

MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

REGULAR MEETING

November 18, 2025

The following were in ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS

Brett McCreary, Chair
Jay Blackwell
Kathleen Hall
Jeff Logan
Brian Wickenheiser

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

James Bennett, Township Planner
Michael Knouse, P.E. Township Engineer
Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

OTHER

Commissioner Joe Swartz
Steve Hoffman – Cumberland County Planning Dept.

CALL TO ORDER AND PROOF OF PUBLICATION

Mr. McCreary called the November 18, 2025 meeting of the Lower Allen Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm. He announced that proof of publication was available for review.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Mr. **BLACKWELL** motioned to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2025 Regular Meeting. Mr. **LOGAN** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

SLD #2025-04 – Liberty Forge Preliminary Land Development Plan

The purpose of this plan is to subdivide the existing lot into two (2) lots. Lot 1 will consist of the existing golf driving range, miniature golf course, and eating establishment. Lot 2 will consist of 137 single-family detached dwelling units and 56 attached twin side-by-side dwelling units for a total of 193 dwelling units.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Jake Creager, RGS Associates, presented the plan on behalf of the applicant. This was a return appearance following the August 2025 meeting, with major plan revisions incorporating prior feedback. The revised plan proposes 193 units (137 single-family, 56 twins). Renderings of the revised plan were shown.

Lisburn Road Improvements:

- Proposed 75-foot left-turn lane into the development at the main entrance on Lisburn Road.
- Proposed overhead flashing warning beacon (rectangular rapid flashing beacon / RRFB) at a marked pedestrian crosswalk across Lisburn Road, consistent with a similar installation already in the township.
- Proposed 8-foot asphalt walking trail on the Lisburn Road / Yellow Breeches side, running from Old Forge Road to the township park and connecting to the development entrance. The trail is located primarily outside the right-of-way, pulled back from the roadway.
- These improvements have been reviewed with PennDOT and received conceptual approval.

Modification/Waiver Requests – Lisburn Road:

- Pavement Width: Requested waiver of roadway widening along Lisburn Road outside the turn lane, citing significant topographical constraints (steep bank on the west side), PennDOT's preference to preserve the corridor as-is, and safety concerns about transitioning from widened to narrow sections. PennDOT expressed a preference against widening.
- Curbing: Requested relief from curbing along Lisburn Road and Old Forge Road, noting it would negatively impact stormwater infrastructure.

- Sidewalks: Requested substitution of the 8-foot multi-use trail along Lisburn Road in lieu of four-foot sidewalks on both sides.

Interior Development Modifications:

- Internal Sidewalks: Requested 5-foot sidewalks on one side of internal streets and 6-foot trails in open space areas, in lieu of 4-foot sidewalks on both sides. The applicant noted that this is an active adult (55+) community with low traffic volumes, that the open space trail network connects all amenities, and that HOA maintenance costs favor the proposed layout.
- Centerline Radius: Requested 150-foot radius for Bermuda Lane/Patrons Way and Clubhouse Court/Patrons Way, replacing 260-foot minimum.
- Intersection Offset: Requested 108-foot offset between the Bermuda Lane/Patrons Way and Clubhouse Court/Patrons Way intersections, replacing 150-foot minimum.
- Slant Curbing: Requested slant curbing in lieu of vertical curbing on internal streets.
- Sidewalk Level Area: Requested relief from level sidewalk areas every 100 feet, citing ADA and grade matching challenges.
- Sidewalk Separation: Requested 2-foot sidewalk separation from curb, replacing 5-foot minimum, to allow space for tree planting.
- Pavement Base Drains: Requested pavement base drains only at low points (not full length), as they provide no benefit upslope.
- Stormwater Volume / MRC: Requested use of DEP's Managed Release Concept (MRC) methodology for volume control, as the site has little to no infiltration capability. The applicant noted PennDOT has approved MRC for similar sites.
- Inlet Tops: Requested slant-top inlets with no sump for all inlets within private streets.

Township Comments

Mr. Knouse referenced the comment letter of November 4, 2025 and recommendations on modifications dated November 10, 2025.

