

DTPC MINUTES

Dickinson Township Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 8, 2026 Dickinson Township Meeting Room
6:00 pm

Attendance

Commission Members:

Chairperson Elizabeth Grant, Secretary Beth Kikla, Robert "Bob" Line, Mark Hockley

Staff:

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

Absent:

Vice Chairman Merkel, Justin Smith

Visitors:

*Ellen Heckert – 288 Stuart Road
Steve Kirsch – HRG Engineers
Josh Mell – Wadel-Mill Inc
Cody Snyder – AgVentures LLC*

CALL TO ORDER

The April 8, 2026 Dickinson Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:04PM by Chairperson Grant followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. A reminder that more information about our community can be found on our website at www.dickinsontownship.org

AGENDA APPROVAL

Bob Line motioned to approve the April 8, 2026 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mark Hockley motioned to approve the March 11, 2026 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Bob Line and passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – No Report

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PLAN REVIEW –

John & Ursula Marks Sewage Planning Module

Ryan Hoover reviewed the John and Ursula Marks sewage planning module. The module related to sewage planning for the newly expanded lot was created through the prior subdivision process. One lot already contains a residence and existing sewage facilities while this module addressed the expanded lot that currently has no sewage facilities.

Beth Kikla made a motion to approve the Sewage Facilities Planning Module for Ursula and John Marks Final Subdivision. The motion was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed unanimously.

Peach Glen Agriculture Project Land Development Plan

Steve Kirsch, HRG Engineers and Cody Snyder, representative for AgVentures LLC presented the Peach Glen Agriculture Project Land Development Plan. Mr. Kirsch explained that the site previously contained several agricultural buildings, including three poultry barns and one swine barn. The three poultry barns were demolished several years ago, and one new poultry barn was constructed. The current project proposes construction of a second barn adjacent to the more recently built barn, generally within the same developed area where the prior poultry barns existed. On the swine barn side of the property, an existing swine barn would be torn down and rebuilt in approximately the same footprint, with slight dimensional and location changes. Mr. Kirsch stated that the project is primarily agricultural redevelopment and replacement of existing facilities, not expansion into new undeveloped areas. There would be a slight increase in impervious area, primarily related to gravel areas and stormwater improvements. A small rain garden is proposed in connection with the NPDES permit. An existing open manure pit would be filled, seeded, and returned to grass, with future manure storage located within the new barn structures. There are requests for five waiver modifications; however the waiver related to establishing a 100-year floodplain, was withdrawn after the Township Engineer clarified that the applicant had shown an assumed 50-foot floodway on the plan and that the proposed improvements were well outside that area.

Beth Kikla asked about the shared driveway access from Peach Glen Road and whether construction would affect other residents or users of the driveway. Mr. Snyder explained that there are two access driveways from Peach Glen Road and Georgetown Road. Some portions are shared or used by others for limited agricultural access but staging and deliveries would occur around the barns and would not block the shared driveways. Mr. Snyder stated that permanent use would be similar to the historic agricultural use of the site. Beth Kikla also asked about manure storage. Mr. Snyder explained that the old open lagoon system would be eliminated. For the hog barn, manure would be stored in a six-foot-deep pit under the barn, with hogs on concrete slats above it. Mr. Snyder stated that a nutrient management plan is in place and that manure is largely exported off-site. For the chicken barns, the manure would be dry and stored in the lower level of the high-rise barn design, with capacity for approximately one year of storage. Chairperson Grant asked about decommissioning the existing manure lagoon. Mr. Snyder stated that the lagoon is rubber-lined and would be pumped down completely, inspected through the county or conservation process, and then the liner would be removed before the area is filled and seeded. Chairperson Grant asked about the proximity of manure storage to wells. Mr. Snyder noted that the existing wells had been present with the existing barn operation and that the proposed concrete pit structures are engineered and are standard for modern facilities.

Beth Kikla raised a concern about potential township road impacts from construction traffic on Peach Glen Road and Georgetown Road. Glenn Kelso indicated that the township would hold the contractors accountable for actual road damage. Mr. Snyder noted that similar prior demolition and construction work had occurred at the site without apparent road issues. This concern later resulted in an added condition requiring an agreement to protect and restore township roads before the plan is recorded. Mark Hockley asked for clarification regarding the location of nearby parcels, wells, drainage direction, and the riparian area. Mr. Snyder explained that the project drainage in the poultry barn area generally flows away from neighboring wells and that the riparian area is identified on the plan.

