

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

November 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, November 12, 2025, in person in the 1st floor conference room at South Campus.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members were present:

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary
Thomas C. McKeon, AICP, CECd
Jodi Gauker
Sarah Phillips
David Mattes
Kevin Lerch
Gavin Milligan

Also Attending:

Ashley Showers, Executive Director
David Peris, Berks County Assistant Solicitor
Shailyn Hernandez, Office Support V
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III
Michelle Franklin, Planner III
Taylor Lawrence, Planner III
Rick Royer, Design Planner I
Devon Hain, Planner II
Laura Mursch Hosie, Intergovernmental Planner III
Mike Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
Mark Mohn, Gov't Affairs Director, Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®
Jeremy Zaborowski, Director of Industrial Development Authority
Alan Shuman, Shuman Development Group
Kim Murphy, President of Berks Nature
Tami Shimp, VP of Development & Community Relations of Berks Nature
Andrew Fetterman, VP for Land & Conservation of Berks Nature
Karen Parish, League of Women Voters

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

a. **Subdivision & Land Development Plan Approval Powers for Lenhartsville & Lyons Boroughs Memorandum**

Executive Director Ashley Showers began her report by inviting the board to discuss any concerns about meeting times for the 2026 Board meetings and to come up with a consensus about the meeting time going forward.

Discussion ensued about the times the board meetings were held in the past and the reasons why 3pm came to be. Comments were made by Sarah Phillips about 3pm, being a time that it interferes with her business routines. She proposed a new time of 5pm or later, if possible, if not she will try to make it work to the agreed time. Chair Glenn Knoblauch made the comment that staff's times need to be considered since staff attend these meetings. Discussion continued about maybe changing the format of the meeting if the time becomes problematic. It was decided that 3pm will continue to be the time for all BCPC board meetings for 2026 and the in-person format remains.

Executive Director Ashley Showers continued her report by informing the board about the approval powers they have for Lenhartsville and Lyons boroughs due to their lack of a Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance. The memorandum shared with the board serves as a reminder and update on what the procedure is when we receive a submittal from either borough. Mrs. Ashley Showers announced that Lyons will be submitting a plan for review in the upcoming weeks which will need to be reviewed and approved by the Berks County Planning Commission board.

Discussion ensued on the procedure and requirements of the review and approval power. A comment was made on the borough engineer coming to our board meeting to answer any questions the board has.

Executive Director Ashley Showers introduced the Berks Nature team that attended the meeting. She shared that she was a member of Berks Nature's Land Committee. The purpose of the Land Committee and her participation on the committee is to meet the goal of working together to come to a common goal for the County regarding conservation. Ashley Showers ended her report by informing the board how their assistance is needed in the process of updating the County Comprehensive Plan. She requested the members of the board attend the small staff meetings where each section of the plan will be discussed. Executive Director Ashley Showers finalized her report by informing the board of all the outreach that had been done for the County Comprehensive Plan and the additional outreach that was to come prior to the end of the year.

B. Staff Reports – Michelle Franklin

a. **2139 N 13th Street – Muhlenberg Township**

The proposed plan was submitted for review as a Preliminary Plan. The site is located along the east side of N. 13th Street and the south side of S.R.0012. The site is in an Existing Growth area. The proposal is for 5 buildings with 84 apartment units each. The proposed development with associated site improvements is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update. There will be parking underneath available, surface lot parking, and a walking path proposed.

A discussion ensued about the history of the parcels and that there is only one way in and out of the site. Comments were made about the concerns about the slopes and visitor parking made by the township.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. October 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity
- D. 2026 Board Meeting Format and Dates

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

5. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS

A. Housing Recap – Mark Mohn & David Mattes

Mark Mohn began his presentation by recapping where he left off last meeting. He spoke on the outcomes of the Land Use & Housing Forum event on October 8th. The input given at the event was taken and reviewed at a housing group meeting held shortly after that. The top two takeaways were affordable housing and attainability, zoning and permitting regulations. Mark Mohn went on to state the potential for growth that is in Berks County; highlighting the development that is happening now in Spring Township – Broadcast District. The new direction should be vibrant communities like those are becoming more appealing to the public and should be taken more into consideration when thinking about housing. Mark Mohn ended his presentation by stating how valuable the Land Use & Housing Forum event was and how in the future events like these can make the way to bring some changes to the County and bring some type of collaboration between all the different entities that operate in the county.

Discussion ensued on the issues with housing and whether there are other counties that have done a great job of finding a solution to housing issues. Mark Mohn gave examples of other states that have tackled housing crises in extreme ways and local examples like Phoenixville. Phoenixville was able to decrease the number of zones, which aided in permits needed for areas to be developed. Comments were made on how we take the findings/data gathered and apply it. Who would take the lead to start the change needed? Some of the solutions stated were to continue the Joint Comprehensive Plan efforts to create a bigger sense of collaboration and unity. Comments were also made about the amount of legal power the county has and how it comes down to how much power we have to make the changes needed to bring the county forward.

B. Berks Nature ROE Tool – Tami Shimp & Andrew Fetterman

Tami Shimp newly appointed President of Berks Nature introduced herself and took time to acknowledge Kim Murphy retiring president of Berks Nature. Ms. Shimp went on to talk a little about Berks Natures history and their goals of protecting nature, water supplies and land. Ms. Shimp explained the importance of partnering with other agencies and educating the public on nature preservation. Ms. Shimp went on to show the different trails, camps, preserves they maintain.

Andrew Fetterman began his presentation by giving some background on who he is and what the Return of the Environment (ROE) tool is and how it can be used. The ROE tool was created as way to prioritize conservation efforts by bringing to light the economic value of natural resources and how it is crucial in informing land use and conservation decisions. The tool conveys the value of nature in economic terms, highlighting the important benefits natural areas provide and costs if lost. The tool is designed to help residents and landowners understand the value of the resources on their land, for students and educators to learn about the community, and for municipal officials to make informed land use decisions. Andrew Fetterman went on to explain how the tool is used and the different examples of the data gathered where expenses can be impacted by different outdoor recreation, highlighting the access to open space having a

tremendous value to the municipalities. The goal is to find the greatest return in preserving land rather than developing it. He went on to show how to access the ROE tool on Berks Nature's webpage and instructions on how to use it. Andrew Fetterman ended the report by informing us how the ROE tool can be utilized to support updating the County Comprehensive Plan by looking at the greenways mapping and conservation values.

Discussions ensued on ways and areas where the tool can be utilized to support staff on the County Comprehensive Plan. Inquiries were made on how the data was collected for the section of the tool that monetizes different outdoor recreation activities. Comments were made on the importance of preserving land features and protecting land versus the need for development.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Gavin Milligan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:52p.m. The motion was seconded by David Mattes.

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair

Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary