

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

August 09, 2023

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Jodi L. Gauker called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:01 p.m. The meeting was held on Wednesday, August 09, 2023, as a virtual meeting using the platform Microsoft Teams.

The following members were present:

Jodi L. Gauker, Chairwoman
Christopher J. Spohn, Vice Chair
Lisa J. Weaver, Secretary
Glenn R. Knoblauch
Thomas C. Mckeon, AICP, CEcD

Also Attending:

David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director
Ashley J. Showers, Assistant Director
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Michael D. Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler
Taylor Lawrence, Planner II
Laura Mursch, Intergovernmental Planner III
Alan D. Piper, Transportation Planner III
Richard L. Royer, Design Planner
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator
Deb Millman, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance
David Myers, Berks Alliance
Heather Berger, Information Systems
Shailyn Hernandez, Planning Office Support V
Kim Fies, Department of Agricultural
Carl Long, County IS
Jeremy Zaborowski, Berks County Industrial Development Authority
Jessica Blauser, Executive Assistant COO Barnhart
Kim Murphy, President Berks Nature
Lynne Burns, Executive Assistant Commissioner Sihelnik
Andrew Fetterman, Berks Nature

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

A. Executive Director's Report

David Hunter began his report by introducing the new Planning Office Support V staff member Shailyn Hernandez. Mr. Hunter went on to provide the Board with the agenda of the August Board meeting. Specifically, Mr. Hunter informed the Board that there has been a change to the agenda and Executive Director Ken Pick from the County Redevelopment Authority is not able to attend today's meeting and will be picking a date for some time in the fall to conduct his presentation. Additionally, Mr. Hunter discussed the tentative September agenda which will include presentation from Michael Golembiewski on the 2020 census.

Executive Director Hunter also thanked the Planning Commission Board members for the support in the July meeting for the proposed future land use map amendment to the Comprehensive plan update.

Mr. Hunter also discussed that one of the main points of the Imagine Berks Regional meeting was to discuss housing. Planning staff has reviewed all the comments made at the meetings and categorized them. The findings came back with only 14% of all the comments in all the meetings were related to housing. The top comments received were regarding land use and collaborations. Mr. Hunter also reported that the number one outcome for him was the emphasis for the Joint Comprehensive Planning Program. Mr. Hunter stated we now have a possible 8 joint comprehensive plans scheduled for the next several years. The Muhlenberg/Laureldale Joint Comprehensive Plan is going for adoption in September. Mr. Hunter thanked staff for the hard work put into creating the plan.

In conclusion, Mr. Hunter shared the news that the state budget included an additional 2 million for the DCED MAP Program. By the end of month Laura Mursch will submit applications for 2 MAP Grants for 2 separate joint comprehensive plans.

Discussion ensued regarding staff time as match to the MAP grants.

B. STAFF REPORTS

a. **Michelle Franklin**
Kate's Place

The proposed land development plan was submitted as a Preliminary plan. The plan consists of a proposal for a 37-lot single-family residential development. It is going to have public sewer and each lot will have its own well for water. The lots

are situated in Washington Township. Access to the development is via Kutztown Road, which is in both Hereford Township and Washington Township. Michelle stated that the proposal is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan 2030 update, due to the location of the development being designated as Agriculture Preservation. Vice Chairman Chris Spohn strongly expressed that the Planning Commission is not in favor of this development moving forward due to it being inconsistent with the comprehensive plan.

b. Shanice Ellison

Reserve At Barto

The land development plan was submitted as a preliminary plan. The plan is called Reserve at Barto, and it is in Washington Township. It is designated as Existing Development, Designated Growth, and Agricultural Preservation in the future land use of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The proposal is for 32 townhouses. Comments made on the review letter included the requirement for a highway occupancy permit for both utilities and the proposed driveway. The project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

1606 Main Street

The land development plan was submitted as a preliminary plan, and it is in Washington Township. It is designated as Existing Development, Designated Growth, and Agricultural Preservation in the future land use of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The proposal is for 12 rental units which will be lots 1-2, and 24 individual units which will be lots 3-6. The project is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Approval of July 12, 2023, Minutes**

B. **Reports for Approval**

- Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity
- New Housing Units & Non-Residential Activity for 1st Quarter of 2023

MOTION: Christopher J. Spohn made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Lisa J. Weaver and passed unanimously.

5. **STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS**

A. **Ken Pick-Executive Director, Berks County Redevelopment Authority**

Mr. Pick was not able to attend, and his presentation is being rescheduled for some time in the fall.

B. Shanice Ellison-Hamburg Borough Zoning Amendment Review

Ms. Ellison discussed the basis of her map. Specifically, the map analyzed potential exclusionary zoning of smoke/vape shops within the borough.

C. David Hunter-Berks County Solar Policy

Mr. Hunter presented the recommendations for the Solar Advice Handout. There are 15 recommendations which are suggested for the municipalities to consider when preparing zoning ordinance amendments for solar facilities. Discussion ensued including recommendations from Andrew Fetterman to change recommendation 6 to include conservation easements. Additionally, Kimberly Fies suggested replacing the word “Allow” in recommendation 14 to “Acquire”. Mr. Hunter concluded that the goal for the Solar Advice Handout is to get approval by the Planning Commission Board and County Commissioners.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Lisa J. Weaver made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:11p.m. The motion was seconded by Glenn R. Knoblauch.

Jodi L. Gauker, Chairwoman

Christopher J. Spohn, Vice-Chair

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Jodi L. Gauker, Chairwoman


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August 9, 2023, BCPC Meeting Minutes