



Allen Township Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes
April 20th, 2026
6:00 P.M.

A **General Meeting** of the Allen Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, April 20th, 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; Gary Krill; Paul Link; Felipe Resendez, Jr.; B. Lincoln Treadwell, Jr. Esq. Solicitor; Sean Policelli, PE, Engineer (Gilmore & Associates, Inc.); Ilene M. Eckhart, Manager

Absent: None.

2026 Reorganization: Mr. Behler made a motion to nominate Mr. Austin as Chairman; seconded by Mr. Link. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Commissioners voted yes.

Mr. Link made a motion to nominate Mr. Behler as Vice Chairman; seconded by Mr. Austin. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Commissioners voted yes.

Minutes: Mr. Link made a motion to approve the minutes from March 17th, 2025, and May 19th, 2025; seconded by Mr. Behler. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Commissioners voted yes.

Public to be Heard:

A. Mr. Frank Hrkach of 48 Oak Lane stated that a property across from his residence has been vacant for approximately 20 years. He noted that a sign on the property indicates it is for sale by Coletta Commercial Realty and questioned whether the area is strictly residential. Mr. Austin asked if he was referring to the area along Route 329. Mr. Hrkach confirmed and asked what could potentially be built on the property given its steep slope. He explained that in the 1970s, a proposal to develop the property was voted down by nearby residents. He also stated his belief that the property is owned by Mario's Pizza.

Ms. Eckhart explained that the property is zoned Highway Commercial and has been designated as such for many years. Mr. Treadwell added that a previous owner had proposed a small strip mall, but the project did not proceed, possibly due to the site's development challenges. Ms. Eckhart stated that any development would require the property owner to submit plans to the Township and obtain the necessary approvals and permits. Mr. Krill noted that the Township had previously denied development due to the slope.

Mr. Austin concluded that the property remains zoned for Highway Commercial development; however, whether development occurs is uncertain. Mr. Hrkach then asked whether the surrounding lots are strictly residential. Mr. Treadwell confirmed and referenced the Allen Township Zoning Map, noting that the subject property is shown in red (Highway Commercial), while the surrounding areas in light blue are zoned R-2 Residential.

B. Mr. Glenn Gehret, President of the Lappawinzo Fish & Game located at 25 Lappawinzo Road, stated that he had spoken with Ms. Eckhart approximately two to three weeks prior regarding the Donavin A. Bohun Major Subdivision

plans. He indicated that Lappawinzo Fish & Game has concerns about proposed homes being constructed in close proximity to their shooting range, as well as near a steep field and track area. Mr. Gehret also raised concerns regarding stormwater drainage flowing down Lappawinzo Road and from their property onto adjacent properties, resulting in significant ponding. Mr. Austin explained that stormwater management would be addressed as part of the land development review process. He noted that the applicant has requested an extension and has not yet submitted revised plans for Planning Commission review.

Ms. Eckhart added that the Township has a review letter, but a resubmission from the applicant is still pending. Mr. Austin further noted that the applicant chose not to attend tonight's meeting and is currently revising the plans with their engineer. Mr. Behler stated that if the runoff issue is an existing condition, the current property owner should be responsible for addressing it. Mr. Gehret indicated that the drainage issue originates from the Moyer property along Kreidersville Road. Discussion followed regarding local geology, particularly in the Spring Hill Road area, and related drainage concerns. Mr. Policelli stated that a key requirement for the subdivision is the preparation and submission of a stormwater management plan with the revised application.

Mr. Gehret also expressed concerns regarding on-lot septic systems and infiltration fields. Mr. Policelli explained that there are required separation distances between structures, stormwater infiltration systems, sanitary systems, and environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands. He noted that additional comments will be provided once revised design plans are submitted. Mr. Gehret further expressed concerns regarding sight distance, particularly at Lot 4, as well as potential encroachment onto Lappawinzo Fish & Game property. He also raised concerns about future homeowners locating adjacent to a shooting range that has been in operation for approximately 92 years. Mr. Austin stated that the Township cannot prohibit development of the property, provided the applicant complies with all applicable ordinances and requirements.

Business Items:

~~A. Donavin A. Bohun Major (Preliminary) Subdivision Plan (90 day MPC deadline June 16th, 2026) :~~
Mr. Austin indicated that the applicant requested an extension. Ms. Eckhart indicated that the applicant will be giving the signed extension to the Board of Supervisors next week.

