
MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD
September 11, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Melosky, Chairman
Matthew Malozi, Vice Chairman
Joy Cohen
Richard Pongracz

VISITORS PRESENT

Joseph Rentko, Black Forest Engineering, LLC

MEMBERS ABSENT

Eddie Burgos

STAFF PRESENT

Matthew Deschler, Esq., Asst. Solicitor
Cathy Fletcher, Bureau of Planning and Zoning
Craig Peiffer, Bureau of Planning & Zoning
Basel Yandem, Dept. of Public Works
Laura Collins, Dept. of Community &
Economic Development
Eric Evans, Business Manager

The September 11, 2025, meeting of Planning Commission held at the City of Bethlehem Town Hall, was called to order by Chairperson, Robert Melosky at 5:00 PM.

AGENDA ITEM #1: APPROVAL OF MINUTES August 14, 2025.

Motion #1: Ms. Cohen made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Second: Mr. Malozi

Result of Vote: The motion passed 4-0.

AGENDA ITEM #2: SKETCH PLAN

Property Location: 1224 Eaton Avenue

Property Owner: Abraham Aityeh

Developer/Engineer: Joesph Rentko, Black Forest Engineering, LLC

Proposed Work: The applicant now proposes to maintain the existing dwelling and widen the existing driveway and construct two sets of three single-family attached dwellings for a total of six new dwellings. Vehicular access for the new dwellings is proposed via a new ingress/egress drive along the east end of the property. No architectural plans were submitted with the sketch site plan.

Discussion: Mr. Rentko gave a brief overview of the proposed sketch plan. Mr. Rentko stated the biggest concern is access. There will be two separate driveways. One driveway would lead to the parking lot, and the other would lead to the proposed townhomes. Zoning relief is needed for the high density in the lot area. Stormwater management is proposed in the Northern section of the property.

Mr. Melosky asked if the correct number of townhomes is six. Mr. Rentko answered the Applicant is proposing six townhomes with the front facing away from Eaton Avenue at a 90-degree angle.

Mr. Peiffer highlighted key points in the City's review letter dated September 4, 2025. The Applicant is encouraged to work with the City Engineer regarding the additional driveway. The plans indicate that a PPL pole is in the middle of the proposed new driveway which needs to be clarified or corrected. There is Zoning relief required for the proposed plan. Mr. Peiffer stated the City's letter informs the applicant they should consider significant changes to the plan prior to formal submission. The City's engineer's comments for the applicant states they need to work with the City Engineering to determine how best to accommodate stormwater runoff along the eastern lot line. Fire comments were regarding the width of the driveway and the turnaround for the fire apparatus. Lastly, Zoning's comments stated variances are needed and encourages pedestrian access from Eaton Avenue to each dwelling.

Mr. Melosky asked what the property is currently used for. Mr. Peiffer explained it is a single-family detached dwelling. Mr. Melosky asked if anyone is occupying the dwelling currently. Mr. Rentko stated the dwelling has tenants. Mr. Rentko explained there is a Dentist office next door to the West and apartments to the East. Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant is willing to demolish the single-family detached dwelling as encouraged in the City's letter. Mr. Rentko responded the plans could be changed depending on the approval of the Zoning relief required. Mr. Melosky stated that looking at the current driveway the lane is narrow and has concerns for the proposed plans narrow driveway lanes. Melosky asked if there were any renderings. Mr. Rentko stated there are no renderings at this time and the Applicant is waiting to see if they can get Zoning relief before renderings are submitted.

Mr. Malozi voiced his concern with the tract size of the proposed plan. Mr. Malozi agrees the demolition of the single-family detached dwelling would aid in the track size. Mr. Malozi asked for clarification on the width of the driving lanes. Twenty feet width is the minimum requirement for a fire apparatus and twenty-four feet in width for two car lanes. Mr. Rentko explained the existing dwelling is where the deficient requirements are for lane width. Mr. Malozi asked if stormwater management would be on site. Mr. Rentko affirmed that is the proposed plan.

Ms. Cohen asked the height of the dwellings. Mr. Rentko stated he does not have the exact height, but it will be under thirty feet. Ms. Cohen asked how many stories the dwellings will have. Mr. Rentko answered two stories, lower than the townhomes adjacent to the property.

Attorney Deschler asked if the single-family detached dwelling were to be demolished, then would that take away the needed zoning relief for the tract size and car lane width. Mr. Rentko explained it will help with density relief, but that the driveway lane where the newly proposed dwellings are located is 20ft in width and would require zoning relief.

Mr. Melosky asked if side yard setback relief is required by zoning. Mr. Rentko explained the Applicant is honoring the side yard setback and no relief is needed. Mr. Melosky asked the distance between the property line and the proposed driveway. Mr. Rentko stated approximately two feet.

Mr. Melosky recommends Mr. Rentko take back the comments from the letter and the Planning Commission to the Applicant and provide more details for the next submission. Mr. Malozi recommends considering demolishing the single-family detached dwelling to create more open space. Mr. Rentko responded he will speak with the Applicant and gave examples of what he will propose to the Applicant.

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA ITEM #3: NON-UTILITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Proposed Work: Ms. Fletcher explained what the Capitol Plan is and reviewed the spreadsheet that outlines spending timeline and funding sources for all capital projects through 2030. Mr. Evans provided information related to City financing and budgets. Mr. Yandem gave details of projects related to the budget. The Public Works main goal is pedestrian and road safety.

Discussion: Mr. Malozi asked if LANTA is coordinating with the City for potential geometric improvements and signal timing. Mr. Yandem answered the City is already talking with LANTA.

Mr. Melosky asked if there is any ranking on updating and/or creating stormwater management throughout the City. Mr. Yandem stated the City has studied where the focus needs to be to improve stormwater management. Mr. Melosky asked for more information about the Sun Inn Court. Mr. Yandem explained there were minor improvements in the past and the City would like to continue and maintain the historic look. The grant funding the City applied for was not granted. Ms. Collins stated there have been conversations about funding opportunities and how the owners of Sun Inn Court and the City can work together.

Ms. Cohen asked why some items, such as air packs, are on the current budget when they are to be done in 2032. Mr. Yandem explained they are to be replaced in 2030, the air packs lifetimes end in 2032, and the City wants them to be replaced prior to their expiration. Ms. Cohen asked when the Center Street two-way conversion is going to take place. Mr. Yandem answered it is planned for 2028.

Mr. Malozi asked how the City will dispose of the 2008 Lenco Bearcat armored police response vehicle in 2029. Mr. Yandem stated it may be traded in.

Motion #2: Mr. Melosky made a motion to pass along the Planning Commission approval of the Non-utility Capital Improvement Program funding spending schedule for 2026-2030.

Second: Mr. Malozi

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

AGENDA ITEM #6: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Peiffer reviewed the upcoming Agenda items.

Ms. Cohen spoke about her concerns at the Go Fish and Azar Grocery store and their turning signs. Mr. Yandem explained Go Fish has a sign that indicates no left-hand turns. The signs at both locations are not enforced and have caused traffic backups.

There being no further business, upon a Motion by Robert Melosky, a Second by Matthew Malozi, and a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

ATTEST:

Craig D. Peiffer, Commission Secretary