

Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting of May 13, 2025

Present: Planning Commission: James Dailey, Christopher Becker, James Colflesh, Michael Werley and Steve Tricarico.

Also attending: Mr. Keith Mooney, Solicitor; Mr. Kent Morey, Spotts, Stevens & McCoy; Aristides Otero, Wilkinson Design Group for Penske; John Hoffert, Hoffert Surveying for Bethany Romanian Church.

Mr. James Dailey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of April 8, 2025 meeting were approved. Motion by Mr. Becker, Seconded by Mr. Werley. Motion passed.

Public Comment

No comment

Subdivision and Land Development Plans

Penske Truck and Collision Center

Mr. Morey noted that many of the items in the SSM review letter of May 11, 2025 were simple drafting items and many others were final plan items. Mr. Morey noted that he supported Preliminary Plan approval subject to the remaining items noted in the May 11, 2025 review letter. Mr. Becker made a motion to recommend conditional approval of the Preliminary Plan to the Board of Supervisors as noted by Mr. Morey. Seconded by Mr. Werley, motion passed.

Bethany Romanian Church

John Hoffert was present to represent the applicant and present the plan.

The SSM review letter of May 7, 2025 was discussed. Mr. Hoffert noted that they have received the Fire Marshal review and will provide them with the necessary information to satisfy that review including noting that the building will have a sprinkler system. Mr. Morey requested that this be noted on the plan. Mr. Mooney inquired about how the church intends to provide security. Previously, they posted a check for inspections. This time, the security will likely be higher and Mr. Hoffert noted that he suggested that the church either provide a letter of credit or post a bond. Mr. Hoffert noted they are working through the lighting plans with Fromm Electric. In addition, he is working through issues with the FAA Form in which the crane for the erection of the steeple is 8' into the fly zone.

Mr. Becker made a motion to recommend approval of the plan subject to the items noted in the SSM review letter of May 7, 2025 and adding the note requested by Mr. Morey. Seconded by Mr. Colflesh, motion passed.

Lookout Planning Modules

Mr. Morey presented the two pages of the Planning Modules that asks general questions about Township Planning. Mr. Colflesh made a motion for the chair to sign the second page, seconded by Mr. Werley, motion passed.

Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Becker introduced his email from earlier in the day & went through the 14 points that he noted in that email that suggested that all appropriate points had been noted in the plan.

Mr. Tricarico pointed out that the responsibilities on p.51 were missing and suggested that maybe assignments should be added. Mr. Mooney went through some of them and noted likely personnel. Mr. Mooney will work on those for the next meeting.

It was noted that the 35' height restriction for certain uses may be too restricted. It was noted that the airport low fly zone and extent of Township owned fire apparatus are the driving forces behind this.

Ms. Burkovich noted that the future land uses simply reiterates the existing zoning and that the comprehensive plan should open up opportunities to uses in other areas. She went on to say that Route 183 (west/north of West Leesport Rd), although currently is mostly residential, it could be a good place to move industrial / commercial uses. In addition, better transitions from one zone to another should be considered. It was noted that the infrastructure (water & sewer) is not available along 183 to support such zoning and that transitions may be better accommodated by the use of larger buffers in the existing industrial / commercial zoning. Mr. Mooney also pointed out that in the eyes of the law, zoning trumps the comprehensive plan. Ms. Burkovich said that she would send her notes/information to the PC members.

It was noted that a copy of the Comprehensive Plan was sent out to the City of Reading for comment but the Township was waiting for comments from them. Their 30 day review period would be expire shortly.

Mr. Becker made a motion to table the plan for now so that further work may be done and to wait for the City comments (if any). Seconded by Mr. Colflesh, motion carried.

Solicitor

No Comment

Adjournment

Mr. Colflesh made a motion to adjourn at approximately 8:45 PM; Mr. Werley seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.