

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SOUTH CAMPUS
400 E. WYOMISSING AVE., SUITE D, BOX 2
MOHNTON, PA 19540

September 9, 2026

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Glenn R. Knoblauch called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:01 p.m. The meeting was held in person in the 1st floor conference room at South Campus.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members were present:

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair
Sarah Phillips, Vice Chair
David Mattes, Secretary
Kevin Lerch
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB
Gavin Milligan
Carolyn Rodino
Jodi Gauker

Also Attending:

Ashley Showers, Executive Director
Leo Scott, Assistant Director
David Peris, Berks County Assistant Solicitor
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III
Michelle Franklin, Planner III
Laura Mursch Hosie, Intergovernmental Planner III
Michael Golembiewski, Planner III
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II
Devon Hain, Transportation Planner II
Rick Royer, Design Planner
Thiago Almeida, Planner II
Shanice Ellison, Planner I
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Taylor Lawrence, Zoning
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator
Mark Mohn, Gov't Affairs Director, Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®
Kelly Hughes, Account Clerk III

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Mohn, Gov't Affairs Director, Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®, provided an overview of 2025 real estate trends using data from the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors. He described how the real estate industry contributes to Pennsylvania's gross state product and summarized statewide median home prices. Mr. Mohn noted that median home sale prices across Berks County continue to trend upward, outpacing the statewide figures reported for 2025. He also reported a decline in the percentage of first-time homebuyers in 2025. He stated that, as September concludes, he plans to prepare the next quarterly real estate update for Berks County in early October 2026.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Ashley Showers opened her report by presenting the Subdivision and Land Development reports for August. There were 11 plans submitted for review, bringing the year-to-date total to 95. Among the submissions was St. George Self Storage project in Amity Township, which includes several proposed buildings totaling nearly 44,000 sq. ft. of self-storage space. Director Showers provided an overview of the parcel using a map and noted that the plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She also reported on the proposed SolAmerica solar project in Jefferson Township, which is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as well. Solar arrays are proposed for approximately 19 acres of the property. A map of the proposed area was provided. Both projects will appear on the Land Development Dashboard.

Director Showers also noted that we have received two zoning ordinance amendments for review so far this month. To date, we have received 23 zoning amendments related to data center regulations, with the most recent submissions coming from Spring Township and West Reading.

Director Showers shared updates on several BCPC activities. Michelle Franklin's participation in the Schuylkill Action Network stormwater BMP tour. Transportation staff attended PennDOT's Planning Partners annual conference in State College, represented by Alan Piper, Mike Golembiewski, Amanda Timochenko, and Devon Hain. Mr. Piper provided a summary of the conference, which was a group of over 200 participants from MPOs from across Pennsylvania, PennDOT district office staff, essential office and policy personnel, executive leadership, and partners involved in the transportation programs. Mike Golembiewski served as one of three MPO co-leads, assisting with organizing the meeting, introducing panels, and participating on panels. Mr. Piper summarized the conference topics, which included safety, program evaluations, long-range planning, transportation improvement programs, and environmental issues, with updates given from every PennDOT executive staff. He emphasized the value of networking with peers, PennDOT officials, executive staff, and federal highway administration staff that review the programs. Feedback received during these interactions indicated that BCPC's team is regarded as one of the most respected in the state for level of effort we provide and the quality of products we deliver.

On September 8th, Director Showers shared that herself and Assistant Director Leo Scott - along with their partners, Pam Menet and Derek Harris from Community and Economic Development, Jeremy Zaborowski from Industrial Development Authority, and the Workforce Development Board as well as Kim Fies from Berks County Dept. of Ag - conducted a site visit and met with Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan at Reading Regional Airport. They were able to share updates on work programs each of their organizations is doing and discussed the regional impact of the airport and ongoing projects there. The group also toured US Adonize, a local

manufacturing facility dating back to the 1950s. The company employs a very diverse workforce, utilizes manual production processes, and has multiple contracts with the U.S. military.

As part of the discussion, and with start of phase one of the 422 Project, BCPC requested that Congresswoman Houlahan consider any available discretionary funding to support completion of all phases of that project. Congresswoman Houlahan noted that Congress is exploring the National Housing Emergency Act, which is a part of the Defense Production Act, which aims to accelerate housing construction by easing certain Build America requirements while still focusing on making materials domestically. She also emphasized the need to address community resistance to new development, noting that municipalities unwilling to support growth should not expect federal funding. In addition, she referenced the CERTAIN Act, aimed at lengthy permitting delays.

