

MINUTES
WEST MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
DATE: September 9, 2025

The meeting was called to order by David Beecher at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Planning Commission Members:

David Beecher, Chairman – Present

Patrick Hein, Vice-Chairman – Present

Felicia Dell – Present

Rainer Niederoest, Dawood Engineers – Present

Staff:

Matthew Biehl – Present

Fred Walters – Present

Rachelle Sampere, Zoning Officer – Present

Ryan Cummings, HRG – Present

Tonight's Planning Commission meeting was held in person. The meeting was broadcast over Zoom for viewing purposes only.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: by Felicia Dell to modify the August 12, 2025, Planning Commission meeting minutes to note that she was present at the August 12, 2025, meeting and to approve the modified meeting minutes.

SECOND: by Fred Walters

MOTION PASSED: 4-0(1 Abstain – Biehl)

ZONING HEARING BOARD CASES

There were no Zoning Hearing Board cases submitted for review for the September meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

T-902 Preliminary/Final Subdivision and Land Development for The Learning Experience – Kenneth Road – to depict a subdivision creating two (2) parcels in the Professional office zone and to depict the land development of the parcels creating a 10,000 square foot commercial day care facility with associated parking, landscaping and stormwater management on Lot 1 and the land development of a 6,000 square foot office building with associated parking, landscaping and stormwater management on Lot 2 **located along the 1900 block of Kenneth Road** in the Professional Office Zone and the R-2 Residential Zone.

Dr. Beecher informed the Planning Commission members that Ms. Sampere received an email from the applicant's engineer requesting that the plan be tabled at this month's meeting.

MOTION: by Patrick Hein to table the plan until the October 14, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.

SECOND: Matthew Biehl

MOTION PASSED: Unanimously (5-0)

Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text and Map Amendment for a Data Center Overlay Zone– to review and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding a proposed a Zoning Ordinance text and map amendment for a use not provided for, Data Center Overlay Zone. The applicant is requesting that the Board of Supervisors amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to define and permit data centers subject to certain standards in a new Data Center Overlay Zone and apply it to UPI # 51-000-HG-0004-00000 and 51-000-IG-0032B-000000 located in the Open Space Zone.

Dr. Beecher informed the Planning Commission members that he was informed that the Board of Supervisors were in favor of the proposed Data Center Overlay for this site and wanted the Planning Commission members

to move the project forward. Attorney James Strong of McNees, Wallace & Nurick, LLC, presented the Data Center Overlay text and map amendment to the Planning Commission members. He informed them that he had received Dawood's review memo earlier that day and would work with the Township Manager and staff to decide which comments are applicable that will be applied. Attorney Strong reminded the Planning Commission members that the request was for an overlay zone and that the application was being presented as submitted. The applicant was not going to change positions to request that the property be rezoned as it opens the property up to all the uses permitted in the rezoned zoning district. The overlay zone would allow data centers as an overlay to the underlying zone. Mr. Hein asked what the Board of Supervisors' resistance was to rezone the property. Dr. Beecher said that the zoning ordinance text amendment to create a data center overlay zone is more streamlined without turning the site into an industrial zone. The Township's recently adopted comprehensive plan did not target this property as an industrial property. Mr. Hein said that it makes more sense to rezone the property. Dr. Beecher said that the applicant brought the draft for the data center overlay to the Township for review and the Planning Commission must make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding the submission. Mr. Walters asked what Jackson Township's opinion was on the proposed overlay zone. Mr. Kahn of Viridian Partners explained that nothing was being proposed in Jackson Township other than some of their electrical components. The portion of the property located within Jackson Township would remain in whatever zoning district it's currently zoned. Mr. Biehl asked what comments Dawood Engineers recommends the applicant should address prior to the Board adopting the draft ordinance. Mr. Niederoest offered that there were comments related to noise and better accommodations adjacent to the residential zone that should be addressed, but it is his understanding that the draft is being offered "as is". Mr. Hein asked if the applicant was amenable to the engineer's comments. Attorney Strong said that he is not in a position to say because he only received Dawood's comments today, but again mentioned that he and his client would work with the Township Manager and staff to decide which comments are applicable that will be applied to the draft ordinance. Ms. Dell asked how the sound at their other sites is addressed. She stated that the draft ordinance has not specificity to sound requirements. It's very broad and doesn't offer any protection to surrounding owners. Mr. Kahn explained that Viridian Partners had a conversation with Township staff that preceded last month's meeting and were advised to keep sound restrictions very broad. They would adhere to industry standards. Mr. Niederoest offered that the applicant should perform a noise study in advance of construction to establish a baseline for comparison to see how the sound from the data centers increase the effect on the neighboring properties. Mr. Niederoest also offered that the reason the Township staff suggested that the noise requirements remain broad was because the Township doesn't have anyone on staff to perform sound studies. It is more complicated than holding a decibel meter. Mr. Hein said that the Township should consider how to quantify sound when it updates the current zoning ordinance. Dr. Beecher said that the text is offered as an overlay with language for the data center requirements. If Planning Commission members do not feel that the overlay is the appropriate approach, vote appropriately. Ms. Dell said that she doesn't think that the right approach for the Township is an overlay zone because it is one parcel specific. Mr. Walters said he's alright with the overlay zone. If this applicant doesn't go through with the project, the overlay zone is still there, but the underlying use can remain. It doesn't have to be developed and the property isn't opened up to other industrial uses.

