

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

March 13, 2024

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Christopher Spohn called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, as a virtual meeting using the platform Microsoft Teams.

**The following members were present:**

Christopher Spohn, Chairman  
Glenn R. Knoblauch  
Jodi L. Gauker  
Miguel Herrera  
Sarah Phillips  
Thomas C. McKeon, AICP, CEcD  
Lisa Weaver-Gonzalez, Vice Chair

**Also Attending:**

David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director  
David N. Peris, Assistant County Solicitor  
Ashley J. Showers, Assistant Director  
Shailyn Hernandez, Administrative Assistant  
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst  
Michael D. Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler  
Taylor Lawrence, Planner III  
Laura Mursch, Intergovernmental Planner III  
Alan D. Piper, Transportation Planner III  
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III  
Michelle Franklin, Subdivision Planner III  
Devon Hain, Transportation Planner II  
Richard Royer, Design Planner  
Shanice Ellison, Planner I  
Pam Menet, Executive Director Community and Economic Development  
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator  
Jaime Perez, Housing Planner, County Redevelopment Authority  
David Myers, Berks Alliance  
IS Production, IS Department  
Melissa Lewis, IS Department  
Amber Columbo, Assistant Director, WFDB  
Emily Wangolo, Executive Director Dept. of Agriculture  
Aaron Gantz, GRCA, Senior Director of Economic Development  
Kimberly Fies, Deputy Director of Agriculture  
Meghan Leshner, IS Department

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hunter began his report by reporting on how well it went at the PA Land Institute which had a record attendance. The event conducted discussions on the benefits of joint comprehensive planning and coordinating zoning. DCED representatives attended as subject matter experts on the benefits of coordinating zoning and the assistance that DCED can provide to the municipalities.

Mr. Hunter announced that Berks Nature 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is this year and extended an invitation to support Berks Nature. Over the course of the next few months Berks Nature will be having 50 public input sessions that will be held in several different venues in honor of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Mr. Hunter also updated the Board on discussions staff has been conducting regarding the County's Comprehensive Plan Update. Additionally, two new Joint Comprehensive Plans from DCED.

Executive Director Hunter ended his report by announcing that senior Transportation Planner, Alan Piper had some important information to share.

Mr. Piper announced that staff are rapidly approaching completion of Transportation Improvement Program draft for Berks County for the federal fiscal years 2025 thru 2028. Staff is seeking R.A.T.S. approval to circulate the documents to the public for a 30-day public review period. The tentative dates for the review period are Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> thru Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Tentatively, it is being anticipated that there will be two public meetings held during that period. The public meetings are tentatively scheduled for Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 3pm at Berks County Commissioner's Board Room and Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Berks County Ag Center.

B. STAFF REPORTS

**a. Ashley Showers**

**Berks County Planning Commission Annual Report**

Assistant Director Ashley Showers began her presentation by stating what are the intentions of the Annual Report. Mrs. Showers went on to review the highlights of the Annual Report over the year, the initiative that Planning Staff takes to continue their education in new planning topics, and how we enjoy collaborating and communicating with partners.

Discussion ensued about the great work that was put into the Annual Report and praises on the overall look of the Annual Report.

MOTION: Thomas C. McKeon made a motion to approve the Berks County Planning Commission Annual Report. The motion was seconded by Sarah Phillips and passed unanimously.

**b. Michelle Franklin –  
Folino Estate Inn and Spa – Greenwich Township**

The proposal was submitted as a Preliminary plan and the site is located on the south side of Old Route 22 (S.R.4028) and the north side of Interstate 78 between Jay Lane and Tedway Avenue. The project will be on the western side of the site and will be using on lot water and on lot sewer. The site is in an Existing Development area and a Future Growth area. The proposal for the inn/spa and associated improvements is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update.

Discussion ensued about any inquiries of community backlash due to the development of that area.

**Plow Solar Farms – Jefferson Township**

The proposal was submitted as a Preliminary/Final plan and the site is located along the east side of Bernville Road (S.R.0183) approximately 500-feet north of the intersection with Summer Mountain Road. The site is in Rural Conservation area and an Environmental Hazard area. The Environmental Hazard area is identified within the area of the 100-year floodplain associated with the tributary of the Little Northkill Creek within the site, as identified on the 2012 FEMA FIRM panels. No development is proposed within the Environmental Hazard area. According to Chapter 4 of the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update, Energy Conservation, notes to incorporate into the development process new energy-efficient technologies while using site and location choices that take advantage of existing energy resources. Therefore, the proposal for the solar project is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update.

Discussion ensued about the handling of storm water on the property and if there was an inclusion of Erosion & Sediment plan. It was also noted that Michelle used Planning Commission's solar advice to assist in the review.

**c. Shanice Ellison  
E. Locust Street Townhouses - Fleetwood Borough**

The proposal was submitted as a Sketch plan and the site is located along the northern side of E. Locust Street between E. Linden Street and Hickory/Dogwood Drive. The site is located within the Future Growth area. The proposal to construct 28 townhouses and associated improvements is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update. The two comments made on the review were to identify whether/or not on-street parking will be allowed, and visitor parking areas should be addressed.

Discussion ensued about the developer of the plan and the great utilization of the site.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of February 14, 2024 Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity
- D. Berks County Planning Commission 2023 Annual Report
- E. Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Redevelopment Program (RCI) Resolution

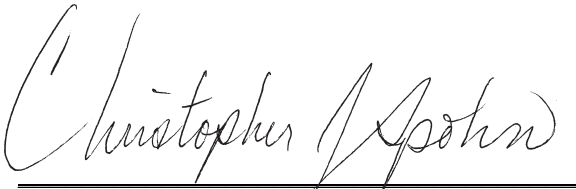
MOTION: Jodi L. Gauker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Miguel Herrera and passed unanimously.

5. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS

- A. NONE

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Sarah Phillips made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:55p.m. The motion was seconded by Lisa Weaver-Gonzalez.

  
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Christopher J. Spohn, Chairman

  
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Lisa Weaver-Gonzalez, Vice Chair