

DTPC MINUTES

Dickinson Township Planning Commission

January 14, 2026 Dickinson Township Meeting Room
6:00 pm

Attendance

Commission Members:

Chairperson Elizabeth Grant, Vice Chairman Nathan Merkel, Secretary Beth Kikla, Robert "Bob" Line, Justin Smith

Staff:

Township Manager Jill Lovett, Public Works Director Glenn Kelso, Zoning/Codes Officer Ryan Hoover, Secretary/Treasurer Grace Hogue, Solicitor Matt Boyer

Absent:

Mark Hockley

Visitors:

CALL TO ORDER

The January 14, 2026 Dickinson Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:13PM by Chairperson Grant followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Dickinson Township currently has openings on several boards and committees. Please visit the Township website for more information.
- b. A reminder that more information about our community can be found on our website at www.dickinsontownship.org

AGENDA APPROVAL

Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to approve the January 14, 2026 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Beth Kikla motioned to approve the December 10, 2025, regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairperson Merkel and passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Chairperson Grant reported a few members of this commission have registered for the upcoming event for the data center event. This is a county hosted event at Dickinson College and virtual attendance is an option. Pre-registration is required and Chairperson Grant stated she

will be providing the link to register to anyone interested. Chairperson Grant explained there are several municipalities that are reviewing and adopting ordinances for data centers.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PLAN REVIEW - None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and discussion on the Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the 2022 Dickinson Township Comprehensive Plan

Chairperson Grant presented the Dickinson Township Comprehensive Plan to introduce ideas for potential updates to the current document. She suggested breaking the plan into subsections rather than reviewing it in its entirety at one time. Beth Kikla noted that, based on her review, the plan is intended to serve as a guiding document rather than an actionable one. She recommended developing a more defined action plan to accompany the identified items and suggested highlighting initiatives that have already occurred since the plan was adopted. She stated the need for clear objectives to move these items forward and recommended that the Board compile strategies discussed over the years to support progress. Chairperson Grant added that the focus should be on identifying any recommended changes and evaluating the progress that has been made to date.

Beth Kikla asked for an update on the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). Manager Lovett reported that a Supervisor, a Planning Commission representative, and a Township resident have been confirmed for appointment to establish the EAC.

Beth Kikla then asked how the Comprehensive Plan review should be approached. Vice Chairperson Merkel suggested that staff begin reviewing the plan and provide recommendations for changes, noting that staff has a strong understanding of Township actions and initiatives completed since the plan was adopted. Chairperson Grant added that input from the Board of Supervisors would also be important as part of the review process. Bob Line stated that he did not believe the Township has changed significantly since the plan was written. Ryan Hoover stated the importance of moving the plan forward by establishing deadlines and developing action plans. Vice Chairperson Merkel agreed, stressing that creating deadlines and following up on short-term action items is critical. He stated that the first step should be establishing a baseline, followed by advancing specific action items. Chairperson Grant emphasized the need to closely review the Comprehensive Plan to identify areas requiring greater specificity. Justin Smith highlighted the importance of the action items, noting that not all are staff-driven, and stressed the value of assessing changes that have occurred over the past four years. Chairperson Grant noted that some plan items reflect efforts that were intended to begin or continue existing initiatives. Beth Kikla suggested using a checklist during the review. Bob Line stated that the plan is meant to guide decision-making and should remain a reference document for Township actions. Chairperson Grant acknowledged that some items will be action-oriented while others will not and asked whether the plan should be reviewed in sections or as a whole. Vice Chairperson Merkel and Justin Smith agreed that reviewing the plan in subsections would be more manageable. Bob Line recommended setting time limits for reviewing each section. Manager Lovett supported reviewing the plan in subsections for staff efficiency. Vice Chairperson Merkel noted there is no urgency and suggested beginning with four strategies for discussion. Chairperson Grant agreed to have the first four strategies prepared for review at the next meeting.

B. Discussion on the need to implement a data center ordinance

Chairperson Grant initiated a discussion regarding multiple municipalities considering data center ordinances, noting that the County Planning Commission will also be reviewing the topic. She stated that two municipalities within the county have already adopted such ordinances. Vice Chairperson Merkel asked how receptive municipalities typically are to developer-driven discussions. Chairperson Grant responded that zoning ordinances are intended to guide growth and that changes after adoption can be challenging. She noted that receptiveness varies by municipality, with some more open to planning for this type of development than others. Beth Kikla asked whether an upcoming seminar would be beneficial. Chairperson Grant explained that the panel discussion would address general questions and concerns but would not focus on specific zoning provisions. Vice Chairperson Merkel commented that developers often have significant resources, while some townships may not. Manager Lovett offered to share North Middleton Township's ordinance to support the discussion. Chairperson Grant stated that a key question is identifying where, if anywhere, this type of development could be accommodated within the Township. Beth Kikla added that further review of the Comprehensive Plan would be helpful. Chairperson Grant questioned the potential community benefits of data centers. Beth Kikla noted that many residents are asking what advantages such development would bring. Justin Smith emphasized the importance of establishing a foundation for the review process. Beth Kikla suggested researching how other municipalities have approached this issue. Manager Lovett recommended gathering information from the County, and Bob Line suggested consulting Solicitor Boyer to help identify the best path forward. Beth Kikla reiterated that research should be the first step, including compiling examples and best practices from other municipalities. Vice Chairman Merkel suggested involving the Municipal Authority to obtain input. Justin Smith asked for clarification regarding Township water systems. Glenn Kelso explained how the systems are connected and noted that service is provided through South Middleton Township. The consensus was to first review and research ordinances adopted by other municipalities, then request guidance from Solicitor Boyer. Township staff will also review the issue and provide updates. Chairperson Grant and Manager Lovett will provide example ordinances for reference.

ZONING OFFICERS REPORT - None

SOLICITORS REPORT – None

ENGINEERS REPORT - None

PARK & RECREATION LIAISON REPORT – The Family Bowling event will be February 5, 2026, from 5:30-8:30pm in one-hour increments. The Spring event, Buy, Sell, Eat, will be May 9, 2026. The committee is hoping to get more craft vendor participation. The committee may consider a fishing derby and ice cream social in the fall of this year.

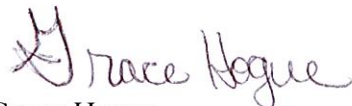
SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT – Bob Line expressed his appreciation to Manager Lovett and her work on the Lindenwood park project. Manager Lovett responded that there are many items to be looking forward to with this project and Bob Line mentioned this effort also aligns with the comprehensive plan.

OLD BUSINESS - None

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 PM. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Grace Hogue
Secretary/Treasurer