MOTION: by Fred Walters to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the Data Center Overlay text and map amendment subject to the comments from Dawood Engineers being addressed.

SECOND: Felicia Dell

MOTION PASSED: 3-2 (Nays – Dell and Hein)

T-895 Revised Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development Plan for Steve & Karen Washington Taxville Road – to depict a preliminary subdivision of a 29.88-acre parcel to create eleven (11) single-family detached dwelling lots **located at the corner of Taxville Road and Baker Road** in the Rural Residential Zone.

Dr. Beecher informed the Planning Commission members that Ms. Sampere received an email from the applicant's engineer requesting that the plan be tabled at this month's meeting.

MOTION: by Fred Walters to table the plan until the October 14, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.

SECOND: by Patrick Hein

MOTION PASSED: Unanimously (5-0)

T-901 Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development Plan for the Baker Road Subdivision – to depict the proposed subdivision of a 48.640-acre parcel creating 65 residential lots and 2 homeowner's association lots, associated roads and stormwater management **located along the south side of Baker Road near the intersection with Sunset Lane** (Tax Map: JG; Parcel: 0033D) in the R-1 Residential Zone. The properties will be served by public water and public sanitary sewer.

Dr. Beecher informed the Planning Commission members that Ms. Sampere received an email from the applicant's engineer requesting that the plan be tabled at this month's meeting.

MOTION: by Matthew Biehl to table the plan until the October 14, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.

SECOND: by Fred Walters

MOTION PASSED: Unanimously (5-0)

Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text and Map Amendment for Planned Residential Development Overlay Zone – to review and make recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding a proposed Zoning Ordinance text and map amendment for a Planned Residential Development (PRD) for the West Manchester Town Center UPI # 51-000-JH-0056Q-00000, 51-000-JH-0056Y-00000, 51-000-JH-0123-00000, 51-000-JH-0056C-00000 AND 51-000-JH-0056F-00000 in the Regional Commercial Zone.

Attorney Gregg Adelman of Kaplin Stewart briefed the Planning Commission on behalf of the applicant. Attorney Adelman explained that the applicants have been working with Township staff on the draft Planned Residential Development (PRD) overlay text and map amendment for over one year. Their presentation was a high level explanation of their intent to gain the Planning Commission's initial feedback. They'd like to come back next month to get the Planning Commission's in-depth feedback on the proposed text amendment and specific design standards for the PRD. Dawood Engineers performed an initial review of the draft over a year ago. The applicant also agreed to have HRG review and provide feedback on their initial draft. The Board of Supervisors authorized staff to continue to forward the subsequent drafts to HRG for their review and feedback. The applicants found that they were at a place where they have addressed most of HRG's comments and now were seeking the Township Planning Commission's recommendations. The draft was also forwarded to the York County Planning Commission for their review and recommendations. YCPC will be reviewing the draft in October and will provide their comments to the Township later that month. A public hearing will be scheduled when the Board of Supervisors feel it is appropriate to do so. The draft PRD and design guidelines offer various housing types (apartments, townhomes, stacked townhomes, single family detached dwellings, and multifamily dwellings, assisted living facility), streets, walkways, green space and commercial aspects (hotel, self-storage, community building and restaurants) to make the current West Manchester Town Center a more cohesive area tying residential and commercial uses together. The goal is to make it a walkable community. Attorney Adelman explained that this PRD is modeled after Ellis Preserve in Newtown, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. That PRD is a much larger scale, but it brought commercial and residential uses together just as this PRD draft ordinance and overlay is designed to do. The proposed overlay zone covers a few properties in two zoning districts. It is defined by roads rather than by property lines. The applicants are not seeking a recommendation from the Planning Commission tonight; they'd like the Planning Commission to review the proposed draft and design standards and forward their comments and questions to Ms. Sampere who will forward them to Attorney Adelman so they can address them at next month's meeting.

No action was taken.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Matthew Biehl wanted it on record that he felt that the directive from the Board of Supervisors to move the data center overlay project forward because the Board is in favor of it was inappropriate. Mr. Biehl felt that the Planning Commission members should be able to review plans and make their recommendations without prior influence from the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Sampere informed the Planning Commission members that the Board of Supervisors authorized HRG to begin working with Staff to prepare an update to the Township's Zoning Ordinance. That process will begin in the near future.

ADJOURN

MOTION: by Matthew Biehl to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: Felicia Dell

MOTION PASSED: Unanimously (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.