



Allen Township Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes
May 18th, 2026
6:00 P.M.

A **General Meeting** of the Allen Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, May 18th, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at the Allen Township Municipal Building, located at 50 Snow Hill Road, Northampton, PA. Mr. Austin led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:

Present: David Austin, Gary Behler; Felipe Resendez, Jr.; B. Lincoln Treadwell, Jr. Esq. Solicitor; Sean Policelli, PE, Engineer (Gilmore & Associates, Inc.); Ilene M. Eckhart, Manager

Absent: Gary Krill; Paul Link

Minutes: Mr. Behler made a motion to approve the minutes from April 20th, 2026; seconded by Mr. Resendez. On the motion, by roll call vote, all present Commissioners voted yes.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Business Items:

A. Donavin A. Bohun Major (Preliminary) Subdivision Plan (90-day MPC deadline – June 16, 2026) – Acknowledgement of MPC Extension Granted to October 16, 2026: Mr. Austin announced that the applicant requested an extension and they were granted the extension. Ms. Eckhart stated that was correct.

B. Chapter 27, Code of Allen Township – Draft Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment Data Center Overlay Zoning District and Data Center Uses: Ms. Eckhart stated that the Draft Zoning Ordinance had been returned to the Planning Commission for further review following revisions and additions made by the Board of Supervisors. She explained that the Supervisors received additional information in the form of a memorandum and that several logical additions were incorporated into the draft ordinance. She further explained that the overlay zoning map was also reviewed by the Board of Supervisors and referred back to the Planning Commission. Ms. Eckhart noted that the overlay district contains over 400 acres of industrial-commercial property located west of Howertown Road and north of Route 329, totaling approximately 462.32 acres.

Mr. Austin stated that the draft ordinance references numerous rules and regulations that he had not fully researched; however, he referenced a recent Morning Call article regarding a municipality in western Pennsylvania where a data center project received a 75% score. He stated that several points raised in the article appeared reasonable and that the draft ordinance generally addressed most concerns. Mr. Austin explained that one remaining issue involved onsite power generation. He

discussed Tier 4 emissions requirements and questioned whether the Township or federal regulations already addressed those standards. He noted that Tier 4 diesel emission standards have been in place since 2015 and stated that any newly installed generators would likely already comply unless used equipment was installed for emergency backup purposes.

Mr. Austin also questioned how the Township's noise ordinance would distinguish between emergency generator operation and continuous operation. He noted that the draft ordinance addressed the issue to some extent and asked whether the Planning Commission intended to apply the same standards to emergency operations. He further noted that the ordinance included provisions related to renewable energy generation on rooftops based upon roof square footage and required closed-loop cooling systems unless newer technologies became available in the future.

Mr. Austin asked Mr. Behler for his opinion regarding the draft ordinance. Mr. Behler stated that he interpreted the ordinance to require compliance with all applicable standards regardless of whether the generators were used for standard or emergency purposes. Mr. Austin responded that federal regulations establish different emissions standards for continuous-use generators versus emergency-use generators.

Ms. Eckhart referenced the "Backup Power" section of the Chester County and Montgomery County Data Center Ordinance Guide dated April 2026, which states:

"There are multiple tiers of emissions standards that apply to diesel generators, with Tier 4 being the highest. 'Prime power generators,' or those used to operate the facility when disconnected from the grid (not just for emergency use) are required by the EPA to meet Tier 4 requirements. Those used for emergency generation are only required to meet Tier 2-3 requirements. Municipal codes can specify that diesel generators are only used for emergency backup power and must meet Tier 4 standards."

Mr. Austin stated that, realistically, operators would not rely upon temporary rental generators during emergencies and that permanently installed generators would likely meet Tier 4 standards regardless. He reiterated his concern regarding how prolonged emergency operations would be treated under the noise ordinance, such as during an extended power outage caused by a hurricane. He noted that generator operation during a five-day outage could exceed the federal 100-hour threshold for emergency use and stated that the Township should account for that possibility in the ordinance.

Ms. Eckhart stated that the size of the facility would also affect generator capacity and support requirements. Mr. Austin agreed, noting that larger facilities would require substantially more generator support. Mr. Treadwell stated that the Township could incorporate the language from the Data Center Ordinance Guide into the ordinance. Mr. Austin stated that he would prefer to recommend the ordinance to the Board of Supervisors so that it would not need to return to the Planning Commission for further review. Mr. Treadwell stated that the ordinance had not yet been advertised and explained that he and Ms. Eckhart submitted the draft ordinance to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) for review. He stated that the ordinance could not be advertised until mid-June, with a public hearing anticipated for July 14, 2026.

Mr. Behler stated that while he did not have expertise regarding emissions standards, he supported requiring Tier 4 emissions standards across the board. Mr. Austin stated that he and Mr. Treadwell previously discussed the likelihood that future data center developments, including one in South Whitehall Township, would construct onsite power plants utilizing steam electric turbines powered by natural gas. He stated that such systems would reduce maintenance concerns associated with maintaining large numbers of individual diesel generators. Mr. Austin further stated that long-term profitability of data centers would likely require such infrastructure and noted that the current proposed data center within the Township may not be able to obtain sufficient power directly from the electrical grid.

