

# DTPC MINUTES

## Dickinson Township Planning Commission

Wednesday, February 11, 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  
Mark Hockley*

#### Staff:

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

#### Absent:

*Jason Reichard, Engineer*

#### Visitors:

*Rob Kole – 44 Sandy Bottom Rd*

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## CALL TO ORDER

The February 11, 2026 Dickinson Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:00PM 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](http://www.dickinsontownship.org)

Vice Chairman Merkel commented he spoke to someone who may be interested in the vacancy on the Commission, as well as mention the opportunity to others about interest in filling any of the Township vacancies.

Chairperson Grant added the newsletter may include an advertisement for the Commission's vacancy. Manager Lovett confirmed there were descriptions provided for the newsletter; however, there was a restriction on space but would include it in the next issue. Chairperson Grant suggested providing a deadline for the next newsletter.

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## AGENDA APPROVAL

**Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to approve the February 11, 2026 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.**

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Beth Kikla motioned to approve the January 14, 2026, organizational meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Justin Smith and passed unanimously.**

Chairperson Grant requested a series of statements within the minutes be removed as they were duplicated within another subject of discussion.

**Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to approve the January 14, 2026, regular meeting minutes with the suggested amendments. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.**

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Grant reported Cumberland County Planning's need to reschedule the data center forum. The search for a large venue due to all the overwhelming registrations received.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**PLAN REVIEW** - None

## NEW BUSINESS

### **A. Carrie & Randolph Reese Sewage Planning Module – 507 Pine Road**

Glenn Kelso reported the use of this property was brought before the Zoning Hearing Board in December 2025. The Zoning Hearing Board granted the use request as well as more than one principle use. Glenn Kelso explained the restrictions such as number of events, activity during certain times of the year, sight distance items and other requirements on the property. Chairperson Grant asked about parking requirements. Glenn Kelso responded Ms. Reese planned to use the field for parking. He also explained some of the items would be addressed in the UCC regulations. Chairperson Grant stated she was not aware this use was provided for in that zoning district but thought a land development plan would be needed. Solicitor Boyer agreed it should. Beth Kikla questioned the capacity of the public. Ryan Hoover stated the restrictions on timing of events throughout the year and noise restrictions throughout the day. He also mentioned there is a concern about the sharp turn along Pine Road and how this could affect the traffic flow during an event.

Justin Smith asked if this property is being used for these events already. Manager Lovett confirmed there have been events taking place for a while. Glenn Kelso stated he interacted with property owners during an event happening at this location last October. This prompted communication with the owners to take steps to correct this issue.

Vice Chairman Merkel suggested conditional approval based upon land development submission and approval of land development plan for the use of this property. By having signed, sealed plans by an engineer would ensure the sight-distance calculations, traffic issues, parking, capacity, etc. is the process that needs to occur. His concern with events occurring and this step not complied with would create public safety issues.

Justin Smith stated the sewage module would be included in the land development plan so possible denial is appropriate. Vice Chairman Merkel agreed, however with the fact there are already events taken place, the Planning Commission should be mindful of providing any approval to encourage further action on this property with these concerns. Solicitor Boyer added there is an option to table this item also. Beth Kikla agreed with the concerns to provide conditional approval for this item as it could seem like acceptance of events to be taking place at this site. She would like to see noise abatement/sound studies, lighting to be incorporated into the plan as well.

Mark Hockley requested, if tabled, what would be the next steps for this property. Glenn Kelso explained there would be a request for more information from the owners of this location. He stated the first step is applying for the Zoning Hearing Board request, which has been completed. After that, it would be possible land development with the sewage planning module which would be followed by required UCC permits.

Chairperson Grant requested this Board receive the Zoning Hearing Board decision to view all the details on the conditions of the permitted use. She asked if there were any other elements of land development that are expected to meet requirements. Glenn Kelso replied not that he is aware of.

Vice Chairman Merkel asked if a denial would be best to request further items such as a land development plan. Manager Lovett commented that a denial is acceptable and relayed to the Board that there are no permits on file to make changes to the building. This is a concerning issue for the safety aspect of this property. Mark Hockley asked about restroom facilities. Glenn Kelso answered there was a porta potty at the wedding event he witnessed taking place. Chairperson Grant noted that this is a positive potential use for the Township, and when reviewing the zoning ordinance and districts, this use could be considered to be added in future discussions.

Solicitor Boyer explained by tabling it, the process is paused until further information is acquired such as the land development plan. By denying the sewage module, it will go to the Board of Supervisors for review to uphold or overturn the denial. Beth Kikla stated tabling would be ideal to request the land development plan.

**Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to table the Reese Sewage Planning Module for 507 Pine Rd. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and it passed unanimously.**

**ZONING OFFICERS REPORT** - None

**SOLICITORS REPORT** – None

**ENGINEERS REPORT** - None

**PARK & RECREATION LIAISON REPORT** – Manager Lovett reported the attendance of 74 peoples for the Dickinson Township Family Bowling Event on February 5, 2026. She also mentioned she is aware of a possible candidate for the Park & Recreation Committee. Manager Lovett reported an upcoming DCNR site inspection visit for Lindenwood for the grant award from DCNR/National Park Service.

**SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT** – Bob Line mentioned the Zoning Amendment Ordinance for Outdoor Wood Boilers was approved for advertising.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Review of Strategies 1-4 of the Dickinson Township Comprehensive Plan.**

Staff presented the Planning Commission with their notes regarding the first 4 strategies. Chairperson Grant asked for feedback on the first strategy of *Designate appropriate areas for growth that have access to*

*adequate utilities, infrastructure, and potentially public water and public sewer.* Justin Smith asked whether there had been any expansion or growth in water or sewer services over the past five years. Glenn Kelso reported a small expansion on Alexander Spring Road near the Bosniaks' Cultural Center to serve four residents. Justin Smith then referenced the Future Land Use Map, explaining its purpose is to identify growth areas, natural resource protection areas, and primary agricultural areas. He noted there has been little change in these designations. Chairperson Grant referenced the staff note regarding a zoning ordinance review and asked whether there had been consideration of adding mixed-use zones. Justin Smith identified several intersections where such changes could be considered. Chairperson Grant added that an official map could further designate intersections that may need improvement, conservation priority areas and other infrastructure. Justin Smith emphasized the importance of incorporating an official map. Chairperson Grant asked about the process for reviewing the zoning ordinance. Manager Lovett explained that the Board of Supervisors typically directs the Planning Commission to conduct such a review, though the commission could also initiate it independently. Glenn Kelso noted that suggestions regarding the zoning ordinance have been raised, which may warrant a review. Vice Chairman Merkel suggested developing a schedule for the Planning Commission to designate every 5 years to review the comprehensive plan and ordinances. Bob Line agreed, noting reviews should occur proactively rather than only in response to incidents or suggestions. Justin Smith recommended first identifying the overall goal of the comprehensive plan review. Glenn Kelso added that staff would like clarification on whether the review is intended to result in plan amendments or simply identify potential future updates. Chairperson Grant explained the review should help evaluate what has been accomplished and what improvements have occurred over time. She noted that the comprehensive plan is typically reviewed prior to the zoning ordinance, although the zoning ordinance was reviewed first in this instance. Justin Smith referenced Strategy 1 and the map created as part of that strategy, noting the map should be reviewed when considering actions related to Strategy 1. Vice Chairman Merkel questioned how a new map would be developed if needed, as the county would likely not assist. Chairperson Grant mentioned potential funding opportunities, while Justin Smith suggested the Cumberland County's GIS department could assist and that the task would not be difficult. Rob Kole stated that an existing map already appears to address Strategy 1. Vice Chairman Merkel clarified that the current map is not technically an official map. He reiterated that establishing a review schedule would be the most beneficial step to create a clear timeline for evaluating strategies and identifying actions. Chairperson Grant agreed the schedule should also include timelines for developing ideas and implementing actions. Beth Kikla noted that the strategies were intended to be strategic rather than a task list. She suggested determining what the review should accomplish, explaining that the goal is to identify items that may need to be updated when the comprehensive plan is revised in the future. She recommended keeping it at the strategy level and asking if it is still relevant to the direction of the Township. Chairperson Grant agreed with the land use map and land use plan, and it does designate areas for growth. Justin Smith added that potential actions should also be identified to guide work going forward over the next couple of years. Vice Chairman Merkel summarized maintaining a list of items needing potential updates at a future review. **Vice Chairman Merkel reiterated the 2 things that came out of the review for Strategy 1 is the need for an official map and review times of every 5 years.**

The discussion moved to Strategy 2 *Preserve the rural and agricultural character of the Township through ordinance provisions and regulations.* Beth Kikla noted that the recent data center discussion relates to this strategy. Justin Smith stated that the Agricultural Security Areas (ASA) falls in this strategy, though Beth Kikla noted ASA is currently listed under Strategy 4. Chairperson Grant mentioned communication with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and ongoing preservation efforts and additional funding for that. Beth Kikla recommended that any future updates, the ASA piece belongs in Strategy 2 instead of in Strategy 4. She added that several items overlap between strategies. Chairperson Grant noted ASA provides financial benefits to farmers under Strategy 4. **Vice Chairman Merkel suggested to combine Strategies 2 and 4,**

