

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

August 13, 2025

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Glenn R. Knoblauch called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:23 p.m. The meeting was held on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, in person in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room at South Campus with a virtual option via TEAMS.

2. ROLL CALL

**The following members were present:**

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

**Also Attending:**

David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director  
David Peris, Berks County Assistant Solicitor  
Ashley Showers, Assistant Director  
Shailyn Hernandez, Office Support V  
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III  
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III  
Michelle Franklin, Planner III  
Taylor Lawrence, Planner III  
Michael Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler  
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst  
Rick Royer, Design Planner I  
Amanda Timochenko, Planner II  
Thiago Correa de Almeida, Planner II  
Devon Hain, Planner II  
Shanice Ellison, Planner I  
Pamela Menet, Director of Economic Development  
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator  
Heather Zimmerman, President/CEO PA Americana

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hunter had a brief report due to technical difficulties. Mr. Hunter began his report by presenting Planning Chats trailer to showcase the various videos that will be launched in the next upcoming months. Mr. Hunter ended his report by going over a summary of the participants in the different videos and what each video showcased as part of Planning.

B. Staff Reports – Michelle Franklin

a. **J Cube Residential Community – Douglass Township**

The proposed plan was submitted for review as a Preliminary Plan. The site is located along the south side of Benjamin Franklin Highway (S.R.2022) at the intersection with Broadmoor Boulevard. The site is in a Designated Growth area and an Environmental Hazard area. The proposal is for the 3-building, 120-unit Congregate Care apartment complex with associated site improvements. The plan is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update since the proposed development will be within the Designated Growth area.

No comments or questions were made on the subdivision plan.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. July 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity

MOTION: Lee C. Olsen 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. Tourism – Heather Zimmerman**

Heather Zimmerman began her presentation by giving a short background of who she is and her time at PA Americana. She went on to discuss the statistics on tourism in Berks County and the comparisons between numbers in neighboring counties, and one was Lancaster County's growth. Heather shared the findings of a strategic plan that was done previously this year. The study went over the revenue of tourism and the economic impact that it can have on the County if taken more seriously. The goal of her presentation was to bring light to the opportunity that Berks County can capitalize on tourism and having venues where people can go to all year round. Heather Zimmerman pointed out the lack of venues or attractions in Reading where conventions can be held or large events to try to increase revenue from tourism. The point was made to use the resources we have available and capitalize on them to increase tourism and bring more people to Berks County.

There were comments on the planning and approaches that were taken into consideration to build the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Reading and in some way find funding to do a study on where there can be growth in the current complexes available right now. There are site plans and documents that can help assist in the process of reinventing the downtown in Reading. There was a lengthy discussion on the various options of potential growth in certain areas where development can contribute to attracting more people to come to Berks County.

**B. Long Range Transportation Plan – Amanda Timochenko**

Amanda Timochenko began her presentation by giving an overview of what the Reading Area Transportation Study Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is and the goals and objectives of the Plan. Ms. Timochenko reviewed the process for updating the Plan, timeline, and federal and state requirements. She highlighted the outcomes of the initial public outreach sessions, the public identified issues and needs, and the incorporation of the public outreach comments into the development of both the LRTP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Ms. Timochenko concluded her presentation with directions to the LRTP Development Portal on the Berks County Planning Commission’s website where information, meeting notes, and draft sessions are available.

A discussion ensued on the public outreach sessions and the number of interactions that occurred. There was not a high attendance rate at the public outreach sessions, but the people who attended gave very good feedback and participation. The coordination that was done for some of the public outreach sessions also contributed to the great feedback received from the meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman, Glenn R. Knoblauch, gave his apologies for the technical difficulties during the meetings and thanked everyone for having patience as we navigate this new system.

MOTION: David Mattes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:21p.m. The motion was seconded by Lee C. Olsen.

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Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair

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Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary