

**Mt. Joy Township
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, June 9, 2026**

Meeting Minutes

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

Absent: Ben Hawkins, Chris Burne

Also Present: Sandy Yerger, Supervisor; 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: May 12, 2026 - Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Business:

- **Presentation by Mark Grosz from Dark Skies International:** Chair Birkhead introduced Mr. Grosz an advocate for dark-sky preservation provided a presentation on the environmental and biological impacts of artificial light at night. He explained that his interest in the subject began after observing significant increases in sky brightness in recent years and that he has since conducted extensive research on light pollution and its effects.

Mr. Grosz stated that artificial light at night affects more than visibility and astronomy, serving as a biological signal that can disrupt circadian rhythms in humans and wildlife. He discussed the impacts of light pollution on ecosystems, including disruptions to wildlife behavior, predator-prey relationships, bird migration, pollination, breeding cycles, and habitat use. He noted that many nocturnal species rely on natural darkness and moonlight cues for survival and reproduction.

Mr. Grosz cited research indicating that excessive nighttime lighting can contribute to declines in bird and insect populations, interfere with pollination by nocturnal insects, and alter the behavior of wildlife such as deer. He also emphasized the importance of preserving natural darkness to maintain biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. He encouraged consideration of the biological and environmental impacts of outdoor lighting in addition to traditional concerns related to visibility and public safety.

Mr. Grosz discussed the use of adaptive and responsive lighting technologies, noting that modern lighting systems can provide security and visibility while minimizing unnecessary light pollution. He explained that lighting can be designed to respond to activity rather than remain at full brightness

throughout the night and explained how excessive or improperly designed lighting can create safety concerns by reducing the eye's ability to adapt to darkness and decreasing visual contrast. He shared examples of how bright lights can impair vision and argued that glare and over-illumination may create hazardous conditions, particularly along roadways.

- **White Run Terrace – Time Extension:** Supervisor Demas stated that this item can be removed from the agenda. Mr. Vranich stated that plans were resubmitted and will be on next month's agenda.
- **Links Wade Run Phase II – Lot 59 – Time Extension and Plan Review:** No presenter representing the Links was in attendance. Mr. Vranich stated that both he and the Zoning Officer reviewed the plan but since no one is here to present the plan it should be tabled until next month. Mr. Mutzabaugh moved, seconded by Mr. Mearns, to table the plan for Wade Run Phase II – Lot #59 Final Subdivision Plan. Motion carried.
- **Redwood Resources Preliminary/Final Subdivision and Land Development Plan:** William Pompeii of CS Davidson reviewed a proposed subdivision and land development plan for a property located along Route 15 near Mount Joy Road. The proposal includes one single-family dwelling, a clubhouse, a nine-hole par-three golf course, associated parking, stormwater management facilities, and approximately 420 feet of new roadway ending in a cul-de-sac. The applicant requested waivers to allow combined preliminary/final plan submission and to waive the requirement for maintenance benches around the stormwater ponds. The applicant stated that wetlands and existing tree lines would be preserved where possible and that review comments received from Township staff and consultants could be addressed.

Ms. Livelsberger discussed several outstanding issues, including roadway ownership and maintenance responsibilities due to access through Straban Township, the classification of the proposed dwelling and clubhouse, adequacy of parking facilities, landscaping and buffering requirements, utility coordination, and water supply needs. Ms. Livelsberger noted that additional information is needed regarding existing vegetation, screening requirements, well locations, irrigation demands, and the proposed use of the clubhouse and related amenities. Coordination with the White Run Regional Municipal Authority will also be required due to the presence of an existing sewer main and easement crossing the property.

Mr. Vranich reported that several engineering and utility issues remain under review and that a more comprehensive hydrogeologic study will be required to evaluate projected water demands and potential impacts. He also noted that stormwater management issues would benefit from further discussion in a workshop setting with the applicant and Township representatives. During public comments, neighboring property owners and Lake Heritage representatives asked questions regarding stormwater runoff, wetlands, project coordination, and the construction schedule. Following discussion, Mr. Vranich recommended tabling the plan to allow the applicant additional time to address outstanding comments and coordinate with Township staff and consultants before returning to the Planning Commission for further review. Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to table the plan to have further conversation about the points raised by both the Engineer and Zoning Officer letters dated June 4, 2026. Motion carried.

- **Data Center Ordinance Amendment:** Supervisor Demas stated that the Township previously adopted regulations in 2024 identifying where data centers may be located, and the proposed ordinance expands upon those regulations by outlining developer responsibilities and operational requirements.

The proposed ordinance includes standards related to minimum tract size, lot coverage, building coverage, building height, setbacks, buffering and screening, lighting, hazardous materials storage, parking and loading areas, and utility infrastructure. Additional screening requirements would apply to utility substations and other associated facilities. She pointed out requirements for emergency management and public safety, including the submission of a comprehensive emergency response plan prepared by a qualified professional and reviewed by the Township's emergency management personnel. Applicants would be required to demonstrate adequate fire suppression, containment, ventilation, and evacuation procedures. The ordinance also requires developers to provide training and equipment for local fire departments to ensure emergency response capabilities. Supervisor Demas pointed out the ordinance's water resource provisions, including requirements for a water feasibility study and water resources impact study. Applicants would be required to identify and demonstrate a sustainable water source, provide information regarding anticipated water usage, and complete pump testing and drawdown analyses. The ordinance also encourages the use of closed-loop water systems and prohibits reliance on water supplies that could adversely impact neighboring wells.

Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to forward the ordinance to the Board of Supervisors with the Planning Commission comments that lighting cannot exceed fifteen feet (15') maximum height for lighting. Motion carried.

Adjournment. With no further business, Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheri Moyer
Township Secretary