

MEETING MINUTES

Planning Commission- County of Wyoming Pennsylvania

Minutes # 675

April 16, 2025

6:00 pm

WYOMING COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Randy Ehrenzeller
Matthew J. Austin
Jeremy Leaidicker

Ed Coleman
Dale Brown
Paul Rowker

Stacy Huber
Roger Hadsall
Robert Thorne

Meeting Location:

Wyoming County Emergency Operations Center
3880 State Route 6, Tunkhannock, PA

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Call to Order & Roll Call

Randy Ehrenzeller, Chairman, called the meeting to order establishing a quorum.

Present	Absent	Staff
Randy Ehrenzeller		Matthew C. Jones
Ed Coleman		
Stacy Huber		
Dale Brown		
	Roger Hadsall	
Matthew J. Austin		
	Robert Thorne	
Paul Rowker		
Jeremy Leaidicker		

III. Public Comment – *(If members of the audience wish to address the commission on topics on the agenda, let the Chairman know what item that they wish to address, or that they wish to address the commission on an item not on the agenda)*

IV. Agenda

V. Announcement:

- A) The 2024 Wyoming County Planning Commission Annual Report was released in March 2025.

Matt Jones said that the report was recently posted on the County website for public availability.

- B) On April 8th, 2025, sixteen (16) chestnut trees were planted at Seneca Park under the Wyoming County C2P2 ESF Mini-Grant from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) through the Endless Mountains Heritage Region.

Matt said that the plantings were completed with the help of local farmer Jay Jadick, whose family owns property behind the park. He said that a small but substantial grant from Endless Mountains Heritage Region and DCNR allowed the planting of sixteen hybrid, disease-resistant chestnut trees. He explained that the trees would help beautify the park, and encouraged visits to the park.

VI. Approval of Minutes #674 – March 19th, 2025 Planning Commission meeting

A motion was made by Dale Brown to approve the Minutes #674 – March 16th, 2025, seconded by Stacy Huber. The vote was carried unanimously.

VII. Correspondence

- A. Chronological Report – March 11th, 2025 to April 9th, 2025

(Accepted as presented)

VIII. Subdivision and Land Development

- A. Minor Subdivision Report

Accepted with one correction: the subdivision in Tunkhannock Township for Place Estate was incorrectly listed as having taken place in Windham Township.

- B. **Bunker Hill Solar – Land Development Plan – Tunkhannock Township** – File #2024-32 – *Conditionally approved and waiver granted*

Staff update (highlights):

- Related subdivision plans were recently approved. Recordation of the subdivisions is pending.
- The applicant has added substantial screen fencing and evergreen buffer trees to the Land Development Plan in order to shield sight of the panels from neighboring residences.
- Erosion-NPDES approvals have been secured from PA-DEP and the Conservation District.
- PennDOT highway occupancy permit and Township driveway permit are both secured.
- The first 50 feet of the minimum access drive on Bunker Hill Road will be paved as required.
- Historical, archeological, and endangered-species studies raised no concerns.
- The applicant has decided not to bond the construction improvements.
- The County’s consulting engineer recently confirmed that the proposed stormwater controls will be adequate assuming the Planning Commission approves the following waiver request:

Action requested: Staff recommends Commission vote to **approve** applicant’s request for **waiver** of the requirement in SALDO Appendix A that stormwater runoff calculations be based on pre-development conditions of “meadow in good condition.” “Row crops” are

proposed to comprise the pre-development conditions of the site. Staff have no concerns with this waiver request.

Action requested: Staff recommend Commission vote to provide *Conditional Approval* of this Land Development Plan subject to the following conditions being completed within 1 year (by April 16th, 2026):

C1. The related subdivision plans must be recorded (Files #2025-11, #2025-12, and #2025-13) (§305.8).

C2. The five (5) decommissioning plans, agreements, and securities must be finalized and established on terms acceptable to the County (§711).

Matt Jones said that a tremendous amount of progress had been made in the two months since the project was last before the members. He said that a revised plan had been submitted to staff on April 8th.

