

Planning Commission- County of Wyoming Pennsylvania

Minutes # 679

August 20, 2025

6:00 pm

WYOMING COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Randy Ehrenzeller

Ed Coleman

Stacy Huber

Matthew J. Austin

Dale Brown

Roger Hadsall

Jeremy Leaidicker

Paul Rowker

Robert Thorne

Meeting Location:

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

I. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was taken. Staff Director Matt Jones then verbally notified all participants that audio from the meeting would be recorded.

II. Call to Order & Roll Call

Edward Coleman, Vice-Chair called the meeting to order- establishing a quorum:

Present	Absent	Staff
	Randy Ehrenzeller, Chair	Matthew C. Jones, Director
Ed Coleman, Vice-Chair		Meghan Coury, Assistant
Stacy Huber, Secretary		Paul Litwin, Solicitor
Dale Brown		
Roger Hadsall		
Matthew J. Austin		
Robert Thorne		
Paul Rowker		
Jeremy Leaidicker		

III. Public Comment – *(If audience members wish to address the commission on topics on the agenda, please let the Chairman know what item you wish to address, or that you wish to address the commission on an item not on the agenda)*
(None offered at this time)

IV. Approval of Today's Agenda *(additions or deletions?)*

(Accepted as presented).

V. Announcements:

Mr. Coleman said that there were eight (8) members present this evening, Randy Ehrenzeller, Chairman being the only one absent and asked Matt Jones to read the following announcements that were printed on the agenda:

. Falls Township is considering the rescinding of their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO); and transfer of administrative/plan-approval authorities to the County with December 31, 2025 the anticipated date of effectiveness. They would keep their own Zoning Ordinance/Officer/Board.

Vice-Chairman Coleman asked Matt Jones to read the announcements. He said that we were recently informed that Falls Township is considering rescinding their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. There are 23 towns in Wyoming County, five of them have their own home rule Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances approval authority because they passed their own Ordinance. That guides the Administration and approval authority for Subdivision or Land development in their town. The other 18 fall under the county so if there is a major project it comes to the Planning Commission Board and if it's a minor Subdivision it goes to Staff for approval. This would see Falls as one of the 5 that have their own authority punting it to the County. They drafted an Ordinance saying they are rescinding their own Subdivision and Land Development and adopting the County SALDO with an anticipated effective date of December 31, 2025. They would keep their own Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Officer and Zoning Board. We would have to coordinate with their Zoning Officer and against our SALDO. Other than that we would take over administration and approval duties so that is something that is being contemplated by them. They have drafted an Ordinance of Recision and have already shared it with Staff. We have provided comments as they tinker with it.

. On August 12, 2025 the Board of County Commissioners announced \$42,500.00 dollars in Marcellus Legacy Fund Mini-Grants have been designated for nine (9) intended recipient organizations to support various community planning, beautification, and development projects related to parks, trails, recreation and resource management.

Matt Jones commented that the County Commissioners have announced \$42,500.00 in Marcellas Legacy Mini-Grants for Parks, Recreation, Trail and other related projects for 9 applicants in the county. They might be adding to that list but for now have decided there are 9 applicants that they are looking to award. The intended recipients were announced in the paper the past week and they are on the County Commissioners' web page. If anyone wants to know the recipients on the list we have it in our possession.

Dale Brown asked if there were any Applicants not approved. Mr. Jones said there were 4 not approved. Mr. Brown asked if people could still apply for the grants. Mr. Jones said no the window to apply was closed. He said the Board might reconsider one of the rejections as possibly being awarded eventually. There are 9 definite yeses and 4 possible nos at this time.

VI. Approval of Minutes #678 from last meeting of July, 16, 2025

A motion was made by Dale Brown to approve the Minutes #678 of July 16, 2025, seconded by Roger Hadsall and approved unanimously.

VII. Correspondence: Review Chronological Report from July 2, 2025 through August 11, 2025

(Approved as presented).

VIII. Subdivision and Land Development

A. Review Minor/Unique Plans Report for July 3, 2025 through August 11, 2025.

(Accepted as presented).

B. Tunkhannock Area School District Solar Projects – Mehoopany Site (HANDS School) Land Development Plan – Mehoopany Township – File #2025-18

-Project update:

- . Staff has recommended a gravel lane be added so fire trucks can access the solar panels in the rear of the school building. This would increase the Limit of Disturbance; trigger the need for an NPDES Permit; and possibly require additional stormwater management measures.
- . The School Board voted on June 19, 2025 to “pause” their solar proposals for 90 days.
- . The School Board was scheduled to revisit this decision during their August 14, 2025 meeting (result?)

