

DTPC MINUTES

Dickinson Township Planning Commission

Wednesday, March 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, Secretary/Treasurer Grace Hogue, Solicitor Matt
Boyer*

Absent:

Jason Reichard, Engineer, Zoning/Codes Officer Ryan Hoover

Visitors:

John Aigeldinger – 205 E Yellow Breeches Rd

CALL TO ORDER

The March 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. Reminder that Dickinson Township is seeking volunteers for several open positions on various Boards and Committees. If interested, please contact Jill Lovett at manager@dickinsontownship.org if you are interested.
- b. Dickinson Township is asking residents to sign up for its mass text alert system. This system is used to alert residents of things such as emergency situations, road closures, trash delays, etc. To sign up please go to the Township website and click on the image where it says Mass Text Alert Signup. Fill out the form online and hit submit.
- c. Reminder that the Dickinson Township Park & Recreation Committee will be holding its annual spring event on May 9th. If interested in reserving a yard sale spot, please contact the Township office.
- d. 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 March 11, 2026 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Beth Kikla pointed out a needed correction in the minutes on page 5. This was to change “Food Product Residuals” to “Food Processing Residuals”.

Vice Chairman Merkel questioned what the bold statements were in the minutes. Grace Hogue answered these were the statements of recommendations for changes for the comp plan. Manager Lovett added these items will be included in part of the staff summary of suggestions for any continued discussion on the comprehensive plan.

Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to approve the February 11, 2026 amended meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Chairperson Grant announced a planning commission training available to anyone interested. This will explain many items for planning commission and its role. This training is on March 25th at 6pm.

Chairperson Grant also updated everyone the data center forum has been rescheduled to April 29th at 6:30pm virtually.

Chairperson Grant announced that the county planning commission has created its own YouTube channel to assist with providing training modules on particular items.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PLAN REVIEW – None. Vice Chairman Merkel requested clarification on where things were with the sewage module provided and previously tabled. Glenn Kelso reported they have pulled the application for the time being.

NEW BUSINESS - None

ZONING OFFICERS REPORT - None

SOLICITORS REPORT – None

ENGINEERS REPORT - None

PARK & RECREATION LIAISON REPORT – Manager Lovett noted the May 9th event, as well as a possible fishing derby for September in the fall.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT – Bob Line announced the advertisement for the burning and zoning ordinance addition was approved by the board. Solicitor Boyer clarified the reasoning behind how the advertisement needed to take place.

OLD BUSINESS

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

Beth Kikla reviewed all items presented, example ordinances, as well as the start of the draft of the ordinance. She provided questions to begin the discussion on the ordinance. She also presented connections with Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and data centers.

Chairperson Grant mentioned locations of BESS at the facility. Beth Kikla mentioned this is the further conversation needed.

Justin Smith requested information on the energy wattage and stressed the importance of knowledge of safety involved with data center. Beth Kikla referenced different items she had listed to address these questions and concerns.

Justin Smith agreed, while we are mainly looking into an ordinance to get ahead on possible future-needed items, the BESS will be an important discussion as well.

Chairperson Grant suggested discussing locations for possible data centers. Beth Kikla answered she has researched these locations preferences and what all is to be considered. Chairperson Grant mentioned things to consider also include restrictions on zoning districts. Vice Chairman Merkel pointed out keeping data centers within the commercial industrial of the township, since these locations include warehouses. Keeping them in this area is important due to utilities. Vice Chairman Merkel continued by suggesting the next step is presenting this to the authority, who can connect with South Middleton to see if supplying the water would be possible. He mentioned this would be very important to involve the Township Municipal Authority.

Beth Kikla questioned connecting to water supply in that particular area and how that would work. Vice Chairman Merkel explained how the water supply is provided and how close the mains are to the data center sites. He continued by explaining the process to bring this discussion topic before the authority board.

Mark Hockley agreed the best locations for the data centers would be those particular zoning areas. He also pointed out the intense process to install one of these centers. Chairperson Grant confirmed this is one of the reasons why requesting them to connect to public water is so important.

John Aigeldinger – 205 E Yellow Breeches Rd – John Aigeldinger noted his experience in adding these data centers and the height of these buildings can be 90 feet high and suggested the board keep this in mind. There is so much space required for each data center.

Justin Smith mentioned the issues of connecting to high power lines and how this would affect the data centers. Mark Hockley agreed and mentioned how power companies make decisions on higher power suppliers. He requested if there was information on installation of substations for these power companies. Chairperson Grant mentioned utilities usually don't go through land development plan to install substations. Vice Chairman Merkel wondered if Middlesex Township already had a data center ordinance. Chairperson Grant explained their process in changing the zoning and data center ordinance. Justin Smith asked about the expansion of water utilities on Centerville Road and how the need to extend it was possible. Vice Chairman Merkel mentioned that particular project was requested by the developer. Usually if they can extend the power, it is definitely a possibility, which is why it is important to provide restrictions and rules along with how the extension to utilities can happen. Chairperson Grant suggested identifying the limits. Bob Line stressed the point that with the referenced land use, there might need to be more variety of uses provided. Solicitor Boyer agreed that finding uses, while considering the invasive use required by data centers.