He explained that one of the delays on the project was that minor subdivisions had been required to differentiate the acreage being leased vs. the acreage remaining in the hands of the owners. He said that the subdivisions had been submitted about two months prior, shared with the municipality, and had been approved in-house. He added that the next step was for the surveyor to pick up the plans from the planning office, have them signed by the landowners in front of a notary, and then recorded.

Regarding the land development plan, Matt said that the applicant had added substantial fencing and evergreen buffering. The project has secured approvals for its erosion NPDES plans from DEP and the County Conservation District, as well as the required Highway Occupancy Permit and Driveway Permit from the state and township governments, respectively.

He added that the applicant had included several additional studies, including an archaeological study and endangered species report. He said that there was only one concern raised by the reports, the fact that the site lies within the range of an endangered species of bat. He specified that no such bats had been observed at the site, but that the applicant had acknowledged a restriction with the state on when certain trees on the property could be cleared.

Matt said that the applicant had opted not to bond the improvements as they decided that a signed plan was not necessary. He added that the county's consulting engineer had confirmed that the proposed stormwater controls appeared to be adequate, and that Tunkhannock Twp. had advised the applicant that Miller Rd. to the west had a 10-ton limit. The applicant has agreed to primarily utilize Bunker Hill Rd. to the east for construction access.

Matt said that staff recommends approval of the final waiver requested by the project (using "row crops" as the pre-development conditions for stormwater calculations instead of "meadow in good condition") (SALDO Appendix A), as well the conditional approval of the project with the two conditions listed in the meeting agenda.

Paul Rowker said that it might be possible to bond Miller Rd. and run overweight trucks on it. Matt Jones said that the idea had been discussed, but that ultimately the applicant had decided to primarily use Bunker Hill Rd. Neal Thatcher, attorney for the applicant, said there were also concerns with the neighbors about utilizing Miller Rd.

A motion was made by Ed Coleman to grant the waiver to allow "row crops" as the

pre-development condition for stormwater calculations, seconded by Jeremy Leaidicker. The motion passed unanimously.

Matt explained that the two conditions of approval of the plan recommended by staff were that the three related subdivisions be recorded, and that the five decommissioning plans, agreements, and securities be finalized and established on terms acceptable to the County.

A motion was made by Matt Austin to approve the plan with the two named conditions. The motion was seconded by Paul Rowker, and passed unanimously.

C. Tunkhannock Area School District Solar Project – Mehoopany Site – Land Development Plan – Mehoopany Township – File #2025-18 – Plan accepted as received

-Introduction of proposal provided by applicant's engineering team (Ben Clemmer, PE, ARM Group).

-Action requested: Staff recommends Commission vote to acknowledge application package as "complete and submitted/received" (§306.2E).

Matt Jones said that the Tunkhannock Area School District was looking to install non-commercial-scale solar panels at several school locations throughout the district to supplant the schools' electricity needs.

Ben Clemmer of ARM Group, representing the applicant, gave an overview of the proposed solar project. He said that the solar panels would be installed in a meadow on the north side of the elementary school and enclosed by a 7ft. tall security fence, with a 16ft.-wide gate for vehicular access. He added that a 15ft. by 15ft. concrete equipment pad would be installed, as well as evergreen buffering on the southern and western portion of the arrays.

Ben reiterated Matt's point that the project was meant to supplement the school's existing electrical use, not as a commercial installation. Ed Coleman asked if the project would meet the entire electrical need of the school, to which Ben replied that he didn't think it would.

Ben said that stormwater management would result in a net-neutral effect by establishing meadow conditions post-development. He said that a minor erosion and sedimentation control plan would be submitted to the County Conservation District, but that a NPDES permit would not be required as the area of disturbance would be less than one acre.

Matt Austin asked if the school were still operating. Matt Jones said that he believed it was; and that the facility is known as the "HANDS School." Matt Austin asked how far away from the installation the children would be while playing. Matt Jones said that the plan showed the project as approximately 60ft. away from the school, and would have fencing and trees between it and any students.

