

**Mt. Joy Township
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2026**

Meeting Minutes

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

Absent: Chris Burne

Also Present: Christine Demas, Supervisor; Erik Vranich, Engineer

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:** August 11, 2026 - Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Business:

- **Presentation by Dave Smith, Executive Director Dairyman's Association, Adams County Agricultural Center:** David Smith, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Dairyman's Association and a Lebanon County farmer, provided an update on the Pennsylvania Ag Discovery Center project. He explained that the organization recently completed a search for a new executive director following the departure of its previous director, Tom O'Connor. A new director, Amanda, will soon begin working with the organization.

The Discovery Center has an Agreement of Sale with Horizon Realty Group for property located south of the Outlets of Gettysburg. The organization has made a deposit toward the purchase, and the current agreement provides approximately one year to complete the purchase. Preliminary engineering and due diligence work on the property has been completed. Fundraising will be a primary focus in the coming year to secure the funds necessary to purchase the property.

Mr. Smith reported that the project recently received a \$2,000,000 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grant, in addition to approximately \$300,000-\$400,000 in other grant funding commitments. These funds will be available to support the project as additional funding is secured.

The proposed Discovery Center is intended to be a tourism and educational destination focused on agriculture, providing hands-on opportunities for visitors and students to learn about agriculture, agricultural careers, and the various sectors of the industry. Mr. Smith noted that similar facilities exist in Wisconsin and Indiana, but that projects of this type are relatively uncommon on the East Coast.

Robin Fitzpatrick of the Adams County Economic Development Alliance also addressed the Board. She explained that the Alliance has offered the Discovery Center project temporary office space at the Gateway Business Park to provide a local presence for the new executive director. This will allow the director to become familiar with local organizations, meet with Township officials, and attend Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings as appropriate. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the organization is allowing the new director approximately 90 days to become oriented with the project, review existing information and financial spreadsheets, and meet with key partners and stakeholders. Following this orientation period, the organization expects to have a clearer timeline for the project. The new director will begin by meeting with the Township and Adams County officials, followed by outreach to other organizations, board members, state officials, and project supporters.

- **The Links at Gettysburg, Wade Run Phase II (Lot 59 only) Final Subdivision Plan:** The discussion was tabled because the Township was informed that an extension letter was being submitted.
- **The Links at Gettysburg, Wade Run Phase III:** The discussion was tabled because the Township was informed that an extension letter was being submitted.

Adjournment. With no further business, Mr. Mearns moved, seconded by Mr. Mutzabaugh, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheri Moyer
Township Secretary