



To:

**Abington Township Board of Commissioners
c/o Township Manager Chris Christman**

Abington Township
1176 Old York Rd, Abington, Pennsylvania 19001

Dear Township Manager Christman and Members of the Board,

Thank you again for all the work that has gone into the SPS process so far and for the joint Shade Tree Commission and EAC meeting this past week. It meant a lot to see township volunteers, SPS, and so many neighbors all in the same room envisioning a greater future for this site.

From our side, two things stood out very clearly:

- There is strong community support for improving the creek edge and future access behind SPS, which you heard in public comment and saw in the turnout.
- SPS's consultants said they are very reluctant to do any new work in the 100-year floodplain, because they are worried about triggering additional FEMA related permitting and slowing their rebuild. That is one reason they are leaving the lower parking lot in place, even though it sits in the floodplain.

Given that, our Tookany Creek at SPS group has started to shift our near term focus from "SPS builds everything now" to "keep the corridor open so Abington and its partners can restore and open it later with outside funding."

In practical terms, we are asking SPS for:

1. Preserve a creekside corridor and plan for a future easement

Work with SPS to ensure a continuous corridor is preserved along the rear of the site, with grading that allows a gradual slope to Tookany Creek and space for native riparian plantings and a future mixed purpose trail. This corridor could support a restoration and public access easement to Abington or the County at the point when a trail or restoration project is formally advanced and a public agency is ready to build and maintain it.

Under an arrangement like this SPS would mainly be protecting space and, in the future, allowing limited public access across a defined portion of its property, with trail design, funding, and maintenance handled by public partners. Pennsylvania's Recreation Use of Land and Water Act provides important liability protections for landowners who open land for public recreation without a fee, which is why easements like this are common across the state.

2. No new hardening in the floodplain, meaning no additional impervious surface, fill, or structures in the 100 year floodplain beyond what is strictly necessary for safety, so that restoration work by partners like Tookany Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership (TTF) is not boxed out.

3. A clear statement that the grading and parking layout should be adjusted so that a usable corridor remains along the creek edge for future planted buffer and trail, including potential changes to the lower parking lot if the township is willing to revisit parking minimums later.



Wednesday, February 11, 2026

We have followed up with SPS with this idea and suggested a design-focused check-in that would include their engineer, the Township engineer and our watershed advocates & trail partners, so we can look together at what is possible without derailing their schedule.

From the township side, our asks are:

- That staff and the township engineer be encouraged to explore a restoration and access easement along the creek with SPS, and to look at how the current grading and parking proposal could be adjusted to preserve a viable corridor.
- That if a waiver of land development or final approval is considered, any approval include conditions that preserve that rear corridor, avoid new hardening in the floodplain, and direct staff to work with SPS and regional partners on future restoration and trail work.
- That Abington be open to coordinating with Jenkintown, Cheltenham, Montgomery County, the Circuit Trails Coalition and TTF so this stretch of the Tookany can line up with the trail and creek work already being planned just downstream.

Attached are copies of our latest example rendering using their plans and letter from the Jenkintown Planning Commission, plus our original deck shared with SPS and the Township. We would be happy to join any staff or committee discussion where it would make sense.

Thank you again for your time and for everything you are doing on this project.

On behalf of the Tookany Creek at SPS Working Group,

- Ross Abel, Abington Township, Jenkintown Abington Neighbors Association (JANA), Bike Montco
- John Raisch, Cheltenham Township Active Transportation Committee member
- Eric Horowitz, Jenkintown Borough Planning Commission member
- Steve Spindler, Jenkintown Borough Councilmember
- Patrick Monahan, Circuit Trails Coalition & Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
- Jordan Linhart, PA Environment Council Program Manager of Trails & Outdoor Recreation

cc:

Abington Township Shade Tree Commission
Abington Township Environmental Advisory Council
Abington Township Planning Commission