

WORCESTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – October 23, 2025

The Worcester Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Tony Sherr. In attendance were members Michelle Greenawalt, Bob Andorn, Lee Koch, and Jennifer Taylor. Also present was Township Manager Dan DeMeno.

Approval of Minutes

The first order of business was the approval of the September 25, 2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Sherr noted that the minutes had been previously distributed and that the Commission had a quorum for that meeting.

Mr. Andorn raised a clarification regarding the Fire Marshal review referenced in the September minutes. He stated that he left the September meeting under the impression that the Township Manager had already received the Fire Marshal's written approval, when in fact, that was not yet the case. Mr. DeMeno explained that the Fire Marshal had approved the preliminary plan and that a secondary review letter was later issued, confirming compliance except for one minor comment about pipe load capacity, which was addressed.

After discussion, it was agreed that no amendment would be made to the September minutes. Instead, this clarification would be recorded in the current minutes to reflect Mr. Andorn's understanding and Mr. DeMeno's explanation. The Commission concurred that the September minutes accurately documented the factual record of that meeting.

A motion to approve the September 25, 2025 minutes, with this discussion noted in the October record, was made by Ms. Greenawalt and seconded by Mr. Sherr. Motion passed unanimously.

Sewage Facilities Planning Module – 3268 Barley Lane

Mr. Sherr introduced the next item, a review of the sewage facilities planning module (Component 4A) for 3268 Barley Lane. Mr. DeMeno explained that the applicant obtained a special exception from the Zoning Hearing Board to construct an in-law suite and that Montgomery County requires a sewage planning module to verify the presence of a reserve area for a replacement on-lot system. The module is not for immediate construction but serves to confirm that a future system could be installed if needed, consistent with the Township's Act 537 Plan.

Mr. DeMeno clarified that the Township Engineer reviewed the module and found it compliant with the 537 Plan. The Planning Commission's role is to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors, which then forwards the module to DEP for final authorization.

Members discussed several technical and procedural aspects:

- Mr. Sherr and Mr. Andorn asked for clarification of the phrase “reserve on-lot system not proposed.” Mr. DeMeno confirmed it means the new system is not currently being built but identified for possible future need.
- Discussion followed regarding how accessory dwelling units (in-law suites) are regulated. Mr. DeMeno explained that they require a special exception, with deed restrictions ensuring the unit remains for family use only and not as a rental.
- Mr. Andorn raised questions about how in-law suites are defined under the Building Code and the triggers for classification as separate dwelling units. Mr. DeMeno explained the Uniform Construction Code defines a dwelling unit as a self-contained facility with provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.
- Mr. Andorn inquired about percolation tests, discrepancies in the module forms, and illegible attachments. Mr. DeMeno stated that technical reviews are conducted by the County Sewage Enforcement Officer and DEP, and that the illegible documents would be replaced with readable copies.
- Mr. Andorn also identified minor inconsistencies in DEP and engineer correspondence, such as the description of the suite as one- versus two-bedroom and incorrect future dates on the signature block. Mr. DeMeno acknowledged the issues and agreed to correct them prior to submission.

After further discussion, Mr. Andorn made a motion to recommend approval of the Component 4A Sewage Facilities Planning Module for 3268 Barley Lane, consistent with the Township Engineer’s review and the Act 537 Plan. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Open Space Review – Deep Meadow Lane

The Commission next discussed Township-owned open space along Deep Meadow Lane, located in the Enclave subdivision off Bethel Road. Mr. DeMeno reported that the property, approximately 11 acres in total, was dedicated to the Township in 2009 as part of the land development approval. The open space is permanently preserved by deed and serves primarily as a visual and environmental buffer for surrounding homes.

The Commission reviewed photographs and a summary prepared by the Township Manager. Mr. DeMeno noted that the property is maintained by the Township for mowing, while the homeowners’ association performs some supplemental landscaping. He added that if this parcel were offered today, the Township likely would not accept ownership due to perpetual maintenance obligations.

Discussion focused on the following points:

- Mr. Sherr questioned the Township’s responsibility for long-term maintenance and

whether the HOA could formally assume that role under license. Mr. DeMeno agreed to investigate.

- Mr. Andorn suggested including photographic keys in future reports to show photo locations and directions.
- The Commission discussed whether the site could accommodate limited walking or biking paths, though it was agreed the benefit would be primarily to nearby residents.
- Mr. DeMeno explained that the property's function is environmental and aesthetic, providing rural character consistent with the Township's comprehensive plan.
- Mr. Andorn noted the importance of considering connectivity among Township open spaces, suggesting that Deep Meadow's limited access made it a low-priority site for future investment.
- Mr. DeMeno advised that the Township plans to seek a DCNR grant in early 2026 to fund a broader trail connectivity and open space master plan.

The consensus was that Deep Meadow Lane open space should remain in its current natural state with minimal improvements, and that future open space acquisitions should be carefully evaluated for long-term maintenance costs and community benefit.

Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Mr. Sherr and the members discussed the status of the Township Comprehensive Plan. Mr. DeMeno explained that the 2021 draft plan remains ready for adoption, and he intends to recommend its passage as written, with future updates to follow rather than restarting the entire process. The Commission agreed that updating the comprehensive plan will strengthen future ordinance amendments and zoning consistency.

Public Comment

Resident Christine Steere thanked the Commission for discussing open space and requested that the Township consider public surveys or online feedback tools for residents to share their opinions on open space priorities. The Commission expressed support for seeking public input and noted that the Township has the capability to record and post Planning Commission meetings online for greater transparency. Members agreed to consider that option at a future meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan DeMeno
Township Manager