

**Planning Commission
MINUTES**

August 5, 2026

Meeting Held at Springfield Township Building

Members Present: Angela Kelly, Dave Long, Dawn Nicholson, Travis Pantaleo and Nicole Zane

Members Absent: Neil O'Brien and Bruce Whitesell

Ms. Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

Moyer Rd Subdivision

Ms. Kelly noted that the applicant for the Moyer Road subdivision appeared before the start of the meeting expecting to be on the agenda.

Mr. Long had contacted the Township Manager, who confirmed that while the Township had received the application, the Township Engineer had not yet completed the review letter. Mr. Long further communicated that the Township Engineer's review letter may not be ready until the first week of September. Because the Planning Commission does not conduct initial project reviews or formal discussions during work session meetings (such as the upcoming session on August 20th), the Moyer Rd subdivision application review will likely be placed on the agenda for the regular meeting scheduled for September 2, 2026.

Ms. Zane clarified that even if the Township Engineer completes and approves his review letter, the applicant is still required to formally appear before the Planning Commission for discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

Draft Noise Ordinance Discussion

Ms. Kelly, Mr. Long and Ms. Zane summarized the joint presentation of the Draft Noise Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors determined that the noise ordinance should be enacted as a zoning ordinance rather than a standalone general ordinance. The Township Solicitor provided legal guidance regarding the distinctions and persuaded the Board to adopt it as part of the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Long highlighted that integrating the noise standards into the zoning code will necessitate removing or updating redundant noise performance standards currently existing across other sections, such as general performance standards and solar energy provisions.

Ms. Zane reviewed sound monitoring data gathered by local police officers and incorporated it into Section 3 of the draft. The police report indicated that ambient roadside noise without active traffic measured approximately 65dB, with a median average around 75dB, and peak levels reaching up to 99dB when large trucks or semi-trailers passed. Based on this data, the Highway Commercial (HC) and Planned Industrial (PI) districts were separated from all other districts in Section 3, setting a daytime threshold for HC and PI at 75dB to align with measured baseline traffic averages.

Ms. Kelly and Mr. Long noted that for Section 3, the language should clearly state “remaining districts” for “all other district” to encompass the Township’s distinct zoning classifications.

Ms. Kelly reported that the Township Solicitor recommended defining the real property boundary as the exact surveyed property line for legal clarity in court enforcement scenarios. Ms. Nicholson agreed that using the surveyed boundary is standard legal practice. The Commission evaluated concerns raised by the Board of Supervisors regarding the definition of “occasional”. Ms. Zane expressed concern that certain Supervisors were pushing the concept of “occasional” relative to recreational shooting. Ms. Zane, Ms. Kelly, and Mr. Long reaffirmed the Commission’s decision to avoid regulating firearm target shooting within the noise ordinance, noting that any firearm regulation should be handled via a dedicated weapons ordinance to avoid public conflict.

Ms. Nicholson and Ms. Zane recommended utilizing the standard Merriam-Webster dictionary definition for “occasional” (“occurring at infrequent intervals”). Ms. Nicholson noted that standard dictionary definitions hold up effectively under judicial review.

The Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Officer suggested removing pets from the exemptions list. Ms. Zane, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Long, and Ms. Kelly strongly opposed removing pets from exemption, citing concerns over municipal overreach in a rural community. Ms. Zane and Ms. Nicholson noted that state animal welfare laws enforced by State Police already regulate animal cruelty and extreme weather exposure. Mr. Pantaleo suggested referencing Pennsylvania State Code or State Police Jurisdiction if animal cruelty is suspected. The Commission’s consensus was to retain pet exemption within item #4.

The Commission evaluated Item #13 regarding snow blowers and plows. Ms. Zane, Ms. Kelly, and Mr. Long agreed that the phrase “operating during or immediately following frozen precipitation events” was overly restrictive. The Commission agreed to strike “during or immediately following frozen precipitation events” so that Item #13 simply exempts “snow blowers and plows”.

Mr. Long noted that Item #14 exempts agricultural operation, forestry devices (such as chainsaws), and crop protection devices (such as propane bangers/cannons).

The Commission evaluated Item #12 under exemptions versus Section 6 (Commercial Construction Restrictions). Mr. Long and Ms. Zane noted that Item #12 (lawn care, maintenance, domestic power tools) overlapped with Section 3 timeframes. The Commission agreed to strike Item #12 and retain Item #3.

