

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

January 21, 2026

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, January 21, 2026, in person in the 1st floor conference room at South Campus.
2. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER
Executive Director Ashley Showers introduced new board member Carolyn “Lyn” Rodino. Ms. Rodino currently serves as a Water Resources Manager at Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, SSM. Ms. Rodino then made a few remarks.
3. ROLL CALL

The following members were present:

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair
Sarah Phillips, Vice Chair
David Mattes; Secretary
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB,
Thomas C. McKeon, AICP, CEcD
Jodi Gauker
Gavin Milligan
Carolyn Rodino

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
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II
Shanice Ellison, Planner I
Thiago Correa de Almeida, Planner II
Pam Menet, Director Community and Economic Development
Mark Mohn, Gov’t Affairs Director, Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®
Jeremy Zaborowski, Director of Industrial Development Authority
Amber Columbo, Director County Workforce Development Board
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator
Simon Wangolo, Planning Manager, City of Reading

Emily Diaz -Melendez, Planner III, City of Reading
Alex Darlington

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. BOARD REORGANIZATION

Chairman Glenn Knoblauch called for presentation of the nominations for board reorganization.

Tom McKeon presented the following slate of officers:

Glenn Knoblauch Chair
Sarah Phillips, Vice Chair
David Mattes, Secretary

A motion was made by Tom McKeon to accept the slate of officers as presented.

The motion was seconded by Jodi Gauker and passed unanimously

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Ashley Showers began her report by providing updates on department staffing. Ms. Showers briefed the board on the candidates for the Assistant Director position and what the status of the interview process was. Ms. Showers then announced the departure of Shailyn Hernandez as the Office Support V to the County Facilities department.

Director Showers continued her report with an information item for the Board members. Ms. Showers reviewed the memo provided regarding the completion of the annual Pennsylvania Ethics form.

Ms. Showers then shared an update regarding the Imagine Berks Comprehensive plan. Specifically, that the survey response window closed with 1100 responses received. Staff is currently working to prepare a summary of the responses received to present to the board. Additionally, Ms. Showers shared that Pam Menet discussed the comprehensive plan process with the County's School Superintendents in which Ms. Menet who was present, elaborated on discussion. Director Showers then provided an overview of the Corridor Build Out analysis currently being conducted. The purpose of the analysis is to provide data which tells us the remaining buildable area for infill development as well as potential buildout on vacant land. Presently, Brandywine Conservancy is completing their analysis and upon completion will be reviewed by staff and prepared into a package for presentation to the municipalities. The analysis results will be used to overlay our existing future land use to see where areas of growth should be expanded.

B. Staff Reports –

a. Shanice Ellison -Blighted Property Reviews

i. **708 Chew Street – Hamburg Borough**

Shanice provided a brief overview of the property including the acreage of the site, the current blighted use, zoning of the property and the consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

A motion was made by Jodi Gauker to authorize a letter to the

Redevelopment Authority stating the certified blighted property acquisition and disposition for residential or related use is consistent with the Comprehensive plan. The motion was seconded by David Mattes and passed unanimously.

ii. **1853 Old Lancaster Pike – Cumru Township**

Shanice provided a brief overview of the property including the acreage of the site, the current blighted use, zoning of the property and the consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

A motion was made by Jodi Gauker to authorize a letter to the Redevelopment Authority stating the certified blighted property acquisition and disposition for residential or related use is consistent with the Comprehensive plan. The motion was seconded by Sarah Phillips and passed unanimously.

b. Michelle Franklin –

i. **East Penn Mfg. Co. – Admin 3 Building Project – Lyons Borough**

Michelle Franklin provided an update on the status of the project. Specifically, that she and Shanice Ellison attended Lyons Borough meeting on January 5th where a similar presentation to the December board meeting was given. Plans have not yet been submitted as the applicant is still working on a few design components, specifically, a variance for smaller parking spaces. All fees will be collected by the County Planning Commission, held in an escrow account, and used to pay the costs of review.

ii. **Exide Update**

Michelle Franklin attended the most recent Exide project status meeting with EPA. They are in the 3rd stage of a 7-step remediation process. This phase included testing 77 properties of which 70 had over 220 ppm of lead and 31 had over 600 ppm. They will excavate a level of soil from the properties, then conduct another sample test. If they still get high levels of lead, they will then cap the properties and put new top soil down. To find out more information EPA has a website for the site that will be active as long as the site is on their active project list.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. December 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity

*Items D and E, previously listed on the Consent Agenda, were removed after being approved by individual motion. See items 5-B-a-I and ii above.

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

7. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS

- A. Amber Columbo – Berks Workforce 2030

Amber Columbo Executive Director of the Berks County Workforce Development board began her presentation with background on the Board's mission, board composition and purpose.

Ms. Columbo provided an overview of the Berks Workforce 2030 report that included discussion on how they will work to fill our workforce gaps. The Workforce Board identifies priority industry sectors which include Manufacturing, Healthcare, Construction, Agriculture and Educational Services. Ms. Columbo explained the partners that the Workforce Board collaborates with.

Ms. Columbo reviewed both the findings of the study and the recommendations to address the findings. The findings were broken into categories such as, Housing Market and Attainability, Mobility, Commuting and Remote Work, Labor Force Participation and Education, Numeracy and Literacy skills.

Ms. Columbo closed her presentation with discussion on the relation of these findings to the Imagine Berks Comprehensive plan as well as the 2026 priority tasks for the Workforce Board.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair

David Mattes, Secretary