

Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting of October 14, 2025

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

Also Attending: Mr. Keith Mooney, Solicitor; Mr. Kent Morey, Spotts, Steven & McCoy; Mr. Will Thurman, Davis Hill Development; Mr. Nick Perilli, McCarthy Engineering; Mr. Brad Groff, Eagle Metals.

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

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of September 9, 2025, meeting were approved. Motion by Mr. Becker, seconded by Mr. Colflesh. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Will Thurman with Davis Hill Development, is here at the pre-application stage to introduce a 3-megawatt ground mounted solar project off Suburban Road. Mr. Thurman is here to confirm the proper pathway for permitting for a principle use solar use facility in Bern Township. This project incorporates approximately 12 acres of panels with screen and fence on the perimeter of property. Also, we will provide a decommissioning plan with financial security to bring the land back to its previous use. Regarding land stewardship there are several ways Davis Hill uses this land as Dual Use, we incorporate sheep grazing or crop planting to maintain vegetation and are open to exploring other options. Mr. Thurman explained this project is considered a community solar project, essentially it is sent out to the Met-Ed grid. Question was asked about tie-ins, Mr. Thurman responded they will be utilizing the Bern Church substation, will be using existing Met-Ed lines and possibly need to upgrade some lines from single phase to three phase and added additional protection. Question was raised about the consideration of glare from the panels with concerns to the airport being very close. Mr. Thurman responded a FAA glare analysis was done about 2 years and at that time the response was "No Consultation Required", he tried to run another report before the meeting, but with the Government shut down he was unable to run this report for a current report. Timeline for this project with the permit process is about 16 months and will move very quickly at the construction process which is about 3-6 months. Question was asked, who owns Davis Hill Development, Mr. Thurman responded it's a private company, partner company is called Skyview Ventures (2008) they trade renewable energy credits. The anticipated life span of the panels is 25-30 years, so at 25-30 years they will come back and remove the panels and restore the land as it was previously. Attny. Mooney reviewed the Zoning Ordinance the use is not permitted in the rural residential zoning district. The Township Alternative Energy Ordinances also does not permit the use of rural residential either. Davis Hill will need to pursue a Use Variance or make a request to the Board of Supervisors to re-zone the property or amend the zoning. Another question was asked what is the disposal process if the

panels are damaged or destroyed? Mr. Thurman stated there are specific companies that do solar recycling, this is a very intense process to make sure they are not sent to local landfills.

Subdivision and Land Development Plans

Eagle Metals

Mr. Nick Perilli from McCarthy Engineering and Mr. Brad Groff from Eagle Metals. Mr. Perilli proposed a plan for a small pole barn in the rear of the property. Size of this building is little over 1500 sq ft and used strictly for storage. Mr. Perilli & Mr. Groff are in receipt of the Engineer's review letter. The Fire Marshal would need to review this plan regarding the fire protection regulations with regards to the closeness of the already existing building, if sprinkler system would be needed due to storage of cardboard and flammable items and also with liquid hydrogen in the near vicinity.

Plan has been forwarded to Berks County Planning Commission, and the Township Planning Commission has their comments.

Zoning issues and some of the Subdivision Land Development Ordinances need to be addressed.

The following requested waivers were considered:

Section 154-19.D(22)(a) Historical Resource Impact Study; protected area analysis. Mr. Colflesh made a motion to grant a waiver for Section 154-19.D(22)(a), seconded by Mr. Tricarico. Motion carried.

Section 154-19.D(22)(b) Protected Area Analysis; Mr. Werley made a motion to grant a waiver for Section 154-19.D(22)(b), seconded by Mr. Colflesh. Motion carried.

Section 154-19.D(22)(d) Delineation of Steep Slopes Analysis; Mr. Becker made a motion to grant the waiver to the Supervisors for Section 154-19.D(22)(d), seconded by Mr. Werley. Motion carried.

Section 154-30(i) Forgo the Delineation of Steep Slopes Analysis; Mr. Colflesh made a motion to grant the waiver to the Supervisors for Section 154-30(i), seconded by Mr. Becker. Motion carried.

Mr. Perilli stated they will submit the plan to the Fire Marshal and submit a Conditional Use Application.

Solicitor

No Comment

Adjournment

Mr. Colflesh made a motion to adjourn at approximately 8:30 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Becker. All in favor. Motion carried.