Mr. Policelli stated that utilizing natural gas service would provide a more practical and efficient dual-system approach with less maintenance and would ultimately benefit both the developer and the surrounding community. Mr. Behler questioned whether a natural gas main existed along Route 329. Ms. Eckhart confirmed that the same high-pressure gas line serving the cogeneration facility crosses Route 329. Mr. Policelli asked whether any provisions within the Township Code would prohibit a data center from utilizing natural gas. Mr. Austin responded that there were none. Mr. Policelli questioned why an operator would choose to maintain approximately one hundred onsite diesel generators, including the associated oil changes and maintenance requirements, for a facility of that scale.

Mr. Austin stated that he believed the Township was taking the proper approach at the appropriate time. Mr. Behler added that the draft ordinance accomplishes the Planning Commission's objectives and is being completed in a timely manner. He also stated that the Township currently has only one approved applicant and that the proposed location is the most appropriate site within the zoning district.

Mr. Austin made a motion to approve the submission to the Board of Supervisors, the proposed amendments to the Ordinance Chapter 27, with the change for the emissions as discussed by the Planning Commission; seconded by Mr. Behler. On the motion, by roll call vote, all present Commissioners voted yes.

C. Gay Balliet, Ag Security Addition Proposal – K3-11-14E: Ms. Eckhart explained that the property owner requested that Tax Parcel K3-11-14E be added to the Agricultural Security Area as part of the property's agricultural preservation efforts. Mr. Treadwell questioned whether Northampton County had been contacted regarding the request. Ms. Eckhart confirmed that the County had been consulted.

Mr. Behler made a motion to recommend approval of the addition of Tax Parcel K3-11-14E to the Agricultural Security Area; seconded by Mr. Austin. On the motion, by roll call vote, all present Commissioners voted yes.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Announcements:

Mr. Austin announced that the next Planning Commission meeting will take place on Monday, June 15th, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber R. Averbek



**Allen Township
Planning Commission Meeting Agenda**

Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 6:00 P.M.

**Location: Allen Township Municipal Building
50 Snow Hill Rd., Northampton, PA**

A summary of the public comment policy and procedures is located at the end of the agenda as a reference for individuals wishing to address the Board during the “Public to be Heard” segments.

Note: Per Act 65 of 2021 requirements, this agenda was posted to the Township website and physical location of the proposed meeting, by Township staff on: May 14, 2026

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
3. Roll Call

_____ Gary Behler

_____ Sean Policelli, PE, Engineer

_____ David Austin

_____ B. Lincoln Treadwell, Jr. Esq., Solicitor

_____ Felipe Resendez, Jr.

_____ Ilene M. Eckhart, Manager

_____ Gary Krill

_____ Paul Link

4. Review & Approval of Minutes
5. Public Comment (Residents shall limit their comments to no more than three minutes)
6. Business Items
 - A. Donavin A. Bohun Major (Preliminary) Subdivision Plan (90 day MPC deadline – June 16, 2026) – Acknowledgement of MPC Extension Granted to October 16, 2026
 - B. Chapter 27, Code of Allen Township – Draft Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment Data Center Overlay Zoning District and Data Center Uses
 - C. Gay Balliet, Ag Security Addition Proposal – K3-11-14E
7. Public Comment (Residents shall limit their comments to no more than three minutes)
8. Next Planning Commission Meeting – Monday, June 15, 2026 6:00 PM
9. Adjournment

-Public Comment Policy and Procedures-

1. *A period for public comment will be held at the beginning of the meeting and at the conclusion of all agenda business items. Any public comments or questions shall be reserved until time on the agenda. Public comments and questions will not be permitted during the course of the Board's/Commission's business items.*
2. *Individuals who speak must give their name, address and municipality prior to speaking.*
3. *Time limit on length of public comment or presentation will be three (3) minutes per person, per meeting.*
4. *A speaker will only be granted one three (3) minute extension, if given, for a maximum speaking time of six (6) minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman.*
5. *Comments/questions shall be directed to the Board/Commission members only.*
6. *Procedures will be in place to maintain proper decorum for the hearing. Public participation will be allowed but the Board will ensure respect for all citizens and maintain order. Personal attacks and outbursts will be ruled out of order. The Chairman of the Board or Commission may, within this discretion, rule out of order scandalous, impertinent, and redundant comment or any comment the discernible purpose of which is to disrupt or prevent the conduct of the business of the meeting.*
7. *Individuals with lengthy written statements may submit them for the record and provide a verbal summary of three (3) minutes or less. Interested persons may email public comments via email, sent to manager@allentownship.org until 3:00pm local time the day of each meeting or by contacting the Township office. Public comment received via email will be read at the outset of the meeting. If you require an auxiliary aid, service or other accommodation, please contact the Allen Township offices in advance. In addition, an audio recording of the meeting will be posted to the Township website: www.allentownship.org within 48 hours of the meeting.*