-Action Requested:

Consider vote on applicant’s Time Extension Request to Oct. 31, 2025 for the deadline of a decision needing to be made/communicated for this proposal. This would give the applicant time to submit a revised plan if the School Board wishes to continue pursuing the project. Otherwise, a final decision on whether to approve this proposal as currently submitted would be due today.

Mr. Coleman asked if they were requesting an extension. Mr. Jones said yes they were asking for an extension through the end of October. He stated that when Staff finally reviewed the Plan we noticed that this school is unlike the other solar project sites that were proposed by the school district. The property’s location is difficult to access. It’s in the rear of the former Mehoopany Elementary, the current site of the Hands School in Mehoopany Township. There is no easy way to get a fire truck back there. Staff has also recently toured the Clinton Township Solar Panel project near Route 11. In touring that site we were told by several representatives of that site that if the panels or components were to catch fire the panels would burn really hot. If the fire crews were called there it’s really all about containment. It’s a matter of isolating the site and making sure panels can be watered down if necessary. Their goal would be to contain the site and let it burn itself out. With all that in mind in his review letter he recommended that there be a gravel fire lane provided that would loop around the east side of building to get to the rear where the construction site would be located. That would allow tanker fire trucks to get within striking distance of that site. Our Ordinance allows us to require this lane for public safety. It has also come to my knowledge that there has been a fire at that school previously in the distant past. On the assumption that you will agree with Staff the Developer took a hard look at the project. He said they are willing to do this but it will have implications on their erosion and storm water plan. He also noted that he would have to get approvals from the Conservation District and the State DEP and a revised Plan would have to be submitted. Before taking those steps the Developer wanted to make sure that the Tunkhannock Area School District Board is still looking to pursue these projects. He noted that it was reported in the newspaper that the school district had taken a 90 day pause on any certainty moving forward with these projects. That left the Administration in a strange position where they are advocating for this project and they are waiting to see if their Board will allow them to proceed. The Engineer doesn’t want to do anymore work unless they know they are going to get paid.

Mr. Coleman confirmed the only thing necessary from the Board this evening was to act on their request to extend their timeline. Mr. Jones said he believes the School Board will meet in September to discuss if they plan to proceed with this. We can extend their deadline for a decision until the end of October if

we'd like, otherwise a decision would have to be rendered tonight on the application as it is currently presented.

Mr. Coleman asked the pleasure of the Board in considering the extension till October 31st of this year.

A motion was made by Stacy Huber to grant the Request for Time Extension of the Mehoopany Site (HANDS School) Land Development Plan to October 31, 2025, Seconded by Roger Hadsall and was unanimously approved.

C. Douglas & Nancy Jones – Minor Subdivision Plan – Northmoreland Township – File #2025-23

-Background:

- Staff has approval authority for minor subdivision proposals, but Staff does not have the authority to Approve waiver requests. Only the Commission has the authority to decide on wavier requests.

-Decisions are due on the following requests:

W1. Requests for relief from 800 feet maximum length allowed for Minimum Access Drives (shared driveways) contained in §607.7B. Proposed length of driveway is 1,450 feet.

W2. Request for relief from 50 feet minimum width required for Minimum access Drive rights-of-Way by Table V1-1. Proposed right-of-way width is 35 feet.

Mr. Coleman read that there are two waivers requested, one is for relief of an 800 foot maximum length allowed for minimum access drive of a shared driveway. The proposed length of the driveway is 1,450 feet. The other waiver is a request for relief from the 50 foot minimum width requirement with a proposed right-of-way of 35 feet. Matt Jones said he would tee up the maps on the monitors to describe the property and then he suggested Eric Kyttle, Surveyor, PLS and his clients, Mr. and Mrs. Jones could speak. Also, he directed the Board members to review the hard copies of the plans that he left at their table in addition to the monitor views.