- Six previously requested waivers were removed; the applicant is now complying with those requirements.
- Staff generally support the remaining waiver requests as submitted, noting the applicant provided robust detail and justification.
- The internal sidewalk layout was flagged as warranting additional Commission discussion, as the layout was seen as somewhat atypical and less connected than desirable.
- Zoning: Documentation required for perpetual ownership and maintenance of HOA common areas.
- Subdivision/Land Development: Items 1–9 are administrative or outside agency items. Item 10 notes that final plans for each phase must address emergency access. The golf course driveway is the designated second access point and must remain available at all times.
- Stormwater: Largely in compliance. A basin near the emergency access drive currently discharges toward an adjacent property; the applicant must secure an easement or redirect discharge. Operation and Maintenance Agreements and outside agency approvals remain outstanding.

Commissioner Comments

Mr. Logan Inquired about the status of the overhead flashing beacon on Lisburn Road, noting a previous denial for a similar crossing elsewhere in the township on a state road. The applicant and traffic consultant confirmed that PennDOT has given conceptual approval for this treatment, consistent with a similar installation already in the township.

Mr. Logan also expressed concern that the crosswalk location, while improved, still requires pedestrians to cross a heavily traveled road, and noted personal reservations about its safety.

Next, Mr. Logan offered a prepared statement raising the question of liability for falling trees along Lisburn Road, noting a fatal incident approximately two to three years ago caused by a tree falling in high winds. He asked whether the township could become party to future liability by granting the road-widening waiver without addressing the tree hazard, and suggested the township solicitor be asked to weigh in. He noted the Township has the opportunity to mitigate the

hazardous condition by requiring the developer to conform to the stated township code and regulations by widening the road, noting that it could be construed that by agreeing to the developer's waiver request, the township failed in their responsibility to provide for resident safety. Legal counsel for the applicant read the relevant portion of the Township's tree ordinance, which requires property owners and occupants to maintain trees in the right-of-way and confirmed they would agree to undertake clearing/trimming of trees along their property frontage as a condition of approval.

Mr. Logan inquired about stop signs at the Clubhouse Court/Patrons Way offset intersection. The applicant confirmed stop signs are proposed on the two entering streets and offered to consider additional signage. He also asked for clarification on volume control and pavement base drains. Mr. Knouse explained that the ordinance has conflicting parameters and noted that standard practice is to install base drains at low points to prevent water from pooling under the pavement. Lastly, Mr. Logan asked about the phasing of wearing course installation and whether the developer would agree to installation of a final wearing course as each phase is completed within 12 months of completion.

Mr. Wickenheiser asked for clarification on the flashing beacon operation. The applicant confirmed it will flash only when activated (push-button or automatic pedestrian detection) for a limited duration, not continuously. It will include an overhead sign positioned over the roadway and advance warning signs on each approach.

Ms. Hall expressed enthusiasm for the Lisburn Road trail and requested that the trail width be increased from 8 feet to 10 feet to better accommodate two-way pedestrian and bicycle traffic. She similarly requested that the open space trail width be increased from 6 feet to 8 feet for consistency. She further questioned the road-widening waiver, noting that while she understood the traffic calming rationale in urban/suburban contexts, Lisburn Road feels dangerous due to its narrow width. She asked whether the trail would remain if road widening were required; the applicant confirmed the trail is mostly outside the right-of-way and would remain. Next, she noted that the internal sidewalk layout on the upper-left portion of the site seemed disconnected and suggested routing the sidewalk around the outer loop to better connect to the trail. Finally, she asked whether a market study was conducted to support the 55+ designation and whether the township had received one. She noted that housing is an issue for all ages and reiterated prior comments about public transit and aging-in-place provisions for a 55+ community.

Mr. McCreary noted that PennDOT controls Lisburn Road and while the township can require widening by ordinance, PennDOT can ultimately deny. He also acknowledged the left-turn lane as a meaningful safety improvement. Mr. Logan noted that while PennDOT does not support the road widening, the tree hazard along Lisburn Road remains and expressed appreciation for the applicant's commitment to maintain trees along the property frontage.

Ms. Hall asked about trail grade on the Lisburn Road trail; the applicant noted it generally follows the road grade, with a steeper section near the connection to the township park.

Mr. McCreary raised concern about golf balls along the Lisburn Road trail corridor near the driving range netting and whether the netting provides adequate protection.

Mr. Logan raised concern about lighting around mailbox clusters in the development, particularly for the 55+ population in winter months. The applicant indicated willingness to address it.