Beth Kikla questioned if it would be right or conditional use. Solicitor Boyer clarified the differences of the two, but his suggestion is conditional use. He explained this would also need to be approved through the

ordinance by the board of supervisors. Glenn Kelso noted with this being part of the zoning ordinance, it is usually listed conditional use.

Beth Kikla shared her concerns with specific phrases that might differentiate specifics in data center and there should be discussion on whether it is best to include in these ordinances. Bob Line explained service farms are a type of data center and it depends on how much processing is required in the facility. He suggested not including block chain as a use of the servers. Beth Kikla added there might need requirements on activity and power in data centers due to the size.

Chairperson Grant stressed the importance of recognizing the power and energy use, however there might not be a possible way to restrict certain items. Justin Smith agreed, as these items could change rather quickly. Bob Line added that with his experience he has learned the updated centers have already changed quickly. He mentioned the other concern is we shouldn't be wondering about what goes on inside the centers, but more so focusing on the outside properties. Vice Chairman Merkel mentioned he and Bob Line can bring this up to the municipal authority to get their input. Solicitor Boyer confirmed that the question of what restrictions can be given on what happens inside is something he will need to look into. He mentioned he will get further answers on this question. Justin Smith mentioned the need to look into what separates a family use, farm use, compared to data center use. Beth Kikla confirmed that within her research there wasn't particular uses like that in Pennsylvania. Justin Smith mentioned the connection between boiler wood burners. This is similar to being cautious with hazardous material restrictions, which should be included in the ordinance. Bob Line added that at a location in the township, there were more restrictions on their use of the building for safety management. Beth Kikla suggested including this in their application process of land development plan. Justin Smith mentioned the difference between use and size for these restrictions. Vice Chairman Merkel clarified the need of specifications of what each use and size would mean. Solicitor Boyer confirmed he has multiple questions he will find answers to.

The discussion transitioned to the difference of stand-alone ordinance versus adding to the zoning ordinance. Beth Kikla recommended if it is included in the zoning ordinance it might be challenging to keep all zoning requirements involved during a decision on data centers. She asked for other recommendations of whether this ordinance should remain stand alone or be included in the zoning ordinance.

Mark Hockley raised a question on how BESS would be included in the ordinance. Vice Chairman Merkel clarified that whether inside or outside BESS would have restrictive guidelines.

Everyone agreed to keep BESS and data center ordinance stand alone separate ordinances. Beth Kikla mentioned she will find a few other items in her research that would be beneficial to include in these decisions. Glenn Kelso asked what kind of power would be involved as well as where it would be coming from since the Zoning ordinance already has an energy supply section. Justin Smith mentioned looking into specifics of power use is crucial to keep in mind.

Chairperson Grant referenced section 6 of power supply and the alternative language suggested. Vice Chairman Merkel mentioned the expanded wording being the best option. The commission agreed to choose that kind of wording.

The definition of the data center will be confirmed next meeting after Solicitor Boyer gets more information and answers on questions asked.

There was further discussion on accessory use and the best way to approach this. Justin Smith suggested his thoughts on comparing a 911 center to a data center and what is similar. This is something else Solicitor Boyer will look into.

Mark Hockley questioned specifics on restrictions of building dynamics. Glenn Kelso mentioned there are rules on height and other dynamics. The data center request would still need to go before the Zoning Hearing Board.

Chairperson Grant mentioned accessory uses and generators with air quality concerns. She suggested to use language to specify cautious air quality with use of generators.

Mark Hockley pointed out focusing on public water requirement, should the language of well be removed. There was suggestion to leave it in and update it to public utility. There will be more confirmation from the authority to assist with this decision. Bob Line mentioned including some language to specify the requirement to use public utilities.

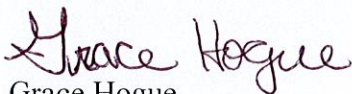
Bob Line also wondered if including tower specifications would be needed. Glenn Kelso said it is best to some research to be sure, but maybe keep it in the ordinance. Beth Kikla agreed there are important pieces to include. Chairperson Grant mentioned looking in the current ordinance to review the best route in including or adding these items.

Beth Kikla pointed out section 7 language and explained her thoughts on making changes in moving it to a different section. She suggested moving some of the items listed over the accessory use paragraph. Chairperson Grant mentioned there seems to be more direction for next month's meeting. Beth Kikla mentioned how she can draft different items for next month. Beth Kikla asked for staff's input on all of this, but also the need to wait on the authority's responses. Vice Chairman Merkel confirmed the commission should prepare their thoughts on BESS for next month's discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Merkel motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM. The motion was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Grace Hogue
Secretary/Treasurer