He noted that the current arrangements on the Jones properties are displayed. They own two different tracts of land next to one another. They own a piece on the west and they own a piece on the right that's highlighted in blue. The piece on the left is the owner occupied residence. This was verified by Eric Kyttle. Mr. Jones confirmed with Mr. Kyttle that the property is 47.88 acres and it's accessible off Keelersburg Road by way of Addison Lane. On the map the municipal line is depicted around the yellow area. Northmoreland Township is to the west of the yellow line and Exeter Township in Wyoming County is to the east of the yellow line. On the east side the road is known as Bass Road if you are in Northmoreland Township and in Exeter Township the road turns into Hickory Road. Along Hickory Road a/k/a Bass Road there is a 35 foot wide opening on the west side of the road and that leads you to a 35 foot wide spaghetti strip of land to what is currently a flaglot. The applicant is proposing to dissolve the boundary line between the two larger tracts of land. They then propose to create three smaller compact lots that would access this 35 foot wide strip gaining access to Hickory/Bass Road.. This would be considered a minimum access drive or a shared driveway. It had been previously been pointed out that the first 50 feet of the road would have to be paved where it meets Hickory Road and there are two waivers that would be required for this project to gain approval. Staff doesn't have the authority to grant waivers only the Planning Commission can grant waivers. This is the reason this Minor Plan is brought to the Board tonight. There would be three lots and they would use the 35 foot wide strip to access the shared driveway. Typically, minimum access shared driveway arrangements can be allowed for up to three lots but only if they are no longer than 800 linear feet long. This road is approximately 1,450 feet long. Also, the other item is that it is typically required to be 50 foot wide. The property owners only possess 35 feet of width of road.

Matt Jones asks Eric Kyttle, Surveyor, PLS to step forward and make his case for his clients Douglas

and Nancy Jones who are present this evening.

Eric Kytte addressed himself to the board and said he represents Douglas and Nancy Jones and prepared their Subdivision Plan. He said he wanted to create his plan with three lots at the end of the 35 foot accessway. He said the reason they are present is that the road is longer than 800 feet and narrower than 50 feet in width. He stated that it had been in existence since 1979. The entire property in the early 1900's was 126.1 acres. The northerly property line of that farm was the north end of this sliver of land that exists today, the narrow band of land going out to Bass Road.

The original farm began with the north side of the existing driveway. Surveyor, Stuart Milnes cut off the property to the south of the narrow band back in 1979 before regulations. The reason the 35 feet exists is because of something that was done in 1979. It is recorded in the courthouse and is currently owned by Simko. He reiterated that it has been in existence since 1979. He wants to stress to the Board this evening that his clients did not create the situation. The bottom portion of the farm was cut off and the 35 feet was what remained.

Attorney Litwin asked Eric what did Simko own and who is Simko? Mr. Kytte was directed to the computer monitors. Attorney Litwin asked if Simko was one of the abutting properties. Mr. Kytte stated that the L shape depicted on the map was cut off by Milnes Engineering in 1979 and it created the 35 foot strip. Everything to the north of that Legacy Lane is a different farm. It was another 100 acre farm that was never part of their parent tract. He showed on the monitors that their parent tract was all the properties working their way south. The 126 acres is all below what is known as Legacy Lane.

Matt Jones asked how long Douglas and Nancy Jones have owned the tract in question. Eric said off the top of his head he couldn't offer the date of purchase. Mr. Douglas Jones said they purchased the original tract where they reside in 1993. They built their house in 1994. The property right next to theirs is where his wife was born in 1971. They purchased the property in the back which they are asking to be subdivided in 2021. It was along their property line and was purchased in the hopes of giving it to their daughters who are present this evening.

Mr. Kytte stated that there is no viable access to the property from the west. Addison Lane hits a creek and it is a floodway. There is no way to get to it from the back side and no one would want to build a driveway that long. There is no other viable access to this particular property. Mr. Hadsall said he was looking at the hard copy of the plan and the three lots in question. He asks how would access be obtained for the remaining lands. Mr. Kytte responded that access to the remaining lands would be off Addison Lane because that would become one piece with the back. Because only three lots would be allowed and not four by the SALDO, that piece would be added and they would only have access by Addison Lane.

Mr. Coleman asked Mr. Kytte if he was comfortable stating that the road would give sufficient access to emergency vehicles. Mr. Kytte said he believes a fire truck could get up there. He said there is no turning radius or cul-de-sac but he believes if you widened the road it could accommodate fire trucks with his knowledge of them. He is not admitting that a ladder truck could get up there.

Mr. Douglas Jones asked if his daughter's father-in-law could speak. His name is Gary Farber and he has been on the property helping clear the land and perform tree removal. He can allude to the size and type of equipment he is using to work the property turning around and moving and it's bigger than any emergency vehicle.

Mr. Farber stated that you can get 2 vehicles or fire trucks side by side back through there. There is not a cul-de-sac on the road but there is a hammerhead turn around. Construction vehicles are being used on the road.

