

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, September 29, 2025 at 7 PM

Community Meeting Room, 425 Wells Road

Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 pm on Monday, September 29, 2025. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Jill Macauley and Robert Repko. Others in attendance included Stacy Yoder, Gilmore & Associates; Dan Wood, Board of Supervisors Liaison; and Stephanie J. Mason, Township Manager.

Not present at the meeting was Vice Chairman Michael Kracht.

The meeting officially began at 7:00 pm.

Public/Commission Comments

None.

Review of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Kelso, seconded by Ms. Macauley, the August 25, 2025 minutes were unanimously approved.

Presentation

N/A

Land Development

Doylestown Hill Final Land Development Plan

Present on behalf of the applicant was attorney David Shafkowitz. The plan has gone before the Board of Supervisors for preliminary approval, and since then revisions have been made, additional review letters have been received, and there are no additional comments of note. The applicant is seeking a recommendation for final land development approval.

Mr. Repko made a motion recommending final land development approval. Ms. Macauley seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

3775 Bristol Road Final Land Development Plan

Present on behalf of the applicant was engineer Vince Fiorivanti. Since receiving preliminary approval back in January, some refinements have been made to the plan. Some waiver approvals have been received, and the plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors with conditions. There have been some public improvements added, including extension of the water main, and variances were granted at Zoning Hearing Board for that purpose as well. A landscaping plan has also been added, along with additional capacity to the stormwater basins, which have been oversized to avoid issues in the

future. Driveway turnarounds were made larger, and widths were made wider. Another condition included is a disclosure statement to each lot owner explaining that if they want to build a house as depicted, any additional impervious would require ZHB approval. Additional buffering has been added along the northern tract line, as well as a proposed swale which would send post development runoff into three consecutive basins, avoiding any neighbors.

Mr. Fiorivanti asked what the Township's preference would be for maintenance of the bike trail.

Ms. Mason replied that they would prefer it to be the responsibility of the HOA, with an easement so that it can be traversed.

Mr. Fiorivanti noted a request regarding the water main easement to be adjacent to the public right of way. But this would place the water main in the bike path, which is not deemed appropriate. They prefer to leave the easement as it is, which is consistent with the Burke Preserve next door.

Mr. Kelso noted that the types of street trees proposed could be hazardous to the bike path.

Mr. Fiorivanti said that the trees can be altered, and he will speak with Gilmore to get suggestions.

Mr. Kelso noted a suggestion by Michael Baker to extend the sidewalk.

Mr. Fiorivanti replied that it is a large improvement for a subdivision of this size. It was noted that tying the sidewalk into a crosswalk would be more appropriate, as the crosswalk can lead to the sidewalk on the other side of the street.

Mr. Repko made a motion to recommend final approval, conditional upon addressing street trees and the crosswalk as discussed. Mr. Kelso seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Other Business

Proposed Zoning Change / Amendment

Zaveta – Hart Property

Ms. Yoder, representing Gilmore & Associates, recused herself, as Gilmore is working with Zaveta for this project. Craig Bryson, PLA, from Pennoni and Libby Naughton from Clarke Gallagher Barbiero Amuso & Glassman Law sat in to represent the Township.

Present at the meeting were attorney Ed Murphy, Kyle McCoy from the Bucks County Historical Society, Sharon Dotts, PE Gilmore & Associates and Rich Zaveta, the developer.

Mr. Murphy described the Hart property, which is a 24-acre parcel owned by the Bucks County Historical Society. It is currently zoned Institutional, I-2. After much misinformation was spread through social media, Mr. Zaveta held two meetings with neighboring property owners to discuss their intentions for the property. This appearance is their first opportunity to talk to the Planning Commission about the project.

Ms. McCoy provided a history of the Bucks County Historical Society, which was founded by Henry Mercer in 1880 and is a private membership supported non-profit organization. It is not a county or

state affiliated organization and relies mostly on charitable donations. The Hart property is not a public property and is now used only for offsite storage and curator housing. The BCHS ended up with the tract of land when it was given to them at the time that Doylestown Hunt was created. In 1994, a letter from George Hart was written asking for a 50-year moratorium of sale to be added to the deed, but it was never fulfilled. A subsequent letter was sent the following year removing that request. There are currently no restrictions on the deed. The Historical Society has since evaluated and assessed their assets, and focused their mission, which is to preserve Mercer Museum and Fonthill. As a result, the board of trustees voted unanimously to sell the Hart tract and reallocate those resources back into the Mercer Museum and Fonthill. It was decided that working with Zaveta was the best way to go.

Mr. Zaveta noted the goal of development to have limited impact and offense to the neighbors. He noted two options, a by right plan, and the one they are proposing. With no zoning amendment, the by right plan could include clearing of the property, athletic fields, classrooms and indoor club facilities, ample parking and additional lighting. Additionally, there is limited buffer to the neighboring properties. With no change of zoning, the property would not be preserved, as was rumored. This type of plan would require no variances.