Commissioner Swartz agreed with the prior comments about the disjointed internal sidewalk network, noting it could discourage residents, particularly those with mobility issues from walking, as residents in some locations would need to cross the street multiple times to reach amenities. He also noted appreciation for the addition of the internal trail connection to the community center and the Lisburn Road trail to the park.

Commissioner Swartz asked for additional information on PennDOT's preference not to widen Lisburn Road. Mr. Knouse confirmed that this was communicated during coordination meetings and that PennDOT's concerns include maintenance burden and safety risks from transitioning between widened and narrow sections. Commissioner Swartz emphasized the importance of tree maintenance. The applicant reaffirmed they would agree to tree maintenance as a condition of approval in the developer's agreement.

Public Comments

Janie Gunn, resident along Lisburn Road and adjacent property owner, expressed serious concern about two stormwater discharge points (an emergency spillway and a level spreader) directed toward her property from the proposed retention ponds. She noted the emergency spillway appears to be approximately 20 feet from her property line and the level spreader approximately 5–10 feet from her property boundary. Her concern is that concentrated discharge at a single point would deliver water to her property at higher volume and velocity than currently occurs naturally over approximately 200 linear feet of slope. She asked who would ensure proper HOA maintenance of the stormwater facilities over time. She questioned the waiver, noting that DEP's own description of Managed Release Concept identifies it as applicable where infiltration is infeasible, suggesting to her that stormwater management is being effectively transferred to neighboring properties. In response, Mr. Knouse confirmed that the Township's MS4 program requires annual inspection of stormwater facilities and the Township has the right to step in if maintenance lapses. He also noted that the discharge point directing toward the adjacent property is identified in their technical review letter as an outstanding item. The applicant must either secure an easement from the neighboring property owner or redirect the discharge.

Ben Richardson, resident along Lisburn Road, shared stormwater concerns, citing personal experience with poorly managed retention ponds living in another development. He noted existing culvert issues near his property that already overflow during moderate rain events and expressed doubt that the infrastructure could handle additional runoff from the proposed development.

Steve Barber, resident of Raven Hill Road, raised concerns about stopping sight distance calculations in the plan, noting an apparent discrepancy between the chart submitted by the developer (showing 142 feet of stopping sight distance meeting criteria) and the developer's own claim of over 640 feet of sight distance. He suggested this inconsistency warrants scrutiny. He also noted the property is zoned R-2 and the project is being processed under the Open Space Development overlay, the fourth stated intent of which is to provide reasonably safe and convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation. He questioned whether the proposed single-sided sidewalk network meets this standard. He suggested that requesting an 8-foot trail in green space while seeking a waiver from sidewalks on both sides of the street appear inconsistent. He also expressed concerns about the number of design standard waivers, noting that 2 of 4 proposed intersection radius do not meet minimum requirements and a third barely meets the threshold. He challenged the premise that PennDOT can effectively dictate local waiver decisions, noting that the Township's own ordinance establishes the right-of-way and roadway width requirements and that the topographical work for widening is comparable in scope to other earthwork already proposed on the site. He noted that the Township's own ordinance requires a 64-foot right-of-way, 12-foot lanes, and 6-foot shoulders for roads with Lisburn Road's traffic volume of approximately 6,700 vehicles per day.

Kelly Logan, a resident of the Arcona development, echoed concerns about the road-widening waiver and the sidewalk waiver along Lisburn Road and Old Forge Road, citing dangerous conditions for cyclists on the narrow roadway. She asked the Commission to consider the future of Lower Allen Community Park as a regional destination and the need for safe non-motorized access to it from the north via Lisburn Road.

