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WORCESTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES JULY 23, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Worcester Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chair Tony Sherr.

ATTENDANCE

Planning Commission Members Present: Tony Sherr, Chair; Michelle Greenawalt, Vice Chair; Lee Koch; Bob Andorn; Jennifer Taylor; Bill McGrane, Alternate Member

Township Representatives Present: Dan DeMeno, Township Manager; John Evarts, Township Engineer; Devin Ralph, Esq., Township Solicitor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of June 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes – Tabled

LAND DEVELOPMENT

LD 2026-03 – Variety Vocational Building – Preliminary/Final Land Development

Chris Poterjoy, P.E., representing the applicant, and Dominique Bernardo, Chief Executive Officer of Variety – the Children's Charity of the Delaware Valley, presented the proposed welcome and vocational training center at 2950 Potshop Road.

Ms. Bernardo provided an overview of Variety's mission and operations. She explained that Variety has operated at the site since 1949 and provides social, educational, and vocational programs for children and young adults with disabilities. She stated that the proposed building would serve as the gateway to the campus, consolidate administrative staff, and support year-round vocational programming.

Mr. Poterjoy explained that the approximately 14,000-square-foot building would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 would include an approximately 8,500-square-foot welcome and administrative center and approximately 70 parking spaces. Phase 2 would add an approximately 5,500-square-foot dining and training area and expand the parking supply to approximately 160 spaces.

The applicant advised that the existing one-way site circulation from Potshop Road would remain. The proposed internal drive would provide bus staging and safer passenger loading. The additional parking was intended to accommodate special events and reduce parking on grass during poor weather.



1721 S. Valley Forge Rd
Worcester, PA 19490



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610-584-8901

The applicant reviewed the requested waivers, including:

1. Waiver of the minimum cartway-width requirements along Potshop Road and North Trooper Road.
2. Waiver of sidewalk and curbing requirements along Potshop Road, North Trooper Road, and Valley Forge Road.
3. Waiver of certain softening-buffer and supplemental-buffer plantings where existing vegetation would remain.
4. Partial waiver permitting privately owned HDPE storm sewer pipe and pipe diameters of less than 15 inches.
5. Waiver of the continuous center planting-island requirement for parking areas containing more than 100 spaces.

The applicant verbally requested the following waiver for review:

1. Combining the Preliminary and Final Land Development approval process.

Township Engineer John Evarts advised that most of the requested waivers had been granted in connection with prior approvals for the property. He stated that staff had reviewed the request to combine Preliminary and Final approval and believed the remaining consultant comments could be addressed through a revised submission.

Commissioner Andorn questioned the two construction phases, replacement of the existing baseball field, tree removal and replacement, delivery access to the future dining facility, building height, utility connections, temporary parking during construction, lighting, stormwater design, and the proposed basin. The applicant agreed to clarify the utility and septic plans, tree information, lighting details, and stormwater design in the next submission. The applicant also agreed to consider fencing around the stormwater basin.

Mr. Evarts clarified that replacement trees are required when 25 percent or more of the trees on a site are disturbed and that the applicant would confirm the applicable calculation. He also advised that relocation of the baseball field had been included in a prior approval but had not yet been constructed.

Commissioner Andorn stated that he could support Preliminary approval but did not support combining Preliminary and Final approval before the revised information returned to the Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Chairman Sherr, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, to recommend approval of the requested waivers, including the waiver permitting the application to proceed as

a combined Preliminary/Final Land Development plan. The motion carried by a vote of 4-1, with Commissioner Andorn voting in opposition.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koch, seconded by Chairman Sherr, to recommend conditional approval of the Preliminary/Final Land Development application to the Board of Supervisors, subject to satisfaction of the consultant review letters and the conditions discussed at the meeting. The motion carried by a vote of 4-1, with Commissioner Andorn voting in opposition.

LD 2026-04 – Methacton High School Renovation – Preliminary Land Development

Eric Fry, Esq., and Chris Jensen, P.E., representing the Methacton School District, presented the revised renovation plan following the zoning approvals granted in June. The presentation was informational, and the applicant did not request a recommendation or action on the proposed waivers.

