

WORCESTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Worcester Township Planning Commission held its regular business meeting on the above date at the Worcester Township Community Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chair Tony Sherr. A quorum was present. Members present included Chair Tony Sherr, Vice Chair Michelle Greenawalt, Bob Andorn, Jen Taylor, and Lee Koch. Township Manager Dan DeMeno and Township Engineer John Evarts were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Bob Andorn and seconded by Michelle Greenawalt to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2025 Planning Commission meeting as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1636 Berks Road / Bean Road Subdivision Sketch Plan Review

Bob Irick of Horizon Engineering presented a subdivision sketch plan. The subject property consists of approximately 32 acres located at the southwest corner of Berks Road and Bean Road and contains two existing single-family dwellings. The property is zoned AGR Agricultural. Mr. Irick explained that a conservation subdivision is required due to the size of the tract. A conceptual yield plan was prepared using available deed information, tax mapping, LiDAR topography, and soils data. No field survey has been completed at this stage. Based on the yield analysis, twelve lots were identified, forming the basis for the conceptual conservation subdivision layout. The plan is subject to revision following detailed field surveys and environmental studies.

The Planning Commission reviewed comments issued by the Township Engineer and Traffic Engineer. Several items were identified as “will comply”, while others prompted discussion. Lot configuration and yard requirements were discussed, including side yard aggregate width standards. Compliance will be demonstrated through final lot dimensions and building setback lines at the preliminary plan stage. Steep slope areas were discussed, particularly where slopes may be attributable to historic soil stockpiles. The Township Engineer advised that man-made stockpiles are typically excluded from steep slope calculations. A full steep slope analysis will be required with the preliminary plan submission.

Access was discussed in detail. The plan proposes a single access point onto Berks Road, a state roadway requiring PennDOT approval. No access is proposed onto Bean Road. Discussion included potential consolidation of an existing driveway into the internal road

system and the need to evaluate sight distance, roadway alignment, and emergency access in coordination with the Fire Marshal. Open space configuration was reviewed. Commission members expressed support for the proposed contiguous open space layout, particularly where it aligns with adjacent conserved lands. The open space is intended to remain privately owned and maintained by a homeowners association. Township Manager stated a general preference not to accept dedication of open space unless there is a clear public benefit or future access opportunity.

Utilities were discussed at length. Public water service is available through North Penn Water Authority. Public sewer availability was explored, including the proximity of an existing sewer main associated with the Whitehall Estates development. The Planning Commission expressed a preference for public sewer if feasible. Staff advised that a firm determination regarding sewer service will be required prior to preliminary plan consideration, as on-lot sewage disposal would require testing and could affect lot yield. Road ownership and maintenance were discussed. The internal roadway is anticipated to be private and maintained by a homeowners association. Township Manager expressed reluctance to accept dedication of a roadway serving only the development, citing long-term maintenance and operational considerations.

Impervious coverage limits were discussed. Commission members emphasized the importance of clearly documenting allowable impervious coverage on the recorded plan to avoid future conflicts with homeowners. Sidewalks, paths, and curbing were discussed. Internal recreational walking paths were proposed rather than sidewalks, with no sidewalks proposed along Berks Road or Bean Road. Commissioners discussed pedestrian safety, long-term connectivity, and consistency with Township standards. No determination was made, and the matter will be addressed further at the preliminary plan stage.

Potential amenities within the proposed village green were discussed, including walking paths, benches, gazebos, and preservation of existing tree masses. Additional details will be provided with the preliminary plan submission. Commissioner Andorn identified discrepancies in acreage calculations and application materials that will require correction. Questions were also raised regarding parcel history and the need to confirm the absence of deed restrictions or covenants through a title report and boundary survey. Environmental constraints were discussed, including wetlands, floodplain areas, steep slopes, and prior bog turtle considerations. Updated wetland delineations and Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory submissions will be required as part of future land development applications. The Planning Commission agreed that while substantive issues remain, they appear capable of being addressed through further study and plan refinement. No formal recommendation was made, as this was a sketch plan review.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISCUSSION

Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Township Manager DeMeno discussed a potential adjustment to the Planning Commission meeting schedule to improve coordination with Board of Supervisors meetings and statutory review timelines. Commissioners raised concerns regarding compressed review periods and potential scheduling conflicts. It was agreed that the January Planning Commission meeting would proceed on the existing schedule, with further discussion to occur before any permanent change is implemented.

Sign Ordinance Update – Introduction

Township Manager DeMeno introduced the first phase of a comprehensive update to the Township sign ordinance, focusing on purpose, intent, and definitions. He explained recent court decisions affecting sign regulation and the need to avoid content-based regulation. Commissioners discussed enforcement concerns, the risk of over-regulation, and practical impacts on businesses. At the request of the Planning Commission, the Township Manager stated that he will provide paper copies of the Franconia Township Sign Ordinance and the Montgomery County Model Sign Ordinance for review and will work to simplify the proposed ordinance into a more condensed and streamlined version. Further section-by-section review will occur at future meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan DeMeno
Township Manager