Recommendation on the Waivers

The Planning Commission proceeded to vote on each modification and waiver request individually.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(1) – To widen the pavement width of Lisburn Road. – outside of widening section for the turn lane. Safe turning into development and widening causes increased speeds. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 4-1 with Ms. Hall voting against it.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(1) – To provide a minimum center line radius of 260' for Bermuda Lane and Patrons Way and replace with a 150' radius. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(6)(b)[3][a][i] – To provide a 150' minimum offset between the Bermuda Lane/Patrons Way and Clubhouse Court/Patrons Way intersections and replace with a 108' offset. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(8) – To provide curbing along Lisburn Road and Old Forge Road, and to provide eight inch (8”) vertical curbs along the internal development streets and replace internal curbing with slant curbs. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver, with conditions, of Section 192-57.C.(9) – To provide sidewalks along both sides of internal development streets, and frontages along Lisburn Road and Old Forge Road. Instead, the applicant will provide a trail from Old Forge to LACP, to be treated as regional trail, away from the road, which leads to crossing with flashing overhead beacon, in a controlled, safer location. The approval is conditioned on the trail along Lisburn Road being widened to ten feet to accommodate two-way traffic, and to eight feet along the open space trail. The motion was seconded by Mr. **LOGAN** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(9)(c) – To provide level sidewalk areas every 100’ and replace with sidewalks to match road grade. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-63.C(1)(a) – To provide sidewalks no closer than five feet (5’) from the curblin and permit sidewalks to be two feet (2’) from the curblin. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 184-14 – To require stormwater volume and to permit Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s Managed Release Concept (MRC) methodology. Members discussed that the Township would conduct annual inspections (under its MS4 program) to evaluate long-term operation and maintenance, with the HOA paying annual stormwater fees. The outstanding discharge easement issue is addressed as a technical comment and will be resolved prior to final plan approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-63.A.(2)(a)[1], Section 184-19.G.(16), & Section 184-19.H.(7) – To provide Type C inlets tops with 10” reveal and to permit slant top inlets with no inlet sump for all inlets within private streets. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C(12)(b), Section 184-19.G.(20) & Section 184-19.G.(21) – To provide pavement base drains in all proposed private streets. The motion was seconded by Mr. **LOGAN** and approved 5-0.

Recommendation on the Plan

With no further discussion, Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned grant preliminary approval of SLD#2025-04 – Liberty Forge Preliminary Subdivision & Land Development Plan, subject to the following conditions:

- Stormwater management discharge points are addressed to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer, including resolution of the discharge toward the adjacent property (easement or redirection).
- The applicant shall enter into a developer's agreement including an obligation to remove and maintain trees within Lisburn Road right-of-way along the project frontage to mitigate safety hazards, consistent with the Township's tree ordinance.
- Final wearing course for each phase of paving to be completed within a defined timeframe following the completion of that phase (to be confirmed in developer's agreement).
- All other conditions and comments outlined in the Township Engineer's review letter dated November 4, 2025 and modification recommendation letter dated November 10, 2025.

The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

SLD #2025-07 – Allen Middle School Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan

The purpose of this plan is to demolish existing buildings and construct additions to the Allen Middle School at 4225 Gettysburg Road, located in the R-1 Single-Family Established Residential District.

Applicant Presentation

Mark McGrecky presented behalf of the West Shore School District to present the plan to expand and renovate Allen Middle School. A sketch plan had been previously presented in June 2024; the current plan is substantially similar with some design evolution.

Project Overview:

- The existing building (~110,000 SF) will be expanded to approximately 151,000 SF, increasing design capacity to approximately 730 students (from ~500–550).
- New construction includes two-story classroom wings on the west side and expanded curriculum/cafeteria/library space on the east side.
- A portion of the existing building is proposed for demolition to allow the new classroom wing additions and to preserve future expansion options for 40–50 years.
- The construction is anticipated to take approximately two or more years. The School District has not yet finalized a decision on whether students will relocate during construction.

Site Access and Circulation:

- The existing Old Slate Hill Road access (currently used for bus loading) will be converted to emergency access only.
- The primary vehicle/parent access will remain at Gettysburg Road, with a new 150-foot left-turn lane into the site extending through to William Penn Drive (symmetrical widening requiring relocation of six utility poles).
- A new bus loop will utilize a Little League Drive access point via an easement agreement with the adjacent property owner accommodating 18 bus spaces.
- The existing parking lot (rear of building) becomes the new primary front entrance / parent drop-off loop with on-site stacking for 50 cars.
- Truck deliveries will be rerouted via Little League Drive to a rear loading dock loop.
- Total parking increases from approximately 120–130 spaces to 210 spaces; expanded lot will also serve field users during off hours.

