

**Mt. Joy Township
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, July 14, 2026**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Kim Birkhead, Chairman; Vice-Chairman; Ben Mearns; Kenneth Mutzabaugh; Ben Hawkins, Chris Burne

Also Present: Christine Demas, Supervisor; Erik Vranich, Engineer; Kim Livelsberger, Zoning & Code Enforcement Officer

The Mount Joy Township Planning Commission met this date, as publicly advertised, at the Mount Joy Township Building located at 902 Hoffman Home Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325. In addition to being in person, the meeting was also accessible by remote ZOOM platform. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Chairman Comments: None

Public Comments: None

- **Approval of Minutes:** June 9, 2026 - Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Burne abstained because he did not attend the meeting. Motion carried, 4-0-1.

Business:

- **Presentation by Elizabeth Cushman and Ted Tesler, Senior Geoscientists from Bureau of Geological Survey, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources out of Middletown PA:** Board Chair Demas introduced Elizabeth Cushman and Ted Tesler, both are from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Geological Survey. Ms. Cushman provided a presentation on the geology, hydrogeology, groundwater resources, and water availability in and around Mount Joy Township. She introduced the Pennsylvania Geological Data Exploration (PA Geo) website, which provides access to geologic publications and a statewide database containing approximately 650,000 water well records and also highlighted several reference publications and studies, including reports on Adams County groundwater resources, the Marsh and Rock Creek watersheds, the Upper Monocacy Basin, and groundwater availability in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Cushman explained that Mount Joy Township relies on groundwater stored within fractures in the underlying bedrock rather than in large underground aquifers and discussed the area's geologic formations, noting that groundwater availability is largely dependent on the presence of fractures rather than the depth of a well. Well data indicates a median well depth of approximately 220 feet and an average yield of about 10 gallons per minute, which is generally adequate for residential use. She emphasized that drilling deeper wells does not necessarily result in higher water yields, as success depends on intersecting productive fractures.

Ms. Cushman also focused on regional water availability and the importance of managing groundwater resources on a watershed basis rather than by municipal boundaries. Current precipitation trends show the region has experienced below-average rainfall and recurring drought conditions over the past several years, raising concerns about groundwater recharge and long-term water availability. She

reviewed the components of a water budget, including precipitation, groundwater recharge, runoff, withdrawals, and consumptive use, and encouraged the Township to utilize available state resources and water-use data when evaluating future development and planning decisions.

Ms. Cushman presented several additional resources available to assist the Township with water resource planning and decision-making. They noted that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Safe Drinking Water provides guidance, permitting information for public water supply wells, and a statewide water withdrawal database. Water users exceeding reporting thresholds are required to submit annual withdrawal data, allowing municipalities to review regional water use trends. She also recommended the York County Integrated Water Resources Plan, which identifies regional water resource challenges and management strategies, and the Adams County Water Supply and Wellhead Protection Plan, which contains information on aquifer capacity and may be useful when evaluating future development proposals and water availability.

Ms. Cushman said using DEP's dashboard, the total water withdrawals in Mount Joy Township and adjacent upstream municipalities were approximately 5.2 billion gallons in 2024, with 91% attributed to public water supplies. Approximately 23% of withdrawals were from groundwater, emphasizing that groundwater and surface water are interconnected and should be managed as part of the same hydrologic system. Average daily withdrawals for the area ranged from 7 to 7.7 million gallons per day.

Barbara Steele - Mud College Road, noted that Mount Joy Township lies within the Allaway Creek and Rock Creek watersheds, both of which ultimately drain into the Potomac River Basin. The Board encouraged residents and officials to utilize the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) weekly drought and groundwater reports as a resource for monitoring local water conditions. It was noted that Mount Joy Township is currently experiencing severe drought conditions, particularly within areas underlain by the New Oxford Formation, and that the ICPRB reports provide valuable information on regional drought status and groundwater conditions. Ms Steele will provide the website information to Board Chair Demas who will send it to the Planning Commission members.

- **White Run Terrace Preliminary Subdivision Plan:** Bob Sharrah, Sharrah Design presented a revised subdivision plan consisting of 23 single-family detached residential lots, similar to a previous proposal. The overall site layout remains largely unchanged, but the lot configuration was revised to address ordinance requirements related to floodplain areas and minimum lot acreage. The previous plan included two panhandle lots extending toward White Run and containing floodplain areas; the revised plan rearranges the lots while maintaining the same number of lots. The development will include public sewer service connected by gravity flow to the existing sewer system near Lake Heritage. Each lot will have an individual private well. The applicant explained that previous testing was completed for potential community water use, including a DEP-approved study, a 72-hour pump test at 60 gallons per minute, and water quality testing. The well met quantity requirements but showed elevated total dissolved solids (TDS), which would require reverse osmosis treatment. Discussion occurred regarding whether individual wells provide the same water quality concerns as a community system and whether additional groundwater testing or a hydrogeologic study is needed. Mr. Vranich noted that the submitted desktop water study did not include the prior well testing information and recommended the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors determine whether additional testing should be required or whether previous testing satisfies the ordinance requirements.

Mr. Vranich reviewed the outstanding plan comments, including the need to update the sensitive resource map to show proposed conditions and how resources are being avoided, clarify the purpose of various easements for access, drainage, utilities, or open space, and complete required sewer

planning, NPDES permitting, bonding, and construction agreements. Additional comments included addressing the clear sight triangle at the Baltimore Pike entrance and ensuring the proposed sign complies with height restrictions, verifying emergency vehicle access to the proposed emergency access route, protecting planting easements along Baltimore Pike for Lots 9, 10, and 12, determining whether Plum Circle will be dedicated to the Township or remain a private road requiring maintenance agreements, reviewing curbing requirements, addressing sewer connection details near White Run, and completing the required hydrogeologic/water study. Additional discussion focused on Lot 12, which the County identified as a concern because the lot fronts Baltimore Pike but accesses through Plum Circle. Mr. Vranich noted that the driveway location may require a waiver because the ordinance requires a minimum setback from property lines.

Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to table the plan until the hydrogeologic study/water supply information, driveway access issue, and remaining plan comments, are addressed. Motion carried.

Breezy Acres School Septic Planning Module: Mr. Vranich reviewed the Breezy Acres Amish Schoolhouse proposal located on the Beiler property at 170 Furney Road. He stated they previously operated a temporary school at the site and is now proposing construction of a permanent school facility. He noted that the project is generally ready for a zoning permit, with stormwater requirements addressed and the project not triggering land development requirements. However, because the facility will utilize privies rather than a traditional sewage system, a planning module is required and must be reviewed by the Planning Commission through completion of the Component 4A form.

Mr. Vranich reviewed the required checklist items, noting that the proposal is consistent with the Township's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, and Sewage Facilities Plan. The project does not impact water resources, wetlands, prime agricultural lands, historic or archaeological resources, or threatened and endangered species. Mr. Beiler provided documentation from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) supporting these findings. Discussion occurred regarding the use of privies, and Mr. Vranich explained that the facility will not have running water and will utilize a pump-out agreement with a hauler and treatment facility. Additional sewage permitting details will be addressed through the Township Sewage Enforcement Officer.

Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Burne, to approve the completion and signing of the Component 4A form for the Breezy Acres School Planning Module. Motion carried.

Adjournment. With no further business, Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Burne, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheri Moyer
Township Secretary