B. Chapter 27, Code of Allen Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment Draft, Data Center Uses:
Mr. Treadwell stated that the Board of Supervisors had directed the Planning Commission to investigate adding data center use to the Township's zoning ordinance. He explained that he and Ms. Eckhart reviewed several examples of data center ordinances and that the document provided to the Commissioners was an initial draft for their consideration. Mr. Treadwell also noted that the Commissioners may be aware that the Board of Supervisors recently approved an amended final plan for one of the Prologis warehouses to allow a data center use within the existing building. He explained that the use was characterized under the Township's zoning ordinance as wholesale storage of electronic information, as this was the best fit within the current ordinance.

Mr. Austin stated that the Commissioners should consider creating an overlay within a portion of the Industrial/Commercial (I/C) zoning district to limit expansion. He noted that, as leases expire, property owners may seek to convert buildings to data center use. Mr. Austin expressed concern regarding the warehouse project located near 700 Savage Road.

Mr. Treadwell explained that the referenced project differs because it was subject to litigation and a settlement agreement. He added that Mr. Austin was correct that an argument could be made that a data center constitutes storage of data, and that a precedent has already been established within the Township. Mr. Austin stated that he agreed with the Board of Supervisors' position that the location discussed would be appropriate for a data center. He suggested establishing an overlay on the west side of Howertown Road and questioned whether additional details would be required beyond the language already included in the sample

ordinance.

Mr. Treadwell questioned where a future data center proposal should be located within the Township, whether in a new or existing building. Mr. Krill stated that if the use is limited to Industrial and Industrial/Commercial districts, there would only be a few viable locations. Mr. Behler noted that restricting the use to Industrial/Commercial districts would exclude the warehouse on Savage Road referenced by Mr. Austin.

Mr. Austin stated that the use should be limited to the Industrial/Commercial district, with the ordinance addressing the placement of generating equipment so that it is located on the west side of buildings, facing away from residential areas. He questioned whether the Township is required to designate a location where the use is permitted. Mr. Treadwell confirmed that this is the case. Mr. Austin noted that the Township has already effectively allowed such use within the Industrial/Commercial district.

Mr. Link commented that the data center plan reviewed by the Board of Supervisors included generators on both sides of the building. Mr. Treadwell clarified that while generators were included, they were proposed with noise buffering, and their effectiveness remains to be determined. Mr. Link asked whether the discussion was focused on limiting the overlay to the west side of Howertown Road, and Mr. Austin confirmed that it was. He added that issues such as noise, lighting, and other development impacts would be addressed through the zoning ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), and applicable state and federal regulations. Mr. Treadwell summarized that the proposed overlay area would be located west of Howertown Road and north of Route 329. Mr. Austin agreed, and Mr. Resendez indicated that this would be an appropriate location for the data center overlay.

The Commissioners also discussed the land surrounding the quarry along Route 329, as well as the nearby warehouse with the proposed data center. Ms. Eckhart noted that the mining operation at the quarry had contacted her following the Township's most recent comprehensive plan update and expressed interest in changing the zoning classification of certain parcels.

Mr. Krill stated that he believed data centers should be required to utilize an enclosed cooling system. Mr. Treadwell responded that such a requirement could be included. Mr. Krill also noted that the draft ordinance specifies a building height of 70 feet. Mr. Treadwell stated that the draft also includes language requiring a will-serve letter for water utilities.

Mr. Link explained that a closed-loop system is typically referred to as an evaporative system. Mr. Krill noted that such systems still result in some water loss. Mr. Link responded that the loss would be minimal and added that it is a more economical and feasible method for achieving a closed-loop system. Mr. Krill and Mr. Link further discussed public water usage. Mr. Treadwell questioned how extensively Allen Township should regulate internal building operations. He noted that if the Northampton Borough Municipal Authority (NBMA) has sufficient water capacity to supply the facility, it may raise the question of whether the Township should be concerned with its usage.

Mr. Austin inquired about the scenario in which a data center operator seeks to drill a well. Mr. Treadwell explained that this would be a different situation, requiring approval from the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), as outlined in the draft ordinance. Mr. Behler noted that the proposed ordinance requires connection to public water and questioned how that requirement would apply in such a scenario, as it may effectively prohibit drilling a private well.

Mr. Austin explained that one of the challenges in the Industrial Zoning District is that multiple warehouses already have access to dual power sources. He noted that both the FedEx facility and the Cisco warehouse across the street have more than one power supply. He expressed concern that, if the Township does not act

relatively quickly to adopt an ordinance, an applicant may seek to construct a data center in that area. Mr. Link stated that he believed the district would be a suitable location for a data center. Mr. Austin added that the Board of Supervisors has already established a precedent for permitting data centers within the Industrial/Commercial district. Mr. Treadwell expressed concern regarding the Industrial district, noting that there is little to no available land and that one nearby property is zoned R-2 (Medium Density Residential), although it was previously designated as Industrial.

