

**Planning Commission  
MINUTES**

**May 6, 2026**

***Meeting Held at Springfield Township Building***

**Members Present:** Angela Kelly, Neil O'Brien, Dave Long, Dawn Nicholson, Nicole Zane and Bruce Whitesell

**Members Absent:** Travis Pantaleo

Ms. Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Draft Noise Ordinance Discussion**

Mr. O'Brien introduced the draft, noting it is currently filed under performance standards, but is intended to become a standalone ordinance or be appended to the nuisance ordinance.

The draft includes a table of maximum sound levels measured at the residential lot line:

- 7AM - 9PM (Residential Districts): 60 weighted decibels (dBA)
- 9PM - 7AM (Residential Districts): 54 dBA

Mr. Long explained that "weighted decibels" (dBA) adjust for human hearing intensity. He provided comparisons of normal conversation (50-65dBA) to laughter (60-65 dBA) to chainsaws/ATVs (95+ dBA).

Mr. Whitesell noted that the Pennsylvania State Police generally do not enforce specific township regulations.

The Commission discussed the necessity of a full-time zoning officer or utilizing a magistrate to resolve neighbor disputes. Concerns for further raised regarding the requirement for officers to stand on lot lines with calibrated equipment for extended periods to capture violations.

The Commission reviewed existing exemptions, including emergency signals, utility repairs, lawn maintenance (7AM – 9PM), agricultural activities, and approved public celebrations. A consensus was reached to add an exemption for generators during power outages or emergency use, and for the removal of "snowmaking" as it is not currently applicable to the township. "Unamplified human voices" are currently exempt, though the Commission debated whether yelling or large groups should remain so.

Definitions discussed resulted as follows:

- Pure Tone Penalty – defined as a 5-decibel reduction in the allowable limit if the noise contains a steady whine, screech, or hum
- Repetitive Impulse Sound – defined as a 5-decibel reduction for repeating sounds like semi-automatic gunfire

Mr. O'Brien was tasked with researching 5-8 neighboring municipalities to compare their decibel limits and rewriting these technical sections into "layman's terms" for public clarity.

The Commission additionally discussed the baseline for ambient noise level. If the natural background noise (ex. Traffic from Route 309) is higher than the ordinance limit, the higher ambient level becomes the new baseline for measuring violations.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Mr. Whitesell, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from the April 16, 2026 meeting with the following: Mr. O'Brien wished to correct a statement made by Jim Nilsen at the previous meeting regarding property designated as forestry or agricultural reserve and allowances to post against hunting. The correct information is that active agriculture and forestry are allowed to be posted against hunting, while agricultural reserve is not allowed posting.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Robert Kent (Route 212) brought to attention the severe increase in ATV and go-kart usage within the village area, where they put a dirt track in their backyard, which has been run regularly for extended hours. His plea was to request a limitation on how long those activities can be conducted within the VR District.

Harry Squares (Winding Rd) inquired about the buffering zones that he believes exist between commercial and residential properties and the lack of enforcement of the current policy, and the lack of being addressed with the proposed revisions. He suggests enquiring with surrounding municipalities about how to address noise issues.

Patrick Sessions (Maple Rd) spoke on the topic of continuous gunfire at the Haycock Camp. He stated the times he had called the police, they came out and declared the Camp not to be in any violation. He feels the Camp is disregarding the restrictions placed on the camp through court order. He would like to see the Township be clear on what will and will not be enforced.

Lorna Yearwood (Woodbyne Rd) speaking as a Township Supervisor, recommends enacting the Noise as a separate ordinance so that it is enforceable for the exact reasons the other members of the public have mentioned. She would like the Township and Police Department to encourage better residential relationships, with respect to repeat offenses.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Ms. Zane wished to clarify that the nature and context of complaints matter in instances of complaints from the public. Context and information not only helps the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to understand the situation, but it allows them to better determine what needs to be fixed or changed.

### **COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Next Planning Commission meeting will be held on May 21, 2026.

Mr. Whitesell informed the Commission that the Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of a GIS system to assist the ABCs. Specifically, the Commission will benefit from the ability to incorporate district overlays. Mr. Whitesell thanked the audience for their participation and attendance.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An Executive session will be held after the meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mr. Long, seconded by Ms. Whitesell and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Pursell  
Township Manager