Mr. Zaveta then presented the plan of proposal. It would include replacing one building that currently sits on the property, adding two structures that are quasi reproductions of original structures, and restoring the existing farmhouse and barn. The main house would become a single-family residence, and the barn would either go with the farmhouse, or become two units if the barn and farmhouse couldn't be sold together. There would be an HOA, and they would mandate exterior maintenance of the restored structures.

Mr. Murphy noted the comparison of buffers for the two options.

Mr. Zaveta replied that in I-2 it could be as close at 15 feet. Their proposal shows a 100 feet at the tightest areas.

Ms. Hendrixson asked how many stories the buildings would be.

Mr. Zaveta said there would be two stories of living area, with all parking below grade underneath the structure.

Ms. McCoy further explained that they intend to build a facility on the Fonthill property to replace the one that is in use at the Hart property.

Mr. Zaveta explained that they intend to work around the storage building until BCHS has a new facility ready, so as not to disturb the artifacts being stored there.

Mr. Zaveta showed photos of the existing structures and renderings of what is proposed.

Mr. Repko asked for confirmation on the number of units being proposed.

Mr. Zaveta said that there would be lower-level parking, with six first floor units and six second floor units. There would be no need for street parking. In total, there would be three buildings with 12 units in each, plus the farmhouse, and the barn. The barn could potentially be two additional units.

Mr. Repko asked how much of the acreage would be used.

Mr. Zaveta said that they would be disturbing 8.2 of the 24 acres.

Mr. Repko asked for the setback from the road at the top of the plan to the neighboring community.

Mr. Zaveta said that it is approximately 64 feet to the Township owned property there, and it fans out to 130, then 220. He added that the forest there contains a large ash tree population and serious invasives. Their goal is to restore the forest and forest floor.

Ms. Hendrixson asked about the lighting plan for the loop road.

Mr. Zaveta said that the goal is to use ambient lighting for adequate guidance, no spotlighting or intense lighting that is disruptive. They want enough lighting for safety, ground ambient reflective lighting and limited projected lighting, that does not contribute to light pollution.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested a site visit to better visualize the property.

Mr. Zaveta welcomed the idea.

Rob Steere of 377 Birdsong Way noted how grateful he and his neighbor were for the sessions with the community and Mr. Zaveta's diligence in understanding their concerns. He is very much in favor of this project and fearful of it going to anyone else, frankly. He added that the area needs a lot of investment, and the forest is starting to crumble. He believes this is a great way to steward this tract. He understands the property has to be sold and would advocate for this project.

Liz Gibson of 253 Fox Chase Lane added that she is very glad Mr. Zaveta is taking over. She noted falling trees at the edge of the property, bordering hers that could be dangerous.

Mr. Zaveta encouraged her to contact his office with her concerns.

Bill Moore of 379 Birdsong Way said that he is very encouraged by Mr. Zaveta's devotion to preserving the land and the environment there. He prefers this option over anything industrial.

Randal Henderson of 272 Fox Chase Lane added that he feels very different from the last time this was presented at the township. He is glad Mr. Zaveta could present the exact plan. In addition to those present there are many others in favor of the project. They believe this is the best use of the property.

Karyn Hyland, Doylestown Borough Director of Planning and Zoning asked for clarification that a map overlay is what is proposed.

Mr. Murphy confirmed it is a map overlay.

Ms. Hyland asked about feasibility for water services, and if the system is sufficient.

The assumption is that the property will be served by public water (DTMA) and (BCWSA) sewer.

Ms. Hyland noted that the proposed entrance aligning with the Wawa opposite was not meant to handle 36 additional dwelling units. She asked for consideration that the access come through Doylestown Hunt. She asked that they evaluate feasibility for preserving safety and allowing another option for access.

It was noted that the applicant would take PennDOT's recommendation on the traffic light and access.

Mr. Boger, a Borough resident, added that he was upset with how the historical society and Mr. Zaveta were previously characterized. He believes they are taking responsible steps to preserve the property, and Mr. Zaveta has proven that he is thorough and conscientious.

Mr. Kelso asked for consideration if these historical properties somehow be connected through the trail system, especially being so removed from public streets.

It was noted that there is a trail that follows the loop road through the property.

Mr. Zaveta applauded the vision and said he would certainly look at it but knows that there are some wetland tributaries through the property that could create limitations.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested coming to a bike and hike meeting. She added that she commends Mr. Zaveta for meeting with the residents and that it was the right thing to do. She suggested the Planning Commission conduct a site visit.

Mr. Murphy handed out a draft amended ordinance for the planning commission's consideration, that includes the proposed map overlay. He said that they welcome comments the next time they're before the Planning Commission.

Ms. Mason said that she would coordinate a site visit.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement