

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP AD HOC COMMITTEE

Minutes of June 25, 2025

Present: Bill Hart
Katherine Mack
Cindy Miller
David Shulman
Kristin Soldridge
Michael Corriere, Solicitor
Lori Lambert, Planning & Zoning Secretary
Mike Muffley, Township Engineer
Jaspreet Bhullar (JP), Pennoni

Absent: Tim Bartlett
Bill Jones
Todd Rousenberger

READING OF THE MINUTES

Bill Hart made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes and approve the minutes from the December 18, 2024, Ad Hoc meeting. Katherine Mack seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Land Preservation Presentation

Zach Szoke stated that it was recommended to him that he attend the meeting, hear the proposed changes to be made and learn, he was not aware that a presentation was to be made.

ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW

Jaspreet Bhullar (JP) from Pennoni introduced herself to the Committee. She noted that Matt Wanamaker from Pennoni previously attended a meeting; they will be taking over the work from URDC. They have been working with Mike Muffley, Lori Lambert and Liz Amato on making the changes to the Zoning Ordinance. There have been a few rounds of drafts and Article II, Zoning District Regulations, is being provided tonight to the Committee for comment.

SALDO will be worked on after the Zoning review is complete. Mike Muffley stated he is behind schedule on a lot of things; he suggested holding off on providing the entire Zoning Ordinance for tonight's meeting. Article II uses and districts are for review tonight. The changes that have already been made are in italic.

Mike Muffley stated that we previously agreed on the zones, map and the new zoning districts.

Section 180-16, Agriculture/Rural Residential District (A/RR)

Permitted by right uses added: agricultural business, agritourism, animal shelters, crop farming, farm occupations, family dwelling.

Grooming service (dog or animal) should be defined under the personal services.

Special exception uses added: auction houses (remove from A/RR, add to commercial zone), butcher shops, domestic violence shelter, emergency services station, farm related business, farmers, antiques, and/or flea markets, kennels and veterinarian clinics (kennels should be removed, listed under stables and kennels), riding stables, theater drive-in.

Conditional uses added: libraries, personal services (remove from A/RR, add to commercial zone).

E. Dimensional standards chart: tiny home added (add setback requirements to mimic those of the single-family dwelling, 400 square foot minimum).

Mark Leuthe questioned where we are in the approval process for the Zoning. Mike Muffley stated that we are looking at maybe 3-4 months, depending on hearing dates, advertising, etc.

Section 180-17 Village Residential (VR)

Permitted by right uses added: agritourism (move to special exception uses), animal shelters (remove from VR), farm occupations, adult day care center.

Special exception uses added: auction houses (remove from VR, add to commercial zone), domestic violence shelters, emergency services station, farm occupations, farm related businesses, kennels and veterinarian clinics, libraries, assisted living residence, places of worship, plant nurseries and greenhouses.

Condominiums should be added to VR.

E. Dimensional requirements: tiny home (add setback requirements to mimic those of the single-family dwelling, 400 square foot minimum).

G. Age-qualified housing option added.

Section 180-17, Village Residential District 1 (VR1)

This section should be removed and the provisions to be added to the Village Residential District, the zoning map should be updated.

Section 180-17.1, Medium Density Residential District (MDR)

This section covers existing mobile home parks in the Township.

Tiny homes have been added as a conditional use.

Section 180-17.1, Neighborhood Commercial/Village Residential District (NC/VR)

This section has been added as a mixed use for the properties along Route 145.

B., Commercial Uses. “maximum of 30 percent” should be changed to “minimum of 30 percent” and “maximum of 50 percent” should be added.

Section 180-18, Resort Commercial District (RC)

Permitted by right uses added: amusement park, animal shelters (remove from zone), craft alcoholic beverage establishments, crop farming, distillery, single family detached dwellings comply with the standards of the A/RR district, theater, drive-in.

Special exception uses added: agritourism, auction houses, emergency services station, farm occupations, farm related business, farmers, antiques, and/or flea markets, racetrack, riding stables.

Section 180-18.1, Planned Resort Residential Community District (PRRC)

Permitted by right uses added: agritourism, animal shelters, crop farming, distillery, farm occupations, farm related businesses, racetrack.