Mark Mohn added that they also met separately with Congresswoman Houlahan to discuss ADUs by-right zoning as a way to address local barriers, and shared that the Congresswoman mentioned the 21st Century Road to Housing Act as the only bill Congress has recently aligned on, indicating that housing remains important across all lines.

Director Showers shared several upcoming outreach activities. On September 10th, Shanice Ellison will attend the Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS® Commercial Industrial Council (CIC) site visit on adaptive reuse. On September 12th, Director Showers, Assistant Director Leo Scott, and Thiago Almeida will promote the “What is Berks Building” dashboard at the Pop Up Farmers Market at the Berks County Heritage Center with display materials and outreach cards available for attendees. A slide of the display poster was presented during the meeting. In early October, Director Showers will serve on a data center panel at the public Spotlight PA Ideas Festival being held at The GoggleWorks, with approval from County leadership. On October 7th, Director Showers and Assistant Director Scott will be meeting with Wyomissing and West Reading Rotary Club about the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan.

5. Shanice Ellison presented an overview of the blighted property at 547 Adamstown Road in Spring Township that is under consideration for acquisition, noting that it is within the existing development area for the Comprehensive Plan and is currently zoned as a rural holding area.

Ms. Ellison noted that it was staff recommendation to authorize the Chairman to issue a letter to the Redevelopment Authority stating the certified blighted property acquisition of 547 Adamstown Road in Spring Township is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update 2030 and recommending residential or related use.

MOTION: Jodi Gauker made a motion to approve the authorization as presented. The motion was seconded by David Mattes and passed unanimously.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve August 12, 2026, Meeting Minutes
- B. Approve Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
July 24, 2026-August 19, 2026
- C. Approve Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity August 2026

MOTION: Kevin Lerch made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Sarah Phillips and passed unanimously.

7. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS

A. Leo Scott - Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan

Assistant Director Leo Scott reported that the Corridor Analysis Regional reports have been distributed to the municipalities, with training planned for late September or early October. He explained that the next steps include completing mapping work, sending invitations for municipal review, and allowing time for updates before finalizing the report. He explained that this will transition into the Comprehensive Plan work, which is scheduled to begin early October, with final adoption targeted for August 2027. Much of the content, especially transportation, is already drafted, while future land use remains the most significant task. The plan will consist of three main parts: Who We Are, which is based on existing information; Where We're Going, which includes land use and transportation; and implementation section outlining goals, objectives, and a 10-year action schedule. Key milestones include a public comment period in May 2027 and BCPC review and recommendation in July 2027. The Planning Commission will serve as the steering committee, providing guidance to the development team, reviewing plan elements, and collaborating on goals and objectives, with approximately half of each Planning Commission meeting designated for Comprehensive Plan work. The organizational structure includes the Commissioners to adopt, the Plan Steering Committee which will consist of BCPC Board members, and staff based administrative, drafting and editorial teams. A land-use committee will also be established including staff, DCED and County Stakeholder participation. Director Showers added that we are going to be presenting all that information to the board and having open discussion about it. Assistant Director Scott added that immediate next steps include establishing the land-use committee, drafting land-use methodology, confirming stakeholders and chapter leads, finalizing schedules, and preparing the first meeting agenda. Questions and comments from the Board were discussed.

B. Ashley Showers – Outreach Efforts

Director Showers provided a liaison write-up for Board members to use when meeting with municipal representatives, noting that personal email addresses will serve as points of contact. Liaisons will be supplied with business cards for outreach as well as name badges for kick off early next year. Planning region assignments were confirmed: Gavin Milligan and Sarah Phillips for Hawk Mountain; Jodi Gauker for Oley Hills; Glenn Knoblauch and Carolyn Rodino for Tulpehocken; Kevin Lerch and Thomas McKeon for Metro; Lee Olsen and Dave Mattes for Southern Highlands. A liaison identification map will be distributed and included in an upcoming e-Flash newsletter. Board members may assist one another across regions, and general questions and comments were discussed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Jodi Gauker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:03p.m. The motion was seconded by David Mattes.

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair

David Mattes, Secretary