**which will be noted for possible future revisions. Justin Smith also discussed groundwater recharge studies and preservation efforts, suggesting additional review of groundwater recharge actions.**

The discussion moved to Strategy 3 *Ensure that natural resources are adequately protected*. Vice Chairman Merkel noted that Strategy 3 includes development of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) which is currently being accomplished. **Justin Smith suggested moving the ground water recharge initiatives to this strategy in the future.** Justin Smith asked whether action items align with the Cumberland County's Water Shed Action Plan and referenced riparian buffers identified on the map and where they are beneficial. Chairperson Grant noted that several planning tools are available and suggested researching how they could be implemented. Beth Kikla questioned whether the Planning Commission has authority to apply such tools during land development reviews related to riparian buffers. Vice Chairman Merkel suggested the action could be updates to the SALDO, such as Food Processing Residuals (FPRs) spreading, to support environmental improvements such as riparian buffers to waters of the Commonwealth. Justin Smith reiterated the need to determine how available resource planning tools could be implemented. Chairperson Grant indicated she could attempt to bring in experts through outreach meetings to discuss implementation. **Justin Smith stated the action item would be to investigate the resource conservation tools available and review the possible incorporation of them into the process.**

The discussion returned to Strategy 4 *Encourage farming sustainability by investigating alternative practices that provide increased financial assistance to the farmer*. **Vice Chairman Merkel again suggested combining Strategies 2 and 4, and Beth Kikla agreed Strategy 4 is a sub-set of Strategy 2.** Glenn Kelso noted staff comments indicate some uncertainty regarding how Strategy 4 is worded and what actions it implies for the Township.

Justin Smith asked how the Planning Commission should proceed with the plan review and suggested adding bullet points to staff notes to capture the commission's recommendations. He suggested keeping staff notes and then a sub section of the future recommendations from the Planning Commission. An example Justin Smith provided was Strategy 1A – Staff Input and Strategy 1B – Planning Commission next steps for review. Vice Chairman Merkel suggested incorporating similar bullet points into the meeting minutes to summarize the discussion. Chairperson Grant asked about next steps to review the remaining strategies. It was suggested the commission review the next four strategies at a future meeting. Vice Chairman Merkel asked staff what would be manageable moving forward. Glenn Kelso suggested reviewing approximately six additional strategies and noted that upcoming agendas will also include new plans for review.

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

Beth Kikla provided an overview of the ordinance examples presented to the Board by the Manager Lovett. She shared how all the ordinances typically follow the process and inclusion of the Cumberland County white paper provided; each ordinance has similar items such as water, energy, setbacks, etc. Chairperson Grant asked if the Board of Supervisors has an interest in the Planning Commission to pursue. Manager Lovett answered the Board expressed interest in encouraging the Planning Commission to review and ensuring the Township has something in place for data centers. Bob Line commented on how ordinances help the Township keep provisions in place. Beth Kikla agreed to the importance of implementing an ordinance as soon as possible. Mark Hockley asked how quickly this subject is approaching or could approach the Township. Chairperson Grant stated the Township has no provisions for this particular use and shared her experience and discussion on how technologies are changing rapidly.

Vice Chairman Merkel reported the importance of ensuring water utilities have the allocation and capacity for the data centers. He suggested discussion on priorities and time allocation. Vice Chairman Merkel recommended priority over data centers by only covering a few strategies within the Comprehensive Plan. If

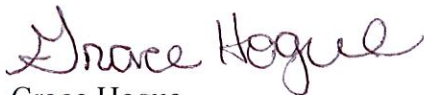
there is a large plan to review, then table the Comprehensive Plan strategies until the agenda is lighter. Mark Hockley confirmed it would be best to prioritize the data center ordinance discussion. Beth Kikla mentioned how far ahead certain municipalities are compared to this Township. She committed to draft an ordinance with the examples obtained and the Planning Commission can review. Chairperson Grant agrees to focus our efforts with the data center ordinances. Vice Chairman Merkel recommended tabling the comprehensive plan discussion as of right now. Chairperson Grant and the commission agreed.

Mark Hockley asked if there were specific concerns from the Board of Supervisors. Bob Line responded there wasn't anything specific, but rather encouragement to take action to create this ordinance.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Grace Hogue  
Secretary/Treasurer