The applicant explained that the project would demolish and replace approximately 100,000 square feet of the existing building and construct a new classroom wing, main entrance, performing arts space, and natatorium. The plan would also reconfigure site access and internal circulation and increase parking from approximately 610 to 842 spaces.

The applicant reviewed the consultant comments and identified remaining issues involving parking, simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor assembly areas, curbing, sidewalks, landscaping, stormwater facilities, utilities, and construction phasing. The applicant acknowledged that another submission would be required before requesting a Planning Commission recommendation.

Commissioner Andorn expressed concern that the full review materials had been received too close to the meeting to permit a detailed review. The applicant stated that the purpose of the presentation was to provide an overview and obtain initial feedback before resubmission.

Vice Chair Greenawalt supported the consultant and Montgomery County Planning Commission recommendations for sidewalks and curbing and emphasized pedestrian safety along Kriebel Mill Road and the surrounding road network. She also supported additional shade trees and tree canopy within the expanded parking areas.

Commissioner Koch requested documentation supporting the need for 232 additional parking spaces, including the number of students, employees, and bus drivers currently unable to park on the site and the number of vehicles using off-site or neighborhood parking. The applicant explained that the estimate was based primarily upon projected student-driver demand and agreed to provide additional supporting information.

Mr. Evarts noted the ordinance provision addressing simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor assembly areas when available parking would be inadequate. The applicant stated that the

School District could manage event scheduling to avoid parking overflow and objected to a plan note that would prohibit simultaneous use in all circumstances.

Commission members also discussed construction staging, temporary parking, contractor access, bus and student circulation, landscape buffering, existing trees, stormwater management, utilities, and site lighting. The applicant agreed to address these matters in the revised plan and consultant-response letters.

Commissioner McGrane raised the site-visit provision associated with the sketch-plan process. The applicant stated that it would accommodate a Planning Commission site visit if the Commission wished to schedule one. No formal action was taken.

OTHER BUSINESS

Draft Data Center Ordinance

Township Manager Dan DeMeno presented the draft Data Center Ordinance by regulatory topic and compared the Township's proposed standards with the Montgomery County and Chester County models. He clarified that the Board of Supervisors had authorized advertisement to preserve the anticipated schedule but had not approved a final draft or committed to adoption.

The Commission discussed the proposed definitions of data center, limited data center, and energy generation facility; permitted zoning districts; minimum tract area; setbacks from property lines and sensitive uses; building height; architecture; landscaping and screening; parking; energy use; emergency generators; water and wastewater; noise and vibration; thermal impacts; construction activity; emergency response; technical review; post-construction verification; and decommissioning.

Several members questioned whether separate data center and limited data center categories were necessary if both uses would be subject to substantially similar standards. The Commission generally supported simplifying the use categories unless meaningful regulatory differences could be established. Members also discussed whether the proposed 10-megawatt threshold for a limited facility was too low.

The Commission asked staff to evaluate including the IR District with the LI District and to confirm that the combined tract-area and setback standards would leave at least one legally feasible location. The Commission also discussed a 25-acre minimum tract and a 200-foot principal-building setback for a smaller facility.

The Commission supported tying building height to the maximum principal-building height of the underlying zoning district. Members asked staff to review the 1,000-foot separation from sensitive uses, the interaction between that separation and property-line setbacks, and whether the standards remained protective without creating an effective prohibition.

Additional discussion addressed retaining the County model's 10 percent renewable-power requirement for further review, testing the proposed ambient-noise limits for feasibility, replacing discretionary terms with clear objective standards, and revisiting the decommissioning and financial-security provisions. The Commission requested examples of recently adopted or pending data center ordinances from nearby municipalities.

Mr. DeMeno advised that staff would revise the draft with the Township Solicitor and Township Engineer and return it to the Planning Commission in August. No formal recommendation was made.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2026.

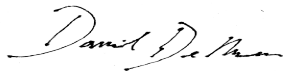
PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Mollick commented on the Methacton High School project. His comments addressed the overall project cost and debt, enrollment trends, parking demand, building utilization, the proposed apartment program, the condition and proposed replacement of the pool, the proposed auditorium, and the School District's project schedule.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Sherr adjourned the meeting at 9:58 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan DeMeno", written in a cursive style.

Dan DeMeno
Township Manager