Mr. Krill stated that if Mr. Link favors including Industrial areas, it may be prudent to incorporate portions of the Industrial district within the overlay in case a warehouse seeks to repurpose an existing building for a data center. Mr. Link suggested limiting the overlay to a specific section of the Industrial district, similar to the proposed approach for the Industrial/Commercial district. Mr. Treadwell agreed, noting that this would require delineating the area on the zoning map.

Mr. Link added that this approach would exclude the Savage Road warehouse, which is located within the R-2 district. Mr. Behler reminded the Commission that there are planned residential developments adjacent to Industrial areas and noted the proximity of North Catasauqua. Mr. Link suggested that the overlay could be limited to the area near the FedEx facility.

Mr. Treadwell commented that technology is rapidly evolving and noted that modern data centers are approximately one-quarter the size of earlier facilities.

Mr. Krill noted that Lower Nazareth Township and Bushkill Township treat data centers as a conditional use within Industrial/Commercial districts, while Moore Township classifies them as a special exception. Mr. Treadwell expressed hesitation regarding conditional uses, explaining that they may create the misconception that such applications can be denied based on public opposition, when in fact they cannot be. He indicated that the Township should instead determine whether data centers are permitted uses.

Mr. Krill agreed that, if data centers are to be permitted, the Township must ensure that appropriate conditions are clearly established. Mr. Treadwell responded that this is the purpose of adopting a comprehensive ordinance.

Mr. Behler questioned the construction hours outlined in the draft ordinance, stating that typical construction hours are 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Mr. Treadwell explained that the draft ordinance is a compilation of provisions from various ordinances assembled by Ms. Eckhart. He stated that the Planning Commission will provide direction moving forward, and the document will be revised accordingly based on that direction.

Mr. Behler stated that, although he did not see it in the draft ordinance, he recalled recommending that data center applicants be required to provide some percentage of energy back to the grid. He noted that he was aware of the Fire Company's comment suggesting that solar panels be installed on the side of the building rather than on the roof, which he indicated he supported. Mr. Behler further stated that the properties within the proposed overlay appeared to have sufficient space for solar panels, particularly if impervious coverage from parking areas were reduced. He added that, while the Township could not require a full return of energy, there should be some level of encouragement for applicants to contribute energy back to the grid rather than solely consuming large amounts of power. Mr. Austin responded that he did not believe this was within the Township's purview. He explained that if a data center operator is willing to purchase power and determines that incorporating solar energy would be beneficial, the proposal would be brought before the Board of Supervisors, Zoning Hearing Board, or Planning Commission for review. He questioned how the Township could mandate what he described as a loosely defined solar requirement based solely on property use.

Ms. Eckhart stated that she had identified standards from the U.S. Green Building Council, which include a data center rating system based on design criteria. Mr. Treadwell added that Mr. Austin's point related to the

scope of Township regulation, noting that electrical power considerations are similar to the previously discussed issue of water usage. He stated that the ordinance could include language encouraging the use of alternative energy sources.

Mr. Krill expressed concern that including such language might lead to solar panels being installed on building roofs. He explained that roofs are typically not designed to support significant additional equipment, particularly if chillers are also located on the roof, and that structural reinforcement would likely be required. Mr. Link stated that this issue would be addressed during the permitting process and that a permit would not be issued if the structure were not capable of supporting the added load. Mr. Treadwell added that applicants would not install equipment that could compromise a building housing costly equipment.

Mr. Krill maintained that requiring rooftop solar panels could create safety concerns, referencing incidents in Ontario and California where warehouses collapsed due to excessive roof loads. Mr. Austin responded that such matters fall outside the Planning Commission's responsibilities. Mr. Link reiterated that all such proposals would undergo engineering review, during which structural capacity would be evaluated. Mr. Austin concluded that, while he understood Mr. Krill's concerns, decisions regarding structural design ultimately rest with the project engineers.

Mr. Behler stated that the draft ordinance includes language regarding sound with certain exceptions. He expressed that there should be no exceptions for sound and emphasized that, regardless of the activity, all operations must comply with the Township's noise ordinance. He also noted that he had previously stated at a Supervisors meeting that even when backup generators are in use, they must still comply with the allowable sound levels established by the noise ordinance. Mr. Link stated that a data center is unlikely to lose power in the same manner as a residential home, noting that if a high-voltage line goes down, the outage would affect a much larger area. Mr. Policelli added that in such a situation, sound concerns would likely not be a priority. Mr. Link further explained that data centers are typically fed from two substations, so if one substation goes down, switchgear would automatically transfer power to the other. He stated that the only time he would expect generators to operate routinely is during periodic testing, likely once a week. Mr. Behler responded that, regardless of whether the generators are used for testing or emergencies, neighboring properties should not be adversely affected by noise. Mr. Link questioned whether residential generators meet the noise ordinance standards and added that the type of generators proposed would be equipped with effective mufflers and sound insulation. Mr. Ryan Regec, who was in attendance, stated that he installs similar generators at hospitals and noted that they operate quietly. Mr. Krill remarked that, regardless of these factors, the generators must still comply with the applicable sound requirements.

