approximately 19,066 square feet of CHOP building. The estimated height of the CHOP building is 32’, which is similar to the existing Y. It appears that the new CHOP building will have green space and setbacks from the street similar to the current Y.
- 6. Is there now a possibility of the original Y building (the “old part” on Old York Road) being preserved?** Yes. The Y has long planned to maintain a daycare location in the Township. It is BET’s desire to preserve the original Y building along 611 as a standalone structure for this purpose.
- 7. What about all of the stormwater management upgrades that would have come with the Abington Terrace development?** These will still happen, as they are mandated by Pennsylvania/Township regulations for any development or redevelopment. (As a reminder, there is currently no stormwater control system at either the Y or the funeral home properties.)
- 8. Is this going to be another hospital with ambulances, helicopters, etc.?** No. This will be a CHOP center providing CHOP-quality pediatric specialty care, but it will be a medical office building providing outpatient and urgent-care services, NOT a hospital. It will not have an emergency room, there will not be ambulance or helicopter traffic, and there will not be overnight patient stays.