Beth Kikla asked for clarification, regarding the first waiver request because she initially interpreted “maximum” slope differently. Jason Reichard explained how engineering terminology with ratios is different. This plan was therefore requesting approval of a steeper slope than the ordinance allows. Jason Reichard continued to explain that the township’s ordinance standard is a best practice intended to support long-term maintenance, especially mowing and preventing animal burrows or other maintenance issues in basin embankments. He stated that the engineer had demonstrated that the stormwater facilities would function as designed and that he did not see the proposed slopes as a major issue in this agricultural setting, but he believed the waiver should be formally considered by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Mr. Kirsch stated that the basins are shallow and that agricultural equipment should allow them to be maintained.

Beth Kikla questioned the process and inspections required after construction for continued maintenance. Glenn Kelso answered C. S. Davidson will be conducting inspections for the entire project, monitoring everything involved.

Mr. Kirsch requested relief from the swale side slope requirement, proposing 2:1 side slopes in one location rather than the ordinance’s 3:1 maximum. Mr. Snyder explained that the swale is located behind a proposed replacement building where drainage issues currently exist. The swale would redirect water away from the back of the building. Because an existing adjacent embankment is already approximately 2:1, requiring 3:1 slopes would force the project to disturb and regrade a much larger hillside area.

Mr. Reichard explained that the swale is a shallow diversion feature and that the proposed 2:1 slope ties into an existing bank. He stated that, in this case, less disturbance may be preferable because flattening the slope would require additional earthwork and could create more problems. He also clarified that the roof drainage would be piped into the basins rather than flowing down the basin slopes.

Mark Hockley asked whether the steeper slopes would increase water velocity and whether the basin would still handle the flow. Mr. Kirsch explained that water from the buildings would enter through pipes and rock aprons at the bottom of the basins, so it would not sheet-flow down the side slopes.

Mr. Reichard explained that the swale is a shallow diversion feature and that the proposed 2:1 slope ties into an existing bank. He stated that, in this case, less disturbance may be preferable because flattening the slope would require additional earthwork and could create more problems. He also clarified that the roof drainage would be piped into the basins rather than flowing down the basin slopes.

Mr. Kirsch requested relief from the Township’s minimum 15-inch pipe size requirement. The project representative stated that the proposed pipes were sized for the 100-year storm event and that increasing them to 15 inches would not provide a benefit.

Mr. Reichard stated that the 15-inch minimum is primarily intended for pipes associated with Township roads, where smaller pipes are more difficult to maintain and more likely to clog. He explained that the requirement was carried into this land development review but did not present a concern in this case.

Beth Kikla asked whether smaller pipes would maintain sufficient water velocity to avoid sedimentation. Mr. Kirsch explained that the pipes would primarily carry clean roof water from metal roofs, so sediment loading should be minimal. Mr. Reichard added that any water leaving the stormwater basin would pass through a structure that allows sediment to settle in the basin before discharge.

Mr. Kirsch had requested a waiver from establishing a 100-year floodplain for an unnamed tributary located between the two project areas. The project representative explained that the stream has no FEMA-defined floodplain and that the proposed building areas are approximately 275 feet horizontally and roughly 30 feet vertically from the stream. Preparing a detailed floodplain study would add cost and was unlikely to affect the project.

Mr. Reichard stated that the waiver could be withdrawn because Mr. Kirsch had provided an assumed 50-foot floodway on the plan, dimensioned and labeled. He stated this was adequate for the project because all proposed improvements are well outside that boundary. The waiver request was withdrawn.

Mr. Kirsch requested relief from park and recreation land dedication requirements, stating that the project is an agricultural redevelopment within the existing development footprint and does not create the type of residential or population impact typically associated with park and recreation land dedication.

Chairperson Grant noted that the Township had recently amended its standards for agricultural projects so that any fee in lieu of land dedication would be based on disturbed acreage rather than the full acreage of the agricultural tract. Beth Kikla agreed and recalled that the change was intended to avoid imposing excessive recreation fees on agricultural projects based on an entire farm acreage. There was a discussion that this project did not appear to create new recreational demand and involved replacement or redevelopment of existing agricultural uses, including filling an open manure pit and returning that area to previous grass.

Following discussion of the waivers, the Planning Commission members considered the Peach Glen Agriculture Project Final Land Development Plan.

Bob Line made a motion to approve the waiver request for modification of Chapter 170-20.C.6 - Basin Side Slopes - a maximum embankment slope of 4:1 shall be used for all slopes within the impoundment area of a basin. A 3:1 side slope is being proposed. The motion was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.

Beth Kikla made a motion to approve the waiver requesting a modification of Chapter 170-20.D.4 - Swale Side Slopes – Side slopes for all stormwater conveyance swales shall be a maximum of 3:1. A 2:1 side slope is being proposed. It was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed unanimously.

Mark Hockley made a motion to approve the waiver requesting a modification of Chapter 170-20.E.1 - Minimum Pipe Size - Storm sewer pipes and culverts shall have a minimum diameter of 15 inches. A 12-inch pipe is being proposed. It was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed unanimously.