Mr. Behler further indicated that, with respect to buffering, the Township should apply the same performance standards currently used for distribution centers.

Mr. Krill questioned what the emergency management component of a data center would entail. He asked whether the Township would require the data center operator to train the Fire Department on its fire suppression system, noting that such systems would differ from those in a typical warehouse. Mr. Treadwell stated that the Township would not include such a requirement in the ordinance but would inform the applicant that training the Fire Company is expected. Mr. Krill questioned what would happen if the applicant failed to do so. Mr. Krill explained that the Township is already experiencing issues with warehouses not maintaining up-to-date emergency contact cards. He noted that when the Fire Department calls the listed contact, the individual often no longer works for the warehouse. He further stated that fire emergencies do not appear to be a top priority for some warehouse operators. Mr. Austin referenced the *Data Center Ordinance Guide Version 1.0* (dated April 2026) from the Chester County Planning Commission and the Montgomery County, PA Planning Commission, which had been provided by Ms. Eckhart as a reference. He read the following excerpt:

“2. Each Data Center shall provide 24-hour emergency contact signage that is visible at the main entrance. Such signage shall include the company name (if applicable), the owner/representative’s name, the telephone number, and the corresponding local power company’s name and telephone number.”

Mr. Treadwell stated that this would not resolve Mr. Krill’s concern, as nothing written by the Township would ensure that contact information is kept up to date. Mr. Krill responded that it would be in the applicant’s best interest to maintain current contact information. He further indicated that while other Commissioners suggested the data center operator would likely train the Fire Department, this does not guarantee that such training would occur.

Mr. Link stated that, in that case, the Township would not issue an Occupancy Permit. He added that the Fire Marshal should not sign off on the issuance of an Occupancy Permit until Mr. Krill and the rest of the Fire Department have been properly trained.

Mr. Krill noted that there are numerous rules and regulations the data center must follow, but emphasized that acting in their best interest does not necessarily mean compliance will occur. Mr. Treadwell reiterated that including requirements in the zoning ordinance does not guarantee adherence.

Ms. Eckhart questioned whether she and Mr. Treadwell should prepare the draft to be referred to as the Data Center (DC) Overlay IC-DC on the proposed Zoning Map amendment. Mr. Austin indicated that he did not have an opinion on the naming. Mr. Treadwell stated that once the ordinance is drafted, he and Ms. Eckhart will submit it to the LVPC. He explained that the Planning Commission will review it again, as both the LVPC and the public will provide comments.

Mr. Krill asked whether Ms. Eckhart and Mr. Treadwell had received the LVPC’s questions regarding the Township’s draft ordinance and noted their inquiry about cooling systems. Mr. Treadwell confirmed that he had received them.

Mr. Austin made a motion for the Township to redraw the Zoning Map to include a DC Overlay west of Howertown Road and north of Route 329, and to proceed with developing an ordinance governing the construction or conversion of buildings into a data center; the motion was seconded by Mr. Resendez. On the motion, by roll call vote, all members voted in favor.

Public to be Heard:

Mr. Hrkach questioned what the Planning Commission meant by a certain level of sound allowed in the Township. Mr. Austin explained that there are decibel limits associated with different types of uses and that standards are established based on zoning districts. He noted that he does not currently experience any sound issues; however, he referenced a *60 Minutes* segment indicating that data centers can be noisy.

Mr. Treadwell stated that one of the conditions to which Prologis has agreed is to conduct a pre-data center sound study. Mr. Link added that little to no sound would be heard from inside the building and noted that, depending on the cooling system used, noise levels could be minimal.

Announcements:

Mr. Austin announced that the next Planning Commission meeting will take place on Monday, May 18th, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber R. Averbeck



**Allen Township
Planning Commission Meeting Agenda**

Date: Monday, April 20, 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: April 17, 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. 2026 Reorganization
5. Review & Approval of Minutes
6. Public Comment (Residents shall limit their comments to no more than three minutes)
7. Business Items
 - A. Donavin A. Bohun Major (Preliminary) Subdivision Plan (90 day MPC deadline – June 16, 2026)
 - B. Chapter 27, Code of Allen Township - Zoning Ordinance Amendment Draft, Data Center Uses
8. Public Comment (Residents shall limit their comments to no more than three minutes)
9. Next Planning Commission Meeting – Monday, May 18, 2026 6:00 PM
10. 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.*