Ms. Kelly questioned the necessity of Section 6. Ms. Nicholson and Ms. Zane advocated retaining Section 6 to protect residential areas from commercial construction and demolition noise on weekends, evenings and holidays. Ms. Nicholson cited past experiences with heavy equipment noise occurring early on weekend mornings. Mr. Pantaleo suggested clarifying the title and scope to explicitly cover “commercial construction and demolition activities” to ensure both building and site demolition are regulated.

The Commission reviewed the listed restricted holidays (currently listed as Sundays, New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day). Mr. Pantaleo and Mr. Long discussed whether to reference all federal bank holidays. Ms. Zane, Ms. Nicholson, and Ms. Kelly agreed to retain the specific list of family-focused holidays rather than all federal holidays, as restricting all federal holidays would unnecessarily restrict commercial operations on days like President’s Day or MLK Day.

Mr. Long affirmed that the Township Solicitor will rewrite Section 7 (Enforcement and Penalties) to conform with standard zoning ordinance enforcement procedures. Once the Commission's edits are complete, the draft will be returned to the Board of Supervisors. Upon Board review, the Township Solicitor will format the document into formal ordinance language, sent it for review to the Bucks County Planning Commission, and return it for final adoption, targeting completion in late 2026.

Draft Data Center Ordinance Discussion

Mr. Pantaleo reported that he distributed an updated draft incorporating revisions from the May and July meetings, expanding the draft ordinance from 11 pages to 16 pages. The expansion incorporates detailed provisions for lighting, environmental standards, and performance criteria adapted from other municipal codes.

Ms. Zane raised serious concerns regarding high water consumption by data centers and its impact on local aquifers and private domestic wells. Ms. Zane requested adding explicit requirements mandating closed-loop, regenerative, glycol, or water-conserving cooling technologies to minimize groundwater extraction. Mr. Pantaleo agreed to include specific cooling system standards in the draft.

Ms. Nicholson, Ms. Zane, and Mr. Pantaleo evaluated the required radius for hydrogeological impact studies. The draft initially set a 1,000-foot study radius for well impacts. Ms. Nicholson noted that a 1,000-foot radius was insufficient based on prior well applications in the Township, as it failed to cover adjacent elevated residential neighborhoods that share the aquifer. Ms. Zane suggested scaling the study area based on total building square footage or parcel acreage rather than a static distance. Mr. Pantaleo explained that building coverage is capped between 20% and 60% by state and local regulations. The Commission agreed to update the hydrogeological requirements to mandate the identification of all known and potential aquifers and expand the radius for existing and proposed wells to 2,500 feet (or tied to a multiplier based on overall site footprint/acreage).

Ms. Nicholson and Ms. Zane recommended that the Township require applicants to establish an escrow fund to reimburse the Township for hiring independent third-party hydrogeological, environmental, and engineering consultants to review all submitted impact studies. Mr. Pantaleo confirmed that third-party testing and reviewing escrow requirements are currently included for ambient noise and agreed to expand third-party review escrow language across all major impact categories (including water supply, GIS mapping, and ambient temperature).

Ms. Nicholson recommended adding explicit bonding requirements to ensure funds are available to clean up or restore a site if a developer abandons the facility or goes bankrupt. Mr. Pantaleo noted that a decommissioning plan section was present and agreed to add formal Performance/Decommissioning Bond requirements as part of the Conditional Use approval process.

Ms. Nicholson further recommended requiring applicants to always maintain active proof of comprehensive insurance coverage on file with the Township. Mr. Pantaleo incorporated mandatory insurance coverage requirements into the Conditional Use criteria, specifying:

1. Builder's Risk Insurance
2. General Property Insurance
3. Excess Casualty Insurance
4. General Liability Insurance

Mr. Pantaleo confirmed all revisions and corrections noted in the meeting will be corrected and that he will be performing a complete formatting review to ensure all section numbering, roman numeralization, and column alignments are standard before formal presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

Draft Event Venue Ordinance Discussion

Mr. Long referenced the Draft Noise Ordinance review regarding sound regulations as they applied to the Draft Event Venue Ordinance. He cited the specific cross-reference in the event venue draft, noting: "No amplified music shall be allowed outside a permanent enclosed structure. In addition, all sound shall conform to the Springfield Township Noise Ordinance."

Ms. Zane and Ms. Kelly confirmed that the proposed event venue provisions and noise ordinance standards are fully aligned and consistent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Formal action of July 16, 2026, meeting minutes were deferred.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

No additional comments.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

No Commission comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Pantaleo, seconded by Ms. Zane and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Pursell
Township Manager