Conditional uses added: emergency services station, farmers, antiques, and/or flea markets, riding stables.

At the next meeting we will begin reviewing the Neighborhood Commercial District. The changes discussed tonight will be incorporated and a pdf version will be emailed to the Committee for review for the next meeting.

Jaspreet Bhullar provided an update on SALDO: there are seven articles within SALDO. The first and last articles are at 100% completion, article two, the definitions have been beefed up so that things make sense between Zoning and SALDO, article three, the submission and review article has been updated and is 100% complete, article four, design standards are at 50% completion, article five and six have not been started yet. The SALDO updates are at 50% completion.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 30, 2025, at 6:00 pm. Lori Lambert will notify the Committee of the date change of the meeting.

Cindy Miller questioned in SALDO, can a change be made to accept electronic submissions. Mike Muffley stated that he already has an Ordinance drafted. Bill Hart requested that multiple driveways coming out on to a state highway be addressed. Cindy Miller asked if we could require solar projects to be placed on rooftops, in parking areas as shades, etc., so it is a multi-use of space instead of taking up land. Jaspreet Bhullar stated that this can be written into a solar ordinance.

Kristin Soldridge requested that the date be put on the drafts received.

PUBLIC COMMENT

LB Roman, of Pennsville, asked if there was any way that the audience could be provided with the information that is discussed at the meeting. Dave Shulman requested that Jaspreet Bhullar bring extra draft copies to the next meeting for the audience to review. This material would need to be turned back in at the end of the meeting since it is only in draft form.

Zach Szoke, 4467 Timberline Road, stated that his purpose for coming to the meeting was to understand what is changing in SALDO and Zoning that would affect anything they are trying to incorporate with the land preservation program. He does not think being provided with the paperwork at the two-hour meeting, then turning it back in, is enough time to digest what is being changed. Mike Muffley stated that once the hearing is scheduled and the Ordinance is advertised then it is a public document. At that point, the document can be reviewed for comment up until the hearing time. Zach Szoke stated that they are working with the Board of Supervisors to try to have them fully understand the program they are proposing. Mike Muffley stated that there are no changes proposed as to how agriculture is being permitted in the Township. The Township is rural and agriculture in nature, there is a lot of farmland and open space, and the intent of the Township is to keep it that way.

Michael Corriere stated that the changes proposed in the Zoning are not affecting what they are trying to do. Zach Szoke stated that there are no significant additional changes proposed for a big preservation push.

Cindy Miller stated that she wants residents to understand our Zoning and SALDO better, the Township is working hard to keep the Township rural. She is very proud of the Planning Commission and the work they have done on updating our ordinances, approving plans, etc., so that we are not placed in the position like other adjacent municipalities are. We already have Act 319, Northampton County Land Preservation, Blue Mountain Conservation District, wetland and steep slope restrictions. The Township has approximately 9,300 acres that cannot be developed. Kristin Soldridge stated that the Township has been proactive instead of reactive, ordinances have been created to stop the influx of warehouses. Cindy Miller stated that we have already created an ordinance for recreational marijuana, so that when the State approves that, we are prepared.

Katherine Mack stated that Zach Szoke and his group are working on something different, which would allow individual landowners to preserve their land. Much of the properties in the Township do not meet the requirements of the County program. The proposed program would have money set aside for people who would like to preserve their land through the Township program. Katherine Mack's opinion would be to let the residents of the Township decide if they want this type of program. Kristin Soldridge stated that not everyone will pay the tax; it is only residents that work, not retired residents. Cindy Miller stated that when the property is assessed, it will be at a lower value, this means that the Township, the School District and the County receive lower tax monies. This forces all to make up the difference and the mill rates will need to be increased to cover the tax loss. Michael Corriere stated that the County is working on an additional program for open space for the properties that do not qualify for the farmland preservation program.

Zach Szoke stated that he never said that the Township was not doing a good job based on State and Federal Legislation as it relates to Zoning and SALDO. His goal was to see what changes are being made, personally he hasn't seen anything that changes his proposal.

Bill Hart made a motion to adjourn. Kristin Soldridge seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.