Beth Kikla made a motion to approve the waiver requesting a modification Chapter 178-54 – Park and recreation land. It is felt that this requirement would be non-applicable to this project. Mark Hockley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Prior to the approval of the Land Development Plan, there was a request that the plan approval include a condition requiring an agreement to protect Township roads before the plan is recorded.

Beth Kikla motioned to approve the Land Development Plan for Peach Glen-Agricultural Project on condition that the Township staff, Township solicitor, Cumberland County Planning department, Township engineer comments have been met and plan approval be based on the applicant paying in full all administration fees, inclusive of application fees, plan review, and inspection charges, within sixty days following the date of written notice from the township of any administration fees, and the condition requiring an agreement to protect the Township roads before the plan is recorded. Final plans will not be signed or released for recording until all administration fees are paid in full. The motion was seconded Mark Hockley it passed unanimously.

Roger A. & Lynne N. Immell Final Subdivision Plan

Roger A. and Lynne N. Immell Final Subdivision Plan was presented by Josh Mell, Wadel-Mell Inc. Mr. Mell explained that the applicant proposes a lot addition from existing Lot 1 to existing Lot 2. No construction, earthmoving, or improvements are proposed as part of the plan. A sewage planning waiver and non-building declaration were submitted with the plan. Beth Kikla asked what acreage would remain in Lot 1 after the lot addition. The representative stated that Lot 1 would be just under 2.3 acres. He discussed the waivers. Chairperson Grant stated that she would abstain from voting because the property is neighboring property.

Beth Kikla made a motion to approve the waiver request for modification of Chapter 178-18.D of the SALDO, which requires the plan to show existing features located within 200 feet of the subject property. Applicant is looking for a waiver from the requirement on sheet 2 of the plan. The motion was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed with Chairperson Grant abstaining.

Mark Hockley made a motion to approve the waiver requesting a modification of Chapter 178-51.B. of the SALDO, which requires Steep slope delineation. A topographic map of the site which depicts and distinguishes those areas that possess slopes exceeding 15% and 25% respectively shall be incorporated into the natural and cultural features site plan. Applicant is looking for a waiver from the requirement on sheet 2 of the plan. It was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed with Chairperson Grant abstaining.

Mark Hockley made a motion to approve the waiver requesting a modification of Chapter 178-55 of the SALDO, which requires carbonate hazard areas to be identified on the plan. The Applicant is looking for a waiver of the requirement for sheet 2 of the plan. It was seconded by Beth Kikla and passed with Chairperson Grant abstaining.

Mark Hockley motioned to approve the Final Subdivision Plan for Roger and Lynne Immell on condition that the Township staff, Township solicitor, Cumberland County Planning department, Township engineer comments have been met and plan approval be based on the applicant paying in full all administration fees, inclusive of application fees, plan review, and inspection charges, within sixty days following the date of written notice from the township of any administration fees. Final plans will not be signed or released for recording until all administration fees are paid in full. The motion was seconded Beth Kikla it passed with Chairperson Grant abstaining.

Roger A. & Lynne N. Immell Final Subdivision Plan – Sewage Planning Waiver & Non-Building Declaration

Bob Line made a motion to approve the Sewage Planning Waiver & Non-Building Declaration. Beth Kikla seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously

NEW BUSINESS - None

ZONING OFFICERS REPORT - None

SOLICITORS REPORT - Solicitor Boyer stated that he had no separate report at that point but had feedback on the draft data center ordinance, which he suggested could be addressed under old Business.

ENGINEERS REPORT - None

PARK & RECREATION LIAISON REPORT – Manager Lovett reported that there was nothing additional beyond the previously announced May 9 spring event. The yard sale spaces were reported to be full, with 30 spaces reserved.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT – Bob Line referenced comments and discussion related to the data center ordinance and encouraged attendance at the next municipal board meeting. The next authority meeting will be on April 28, 2026 and the engineer will be present to assist with this discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairperson Grant suggested reversing the order of the two Old Business items because the data center ordinance was tabled for future action and Solicitor Boyer had feedback related to it.

a. Draft Data Center Ordinance and Draft Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Ordinance

Solicitor Boyer reported that he had spoken with Scott Coburn, counsel to PSATS, and also consulted with others in his office. He stated that data centers, battery energy storage systems, and related power-generated issues are evolving quickly, and there are not always clear or settled answers. Solicitor Boyer advised that, generally, one combined ordinance would be preferable to two separate ordinances. He stated that a single ordinance would be easier to understand, enforce, update, and advertise, and would allow for more consistent definitions. He noted that data centers and battery energy storage systems are likely to be co-located in many applications, so regulating them together would likely make practical sense. He also cautioned that large utility-grade battery energy storage systems, particularly those returning power to the electrical grid, may fall within the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. He advised that the township should avoid attempting to regulate beyond its authority. However, the Township could still address battery storage systems associated with data centers or smaller-scale systems through zoning provisions where appropriate. Solicitor Boyer also discussed decommissioning. He stated that solar farm ordinances often contain useful decommissioning provisions, and he had prepared preliminary draft language adapted from those models. The provisions would require proper recycling or disposal of data center or energy storage equipment and would require financial security so the Township could address abandonment or improper decommissioning if an owner failed to do so.