Attorney Jami Hearn is present to represent Douglas and Nancy Jones. Attorney Litwin questioned her on how they would handle future driveway maintenance and if there is a driveway agreement. He asks if the new lot owners would enter into some Agreement.

Attorney Hearn responds that there would be a Maintenance Agreement among the three lot owners, their heirs and assigns. One lot would retain a fee simple deed. The other two lots are retaining easements.

Mr. Kytte said that lot two is actually going to own the strip. Lots one and three will have private access and rights of way. Matt Austin asked if this problem was found because the property was being surveyed and the issues were noticed. Mr. Kytte responded that he was contracted to subdivide the property into these three lots. He advised that there was not enough room from the land available to create a wider road.

Mr. Hadsall asked Attorney Litwin if it would be okay to issue conditions with waivers stating the first 50 feet should be paved and a township driveway permit should be issued. Attorney Litwin said the Board would only be approving the waivers the rest would be approved by Director Jones because it's a minor subdivision. The requirements are in the SALDO. Mr. Coleman concurred that it was up to Matt Jones to approve the Plan.

Director Jones said staff gave a preliminary review. One of the items was that it be agreed that an easement be established for all three lot owners to gain access to the road. Their heirs and assigns should also have a right of way for the strip of road. They had acknowledged that and a note was added to the plan with that covenant.

Mr. Kytte stated an agreement could not be recorded until the plan is approved. The lots do not exist until the plan is approved. The agreements will be done after the plan has been recorded. Matt Jones stated that where the driveway is located is a decentralized and wooded area. There aren't a lot of other driveways located near that point of access along Hickory and Bass Road. If there were he would wonder and take pause if they could obtain a township driveway permit. He's likely to believe they will have no trouble obtaining a township driveway permit, if they don't already have one. This arrangement has no hill, crest or sharp curve onto the 35 foot strip onto Hickory Road. There are site distances and it's a safe arrangement where the 35 foot opens up onto Hickory/Bass. The Ordinance also requires the shared driveway be paved 50 feet deep from its access with Bass/Hickory and 18 feet wide which they've also agreed to do and they've added that note to the plan as well.

Mr. Hadsall asked if Bass/Hickory road is paved. Mr. Kytte said Bass/Hickory is unpaved. He said he did not know how the township would want the client to pave within their right of way. He stated that Northmoreland Township and Chuck Story, a Township Supervisor, are easy to work with but would not know their requirements on road paving.

Matt Jones said they could go up to the right of way and have 50 foot. They could call the Township and ask if they want them to tie into the cartway or not. It is very close to the Municipal line. On one side of the township line it's a much better condition than the other. It was noted that the property is in Northmoreland Township by the quad maps but Exeter township is very close and their rules on roads are more stringent. Contact with Northmoreland Township was suggested to get their feelings on paving into a dirt road. Perhaps the township road may be paved or improved in the future. Douglas Jones noted that his driveway is twice as wide as Bass Road and in better condition. The township road is a rough, narrow road. He believes if emergency vehicles needed to get to the property they will prefer his driveway over the township road.

Mr. Coleman asked for discussion on the waivers. Matt Austin said the county is littered with these legacy omissions. He felt it seemed unnecessary to put a bunch of restrictions on the property owners when they are trying to correct a problem. He said he would be seeking relief if he owned the property

just to clean it up.

Director Jones noted that they purchased the property when they knew it was arranged as such. They are entitled to one single family home and maybe three lots if they obtain waivers tonight. That is a judgment call for the Commission.

Mr. Coleman asked for any Motions on the Waivers.

Matt Austin made a Motion that the two Waivers on the length and the width of the Minimum Access Drive be granted. Motion to second was made by Jeremy Leaidicker. It was unanimously accepted.

The property owners thanked the board. Matt Jones said he would issue the Approval letters from the Planning Commission tomorrow. Eric Kytte said he would bring the plans to the Planning Office when the signatures on the document were notarized.

IX. Old Business: None to report from Staff.

X. New Business: None to report from Staff.

XI. Visitors & Guests:

There were no further comments from visitors or guests. The following were in attendance:

Eric C. Kytte, PLS; Gary Farber; Jami Hearn, ESQ; Douglas Jones; Wesley Woods; Faith Woods; Brian Muckin; Hope Muckin; Nancy Jones; Eric Mark, Wyoming Examiner.

XII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Hadsall seconded by Mr. Huber and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Commission staff may be reached at:

WYOMING COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

1 Courthouse Square, 3rd Floor * Tunkhannock, PA 18657 * 570-996-2268

WyomingCountyPA.gov/board