Matt Jones asked if the fencing would have slats. Ben said that the applicant proposed "wildlife fence," a graded wire mesh fence that would allow small wildlife to pass under.

Matt Jones said that Ben had met with staff prior to submittal of the plan and that

staff had recommended screening on the southern and western edges of the arrays due to some residences in those directions, but that it hadn't yet occurred to him to wonder whether the school might want/not want children to be able to see the panels from inside the classrooms (Could glare cause a problem for students?). Ben said that the idea had been raised with the school district, which was considering the issue. He added that it was likely that the land development plan would focus on meeting the county standards for screening and that if the school district wanted additional screening between its building and the array, it would pursue that in the future.

Matt Austin said that he was concerned about the children taking too great an interest in the panels. Ed Coleman said that interest would fade after a while and that the school staff would have to monitor the children. Randy Ehrenzeller said that the fence would provide additional deterrence.

Randy asked if there were any land disturbance expected other than burying cables and installing posts. Ben said that the entire array area up to the fence line would be considered the area of disturbance, even though only parts of the area would be graded.

Regarding access to the site, Ben said that a proper access road would be unnecessary, but that for construction purposes a rubber mat would be laid in place from the nearest parking lot to the development site as depicted on the plan.

Ed Coleman asked Matt Jones if staff recommended accepting the application as received, to which Matt said yes.

A motion to accept the application as received was made by Ed Coleman, seconded by Dale Brown. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Tunkhannock Area School District Solar Project – Tunkhannock High School – Land Development Plan – Tunkhannock Township – File #2025-19 – Plan received

-Introduction of proposal provided by applicant's engineering team (Ben Clemmer, PE, ARM Group).

-Action requested: Staff recommends Commission vote to acknowledge application package as "complete and submitted/received" (§306.2E).

Ben Clemmer explained that this project would be located on the northwest side of Tunkhannock High School, on a grass embankment adjacent to a parking lot. Matt Austin said that a row of evergreen trees were located in that area, and asked if they would be removed. Ben answered that doing so would be avoided if possible, since they already provide buffering for the site and it wouldn't make sense to remove them and then have to provide replacement screening. He said it would only be considered if the trees caused shading concerns with the solar panels.

Ed Coleman asked how many panels would be installed. Ben answered that he didn't have an exact number, but that the school intended to install both ground-mounted and roof-mounted panels.

Ben said that many of the details of the plan, such as the fencing and the erosion & sedimentation controls, would be similar to those used at the Mehoopany project. He

said this site would also utilize the rubber mats as a vehicle access to the site, but that the site was much closer to a parking lot than the Mehoopany site.

Ben added that the entire site was within the 100-year floodplain, but that he had contacted Tunkhannock Twp.'s engineer regarding any pre-emptive steps that could be taken before submittal. On the engineer's recommendation, the equipment on the equipment pad would need to be elevated 18 inches above the 100-year floodplain elevation. Ben said the details could be found in the project's stormwater management report.

Randy asked if the panels themselves would be elevated enough to avoid floodplain issues. Ben answered that a hundred-year event would have approximately a six-inch depth in that area, based on his firm's calculations, and that only the panels' posts would be affected.

Randy asked how high the panels would be above the ground. Matt Jones answered that the plan indicated they would be 8ft. tall at their highest point. Ben added that the plan showed a ground clearance of 3ft. for the bottom of the panels.

Ben said that additional buffer trees are planned. He said it was uncertain if they were necessary for screening purposes but that they were needed for stormwater management purposes. Matt Jones said that there were some residences to the south and west, so staff would be checking the plan to determine if the proposed screening would be sufficient.

A motion to accept the application as received was made by Matt Austin, seconded by Ed Coleman. The motion carried unanimously.

IX. Old Business- *None raised.*

X. New Business- *None raised.*

XI. Visitors & Guests- *Ben Clemmer, Emily Zapinski, Neal Thatcher, Warren Howeler, Eric Sieckmann*

XII. Adjournment-

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 6:41 p.m. by Paul Rowker, seconded by Stacy Huber, and carried unanimously.

Commission staff may be reached at:

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