

# **FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

*Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2025*

## **Commissioners in attendance:**

Denny Robinson, Dale Graves, JR Crushong, Jim McDannell, Gary Deardorff, Jed Fetter, Kathleen Reilly (Alternate)

## **Others in attendance:**

Dominic Picarelli, KPI Technology; Lynda Beckwith, PMCA, Chris Santay, Supervisor

## **CALL TO ORDER**

- Meeting called to order by Denny Robinson, Chairman, at 7:00pm.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **MOTION to APPROVE JANUARY minutes, by Jed Fetter, seconded by Gary Deardorff.**
  - **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **UPDATES TO AGENDA**

## **SKETCH PLANS**

- None

## **PLANS**

- **465 Buchanan Valley Volunteer Fire Company Addition – 1180 Buchanan Valley**
- The Planning Commission meeting focused on the Buchanan Valley Volunteer Fire Company's building addition and associated land development plan. The fire company is consolidating two separately purchased parcels into one through a consolidation deed, to resolve discrepancies at the county level regarding ownership records.
- Adams County's comments primarily directed the applicant to satisfy zoning officer requirements. The applicant addressed multiple comments from both the county and the township engineer, including zoning issues, adding required notes to the plan, and other general housekeeping items.
- A key issue was the submission of a non-building waiver to clarify that the building addition (primarily for storage and non-public spaces) will not result in additional sewage flow. The sewage enforcement officer (SEO) must confirm that no new sewage capacity is being created before the waiver is approved.

## FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

*Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2025*

- The applicant also requested a waiver of the required widening of Buchanan Valley Road, which is a PennDOT road. The township acknowledged that although they have an ordinance requiring road improvements, PennDOT ultimately controls the road, making enforcement impractical.
- Further, the applicant sought a waiver from the required recreational fee or land dedication. They argued that as a community-serving, nonprofit fire company, a recreational area or fee should be waived. The Commission agreed that this is a policy decision for the supervisors but leaned toward recommending approval of the waiver.
- Lastly, the applicant requested a waiver related to stormwater management. They argued that they are only adding approximately 1,190 square feet of new impervious surface after removing over 4,000 square feet, resulting in minimal additional stormwater runoff. Existing stormwater infrastructure is already capturing runoff from the entire property, including the area of the proposed addition.
- The Commission suggested refining the waiver request to target specific stormwater ordinance provisions rather than requesting a blanket waiver. The Commission agreed that the applicant should work with the township engineer to address remaining stormwater issues before final supervisor approval.

- **MOTION:** The Planning Commission *recommends APPROVAL of a waiver of recreational area requirements*, by Jed Fetter, seconded by Dale Graves.
  - **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- **MOTION:** The Planning Commission *recommends APPROVAL of a waiver for cartway path requirements*, by Jed Fetter, seconded by Gary Deardorff.
  - **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- **MOTION:** The Planning Commission *recommends APPROVAL of the Buchanan Valley Fire Department Land Development Plan, contingent on addressing outstanding comments from the Township Engineer's letter dated February 19, 2025, and final approval of stormwater management plans*, by Jed Fetter, seconded by Gary Deardorff.
  - **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- **Willow Farms Preliminary Subdivision**

- **MOTION:** The Planning Commission *TABLES consideration of the Willow Farms Preliminary Subdivision for adequate time to review the plan*, by Jed Fetter, seconded by James McDannell.
  - **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

*Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2025*

- **Solar Facility – 170 Bingaman Road, 391 Peach Tree Road, 366 Orrtanna Road**
- At the Planning Commission meeting, representatives from Formation Energy and their legal counsel presented plans for a proposed solar energy project called the Franklin Solar Projects. The project consists of two co-located, 3-megawatt ground-mounted solar facilities, totaling approximately 6 megawatts, to be located on parcels owned by the Bream family in Franklin Township. The electricity generated will be sold to MedEd under Pennsylvania's net-metering program and will feed directly into the local grid, as opposed to utility-scale solar farms that feed larger transmission lines.
- Formation Energy emphasized that this project differs from larger-scale utility projects often criticized for their visual impact, substations, and grid strain. The project's design will not require a large substation, instead relying on inverters and medium-voltage transformers to connect to existing distribution lines. They noted that any necessary upgrades to the utility's infrastructure will be funded by the developer.
- Key equipment will include bifacial silica-based solar panels with anti-glare coatings, string inverters to minimize noise, and a racking system sourced from Pennsylvania manufacturers. The team provided assurances that the system will meet UL and international electrical code standards. They also discussed the recyclability of the panels, emphasizing that specialized recycling facilities are available and that end-of-life panels could be repurposed or recycled, minimizing local environmental impact.
- Screening was a major topic, with Formation Energy acknowledging concerns about the visual impact. They committed to robust screening plans, including preserving existing orchard vegetation and adding new landscaping. The fencing will be an aesthetically softer woven-wire design rather than industrial-looking chain link. They referenced lessons learned from prior projects in Franklin and York counties, where they served as subcontractors. While this is Formation Energy's first project as the prime developer in Adams County, they stressed their commitment to working with the community and incorporating feedback.
- A glare study was submitted, covering multiple observation points, roads, and flight paths, which concluded there would be no significant glare issues due to the panels' anti-glare coating and tracking system that adjusts with the sun. A noise study, conducted using World Health Organization guidelines, indicated no measurable noise impacts from the smaller string inverters used on-site.
- Emergency response was also discussed. Formation Energy acknowledged concerns from the local fire chief regarding safety risks for firefighters entering the solar field during an incident. They explained that utilities will have remote shutoff capabilities for the grid connection, while onsite equipment will still require coordination with emergency responders. They offered to conduct training sessions with local fire departments to review site layouts, emergency protocols, and safety measures.
- Environmental impacts were discussed briefly, with Formation Energy stating that no wetlands or critical habitat areas would be affected and that erosion and sediment control measures have been reviewed with the Adams County Conservation District.
- The Planning Commission noted they had not yet reviewed the full plans and requested electronic copies, which Formation Energy agreed to provide. Commissioners also

# FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

*Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2025*

requested addresses of similar completed projects for field visits to compare with the proposed design.

- **MOTION:** The Planning Commission *TABLES consideration of the Solar Facility Project for adequate time to review the plan*, by Jed Fetter, seconded by Dale Graves.
  - **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## OLD BUSINESS

- None

## NEW BUSINESS

- **Advancing Updates to Solar Facilities Ordinance**
  - As part of the Franklin Township Planning Commission's ongoing review and updates to current Township Codes and Ordinances, the Planning Commission is considering substantial changes to the existing ordinance related to solar field arrays and accessory structures.
  - In light of recent proposals regarding solar facilities and the possibility of additional future proposals, the Planning Commission discussed putting forth recommended updates to the solar ordinance separately from the ongoing overall work.
  - Given the long planning times of solar projects, the Planning Commission feels it is better to inform the community and proceed with public consideration of this topic as soon as possible.
  - **MOTION:** The Planning Commission *recommends the Board Of Supervisor move forward with considering recommended updates to the Solar Facility Ordinance as soon as possible*, by Jed Fetter, seconded by James McDannell.
    - **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## GUESTS

## ADJOURN

- Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm by Denny Robinson, Chairman.