Chairperson Grant asked how the responsible party would be defined, particularly where the developer and end user may be different entities. Solicitor Boyer stated that the ordinance could define “owner” broadly to include the legal or equitable owner or other responsible parties.

Beth Kikla discussed her research into model BESS ordinances, including provisions related to abandonment, decommissioning, financial security, fire protection, hazardous materials, emergency services, and safety. She stated that many data center ordinances she reviewed mention BESS generally but do not include the more detailed safety, fire, abandonment, and decommissioning provisions found in stand-alone BESS ordinances. She suggested that those provisions could be incorporated into a combined data center ordinance, with a distinct section addressing BESS or other power storage systems that support the data center. Solicitor Boyer agreed that a combined ordinance could include separate substantive provisions for the energy storage component. Solicitor Boyer referenced an ordinance from

Covington Township in Lackawanna County that uses the broader term “power storage system,” which includes but is not limited to battery energy storage systems. He suggested that broader terminology may help the Township remain flexible as technology changes. Solicitor Boyer noted that small modular reactors are emerging technology and that the Covington Township ordinance includes provisions addressing them, including Nuclear Regulatory Commission licensing. He stated that a BESS or power storage system could be treated as an accessory use to the data center, with specific conditions applicable to that accessory use. He mentioned their thoughts of someone purchasing a warehouse and turning it into a data center.

Beth Kikla asked whether allowing data centers only in that district could create an exclusionary zoning concern if there is little or no available undeveloped land. Solicitor Boyer stated that he did not believe so, because the use would be allowed in at least one zoning district and the Business/Industrial district appears appropriate for the use due to its existing industrial character and access to public water. He agreed to look further into the issue. Chairperson Grant noted that a developer could also seek rezoning if it believed another location was more appropriate. Bob Line questioned whether such systems would be regulated primarily by state or federal agencies rather than the township. Solicitor Boyer agreed that jurisdiction should be researched further before including any such provisions. Overall, he mentioned putting it together in one ordinance is his biggest suggestion.

Mark Hockley suggested choosing the quickest route/suggestion to these ideas due to how quickly these issues are rising. Beth Kikla mentioned it is possible to combine these, however there are multiple questions, including energy issues, that would arise having to do with more than data center areas. These could easily bring up multiple issues, however being able to combine shouldn't be an issue. The ordinances she has researched did not contain particular energy systems listed. Solicitor Boyer agreed and added that keeping it comprehensive goes along with this idea.

Mark Hockley raised a broader concern about emergency provisions and whether there should be some form of shut-off or emergency control mechanism for rapidly evolving technology, including artificial intelligence-related uses. There was an acknowledgement that the broader AI policy concerns are being discussed at higher governmental and global levels, but the township ordinance could still focus on traditional zoning-related health, safety, fire, and emergency-response issues.

Beth Kikla mentioned what she believes the next steps would be to start combining these ordinances. Solicitor Boyer agreed it is important to not just combine and then leave it alone. Beth Kikla asked further questions on accessory uses.

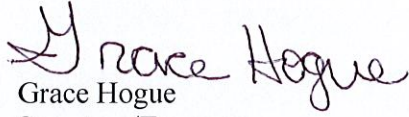
There was discussion on how to move the draft ordinance forward more efficiently. Beth Kikla stated that reviewing complex ordinance drafts only at monthly public meetings slowed progress and made it difficult to maintain momentum. She suggested forming an informal non-quorum working group or subcommittee to review and refine drafts between meetings. Solicitor Boyer indicated that a non-quorum, unofficial group could collaborate outside of a formal public meeting. It was discussed that email communication would not be the best option.

Beth Kikla agreed to take the existing draft data center ordinance and her BESS research and prepare a combined draft that treats energy storage and related power systems as part of, or accessory to, the data center use. She stated that she would aim to produce a consolidated draft within about a week, circulate it for focused review, and then provide a refined version to Solicitor Boyer before the next Planning Commission meeting. The goal was to present a more developed draft for full Commission review at the May meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Bob Line motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Mark Hockley and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Grace Hogue
Secretary/Treasurer