Stormwater:

- Site has very low infiltration rates (near-zero) due to poor soils and limestone geology (stream was rerouted from under the gymnasium when the building was constructed in 1963).
- One above-ground detention basin near the fields provides rate control and fill generation.
- Two MRC storage beds (one ~15,000 SF under the field, to be split into two ~7,500 SF cells per recent DEP comments) provide volume control; these discharge to detention basins and ultimately to Cedar Run via the existing storm sewer.
- The rear parking area is largely existing impervious; green islands are added but full volume control in that area is not achievable, contributing to the request for relief on peak discharge reduction.
- An individual DEP wetlands permit is in process for basin discharge to the on-site wetland area.

Township Comments

Mr. Knouse referenced the comment letter of November 12, 2025 and addressed each of the requested waivers.

- Waiver of preliminary/final combined submission was supported.
- Waivers of additional right-of-way, curbing, and sidewalks along Gettysburg Road, Old Slate Hill Road, and Slate Hill Road frontages. The applicant is widening Gettysburg Road where feasible; sidewalks are provided on the interior of the access drive in lieu of along Gettysburg Road.
- Waiver of additional street trees.

- Waiver of additional 2-foot parking space adjacent to end islands is supported.
- Stormwater peak discharge rate reduction (75% of pre-development for all design storms). The applicant cannot fully meet this due to the existing rear parking lot area.
- MRC volume control in lieu of infiltration-based volume control. There is near zero infiltration on the site.

Mr. Knouse noted that outstanding items include the outside agency approvals, planning module or exemption, lot line markers, cost estimate unit costs (needed for financial security calculation), existing sidewalk evaluation and repair along frontage, and minor plan/detail cleanup.

Commissioner Comments

Mr. McCreary asked whether the new additions are single or two stories. The applicant confirmed two-story classroom wings; the rear addition is largely single-story cafeteria/library space.

Ms. Hall asked about the sidewalk placement. The applicant confirmed that sidewalks are provided on the inside of the access drive and that existing frontage sidewalks will be evaluated and repaired. The waiver pertains to additional sidewalks along Gettysburg Road right-of-way near the on-ramp to Route 15, where it is impractical.

Commissioner Swartz asked whether school zone flashers are planned at the intersections to the west. The applicant noted it had not been discussed in the traffic impact study review process, but acknowledged it is worth raising. The Traffic Impact Study has been approved by both the Township and PennDOT.

Recommendation on the Waivers

The Planning Commission proceeded to vote on each modification and waiver request individually.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-35.A.(2) – Submission of a Preliminary Plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. **WICKENHEISER** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(1) – To provide additional right-of-way and cartway along the frontage of Gettysburg Road and Slate Hill Road. The motion was seconded by Mr. **WICKENHEISER** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(8) – To provide additional curbing along the frontage of Gettysburg Road, Old Slate Hill Road, and Slate Hill Road. The motion was seconded by Mr. **WICKENHEISER** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-57.C.(9) – To provide additional sidewalks along the frontage of Gettysburg Road and Old Slate Hill Road. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-58.C.(5)(a) – To provide additional street trees. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 192-59.C.(1) – To provide an additional two-feet of paving for parking spaces adjacent to the end islands. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 184-17.B – To provide post-development peak discharge rates for all design storms to be no greater than 75% of pre-development peak discharge rates. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Mr. **LOGAN** motioned to approve a waiver of Section 184-14 – To provide volume control requirements and replace with several Manage Release Concepts (MRC) stormwater management basins. The motion was seconded by Mr. **BLACKWELL** and approved 5-0.

Recommendation on the Plan

With no further discussion, Mr. LOGAN motioned grant preliminary approval of SLD#2025-07 – Allen Middle School Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan subject to township and county comments. The motion was seconded by Mr. BLACKWELL and approved 5-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Bennett noted that copies of the 2026 Planning Commission meeting dates were available and that the meeting times would remain at 7:00 PM for 2026.

Mr. Bennett also provided an update on the Zoning Steering Committee, reporting it has worked through all zoning districts. Comments from John Eby on the Industrial District were received and are being reviewed. County Planning and community member comments are being compiled. Final review of definitions, parking standards, and district criteria remains outstanding.

In closing, Mr. Bennett noted that one subdivision plan for a property on Century Drive is anticipated for the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. McCreary announced that the next meeting was scheduled for December 16, 2025.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 PM.