

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER
633 COURT STREET, 14TH FLOOR.
READING, PA 19601-4309

March 12, 2025

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Glenn R. Knoblauch called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, in person in the Berks County Planning Commission's Library Conference Room.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members were present:

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary
Thomas C. McKeon, AICP, CEcD
Jodi L. Gauker
David Mattes, *via Teams*
Kevin Lerch
Sarah Phillips, *via Teams*

Also Attending:

David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director
David Peris, Berks County Assistant Solicitor
Ashley Showers, Assistant Director
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
Michelle Franklin, Planner III
Taylor Lawrence, Planner III
Michael Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler
Laura Mursch, Intergovernmental Planner III
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Rick Royer, Design Planner I
Amanda Timochenko, Planner II
Thiago Correa de Almeida, Planner II
Jeremy Zaborowski, Director of Industrial Development Authority
Pamela Menet, Director of Economic Development
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator
Amber Columbo, Assistant Director of Workforce Development

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hunter began his report by updating everyone on the move to South Campus on April 7th. The new address of our office will be 400 East Wyomissing Avenue Mohnton, PA 19540. Mr. Hunter shared on the details of the new space and after the move the Board will get to visit the new space. He also announced that the next meeting on April 9th will be canceled due to the move and going forward the May and June meetings are still going to be held here at the Berks County Planning Commission's Library Conference Room at 633 Court Street. Starting in July the meetings will be held at South Campus and more information will be provided later. Executive Director Hunter invited everyone to join the Comprehensive Plan Presentation at the Commissioner's Meeting, Thursday, March 27th at 10:00am and the PA Land Institute on Saturday, April 5th at 8:30am. He also invited everyone to attend the SRPRA Meeting in Pottstown on Monday, March 28th at 3:00pm. Mr. Hunter also updated on the new launch date of May for the subdivision dashboard after taking into consideration the comments brought up in last month's BCPC Board Meeting. Changes are currently being made to the dashboard and it should be completed by May BCPC Board Meeting. Executive Director Hunter ended his report by showing everyone a 1960 copy of the Sketch Comprehensive Plan of Berks County and sharing a fun fact that Oley was considered wilderness in the sketch plan.

Discussions ensued on the new meeting room and what it would look like. A concern was raised about enough seating room for everyone and the public in the new conference room. Mr. Hunter shared that there are several places where a meeting could be held, and all the spaces are large and accommodating for a large group of people.

B. Solicitor's Report

a. **Statement of Financial Interest Forms**

Solicitor David Peris began his report by informing everyone on the Statement of Financial Interest Forms and how to access the forms. Mr. Peris stated that the Planning Commission Board Members are required to file these forms and return them to the Berks County Chief Clerk, Amanda Bentzel, by April 1st. The methods of submission can be via email, mail, or inner office mail; the pdf form must still be printed and signed. Additionally, Mr. Peris stated that if you have already filled out the form for another reason, you can use the same form and just submit it to the County's Chief Clerk.

Discussion ensued on where board members could access the form and fill it out. Discussion also ensued on the reasons why this form is required for Board Members. Mr. Peris confirmed that the reason is because the Berks County Planning Commission has approval power for Lyons Borough and Lenhartsville Borough.

b. **By Laws Update**

Solicitor David Peris began his report by giving everyone an overview of the changes. The highlights and changes Mr. Peris went over each section that there were changes as follows: Article III – Membership section were moving things around that did not belong in that section, clarified who are the members, and failure to perform duties. Article IV – Officers section, changes to the terminology were made from Chairman/Vice-Chairman to Chair/Vice-Chair and clarified the

responsibilities of the Secretary and removed references to the Recording Secretary. In Article V – Election of Officers section, changes were made to the term of service of officers were made. In Article VI – Meetings section, changes were made to reference and comply with the changes made to the Sunshine Act Law. The meetings need to be advertised when changes occur prior to the meeting dates, virtual meetings and hybrid meetings are allowed but must be advertised as virtual with ample time for the public to know of the change, and meeting quorum can be met whether Board Members are in person or virtual. Lastly, the Sunshine Law requires that Committee Meetings are subject to all the Sunshine requirements and advertisements must be done prior to the meeting.

Discussion ensued on the specifications of the Sunshine Law Act and the requirements for Committee Meetings. Additionally, comments were made on the standing committees that are established or have been established before.

C. Staff Reports and Recommendations

a. **None**

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. February 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity
- D. By Laws Update Approval
- E. Utility Scale Solar Advice

MOTION: Lee C. Olsen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Jodi Gauker and passed unanimously.

5. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS

A. Ashley Showers & David Hunter – Comprehensive Plan Kickoff

Assistant Director Ashley Showers began the presentation by giving an overview of the Berks County Comprehensive Plan update process and timeline. Mrs. Showers spoke on the new vision the Planning Department is taking upon embarking on this update. This new comprehensive plan will be more implementable – meaning more organized in a way that decision makers and citizens think, it will help identify partners that will create capacity to carry out the plans’ vision, and will work through the entire planning process to gain community support. There will also be a buildout analysis that a consultant will be used to create that will then be implemented in the new County Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Showers also shared the different software like ArcGIS and Interactive Polling that will be used to help develop the data that will be used in this new County Comprehensive Plan.

Executive Director Hunter began his presentation on the Corridor Build Out Analysis that is being done a consultant. He gave an overview of the area of the corridor as well as the goals of the analysis. The goal of the analysis is to get a fiscal analysis and overall analysis of where

development can happen and the revenue that it will bring to the municipality. Mr. Hunter cleared up that it will be a land use analysis and not a transportation analysis. He also explained the corridor map and what each color represent. Mr. Hunter ended the presentation by informing the Board that this will be done in conjunction with the other analysis that will be done by Planning staff.

Discussion ensued on the clarification of the stakeholders of the County Comprehensive Plan. There were also questions on the areas that are being analyzed along the corridor and which municipalities will be analyzed. There was a discussion on a similar analysis done back in the 90's and the turnout of that analysis. It was stated how helpful that analysis was and how that analysis could be helpful for this new corridor analysis. Discussion then ensued on the timeline of the County Comprehensive Plan and the input of the Planning Commission Board in the process of the County Comprehensive Plan. Discussion then went on about the new look of the County Comprehensive Plan and how it will be more interactive plan than in the past. Transportation Modeler, Michael Golembiewski, stated that there are sections by the MPC that must be included in the comprehensive plan. Board member, Thomas C. McKeon, brought up the concern of Planning's influence on the decision makers. There needs to be planning done that is influential to the decision makers and makes the municipalities look at the County's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hunter stated how the new Comprehensive Plan content will be presented in a more interactive way that is more like a story board. It will be something that people would want to pick up and read. There was a consensus on the material to be more digestible and broken down for the people to read.

Finally, it was discussed that there will be discussions during the Berks County Planning Commission's monthly meetings so that information and comments can be exchanged since there is plenty of time during the meetings where ideas can be exchanged.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Jodi Gauker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:17p.m. The motion was seconded by Kevin Lerch .

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair

Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary