
MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD
JULY 9, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

VISITORS PRESENT

Kelly Yan, Pennrose
Kris Reiss, PE, T&M Associates
Vincent Marucci, AIA, Entropy Consulting, LLC
Anthony Rechia
Michael Recchiuti, Esq., Kolb, Vasiliadis, Florenz & Recchiuti, LLC
Alec Nahas, PE, Bohler Engineering
Kate Durso, Esq., Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba
Anthony Civitella, USA Architects
Janet Barry, 2815 Shakespeare Road
Joseph Rentko, PE, Black Forest Engineering
Domenic Villani
Paul Harak, Esq., Holzinger, Herrick & Scomillio

MEMBERS ABSENT

Eddie Burgos

STAFF PRESENT

Matthew Deschler, Solicitor
Cathy Fletcher, Bureau of Planning & Zoning
Craig Peiffer, Bureau of Planning & Zoning
Dylan Schlosser, Bureau of Engineering

The July 9, 2026, 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 May 14, 2026

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

Second: Mr. Pongracz

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

AGENDA ITEM #2:

Property Location: 1400 East 4th Street

Property Owner: Gateway on Fourth Phase I LLC

Developer/Engineer: T&M Associates

Proposed Work: Phase One will include: (Building A) a four-story structure, with the first floor containing a 1,200 SF retail space, a 750 SF fitness center, a 1,350 SF community room, and maintenance and utility spaces (all square footage is approximate), floors two through four will contain 44 multi-family dwellings. (Building B) a two-story structure, as viewed from E 5th Street, containing 16 multi-family dwellings with 20 below grade, due to site topography, parking spaces. Additional site improvements include a 45-car

surface parking lot, trash enclosure, mailbox shelter, stormwater management facilities, lighting, landscaping, and other site appurtenances. Phase Two will include: (Building C) a three-story structure, containing 44 multi-family dwellings. (Building D) a two-story structure, as viewed from E 5th Street, containing 16 multi-family dwellings with 20 below grade, due to site topography, parking spaces. Additional site improvements include a 45-car surface parking lot, tot lot, paved trail connection to the South Bethlehem Greenway, stormwater management facilities, lighting landscaping and other site appurtenances.

Discussion: Ms. Yan gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. Mr. Reiss stated he spoke with the Fire Marshall and was able to satisfy all fire comments from the City's review letter. A fire lane and hydrant have been added to the plans. Mr. Reiss explained more landscaping has been added including new street trees and slope vegetation. The parking lot layout has more landscaping and an area for a fire truck to maneuver.

Mr. Peiffer referenced the City's June 26, 2026, review letter and explained the project is split into two phases. There will be separate fees for each phase. Impervious coverage details are still needed from the Applicant to determine the correct fees. Mr. Peiffer stated there is coordination that is ongoing for the connection to the Greenway and how storm water flows at the site. The Applicant still needs to provide approval letter from LVPC and an approved NPDES permit to the City.

Ms. Cohen asked if EV charging stations and accessible parking spaces have been added. Mr. Reiss explained that 10% of the parking spaces are for EV charging stations and 20 ADA parking spaces. One of the spaces is both ADA and an EV charging station.

Mr. Malozi asked about the LVPC letter as there were comments that must be addressed such as Act 167 deficiencies. Mr. Peiffer responded that the comments in the April letter have been met and a letter from the City's engineer to LVPC informing them the comments have been addressed will be sent. Mr. Reiss is expecting an approval letter from LVPC shortly.

Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant can meet all the comments in the City's review letter. Mr. Reiss responded they are able to do so.

Mr. Pongracz asked if there will be a connection to the Greenway as previously discussed. Mr. Reiss answered there will be a trail connection to the Greenway.

Motion #2: Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Land Development at 1400 East 4th Street contingent upon the Applicant meeting all conditions in the June 26, 2026, review letter.

Second: Ms. Cohen

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

AGENDA ITEM #3:

Property Location: 52-62 East Broad Street

Property Owner: AJR 60 & 62 East Broad, LLC

Developer/Engineer: Entropy Consulting, LLC

Proposed Work: The Applicants propose to construct a three-story brick and frame in-fill structure on the parcel 56 E. Broad Street. The structure would contain an ~730 SF commercial use on the first-floor front and nine multi-family dwellings on the first-floor rear, second and third floors. The applicants propose modifying the tenant spaces at 52 E. Broad Street, reducing it to ~523 SF and creating a tenth new dwelling to the overall site. The proposed plan would contain four commercial uses, 19 dwellings, and 45 off-street parking spaces (44 surface and one garage space).

Discussion: Mr. Marucci gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. A special exception will be needed to maintain the parking dimensions "as is" and reduce the overall required parking. Two dimensional variances are required, one to reduce the lot area per dwelling and the second to reduce the side yard setback. Mr. Marucci stated that if all the properties are consolidated, the dimensional variances may not be needed. The proposed structure will fit into the fabric of the neighborhood.

Mr. Peiffer referenced the June 8, 2026, review letter referencing the zoning relief needed and commended the Applicant for proposing an infill construction of an appropriate scale, massing, height and fenestration that are reflective of the neighborhood context. Mr. Peiffer stated there will be a sanitary sewer fee as there is an increase and the traffic superintendent is looking for a trip generation calculation, particularly as it pertains to pedestrians, to determine if a traffic study is required. The City recommends curbing along East Walnut Street. The electrical engineer stated there is a conflict with a PPL utility pole, and that if this cannot be addressed, then the plan cannot move forward as presented. Mr. Peiffer stated the Fire Marshal does not have enough information to determine critical items such as if there is a need for a standpipe, and if so, then a fire hydrant will need to be added for project.

Mr. Melosky asked if more details could be given about the proposed lot consolidation. Mr. Marucci explained that Mr. Rechia owns four parcels and if consolidated, the dimensional variances would not be needed. Mr. Melosky asked exactly what zoning relief is sought from the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Marucci stated relief will be sought for dwelling density, side yard setbacks, and a special exception for parking. Mr. Melosky asked if any relief would be sought if the lots were consolidated. Mr. Peiffer responded the Applicant would still require a special exception for the non-conforming parking lot size. Mr. Melosky asked if the lots were consolidated; would the parking lot configuration change. Attorney Recchiuti replied no it would only change if the plan was reconfigured. Mr. Peiffer added that since this area is in the CL District only a special exception is required for parking and relief is not needed for the reduced number of parking spots. Mr. Melosky asked for details on the materials they are proposing to use on the proposed building. Mr. Marucci stated it is proposed to use brick veneer and keep in line with the surrounding neighborhood. The window fronts for the commercial space will look similar to surrounding businesses.

Ms. Cohen asked how tenants would access their apartments. Mr. Marucci stated the majority will enter from the rear and one dwelling unit would be accessed from a

walkway. Ms. Cohen recommends consolidating the lots as the setbacks are significantly different than if they were not to be consolidated.

Mr. Melosky asked how much square footage has been allotted for the commercial space. Mr. Marucci replied the commercial space is 730 sf.

Mr. Malozi asked if all 45 parking spaces mentioned in the letter are for the four properties. Mr. Marucci said the 45 spaces would be for all four properties. Mr. Malozi asked if there is any inadequacy in parking. Mr. Marucci explained they have more than required for the 19 dwelling units and commercial space. Mr. Malozi asked if all vehicular access is off East Walnut Street. Mr. Marucci stated that was correct. Mr. Malozi asked how wide the walkway is between the two buildings. Mr. Marucci stated it will be six feet wide, and it will be for pedestrians. Mr. Malozi recommends lighting in the walkway for safety.

No Public comment.

No motion was made as this was a Sketch Plan.

AGENDA ITEM #4:

Property Location: 404 East 3rd Street

Property Owner: Herald Equities

Developer/Engineer: Bohler Engineering

Proposed Work: The applicant proposes to construct a seven-story structure containing two commercial spaces (3,394 SF-Tenant A, 2,183 SF-Tenant B) and utilities on the first floor; one commercial space (7,671 SF-Tenant C) and residential tenant amenities on the second floor and 80 multi-family dwellings (30 one-bedroom and 50 two-bedroom) on floors three through seven. Gross floor area for the first-floor totals 8,050 SF, second floor totals 11,425 SF and the maximum footprint totals 15,060 SF.

Discussion: Mr. Nahas gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. A meeting was held with the City's traffic superintendent and there will be two parallel spaces along Mechanic Street for short-term off-loading and there will be a driveway along Mechanic Street primarily for any commercial loading and unloading only which would be written into the tenant's lease. The sewer planning module has been approved and there was no LVPC storm water required for the site. Street trees will be added along Polk Street, and the Applicant will pay a fee for the number of trees removed from the property. Mr. Nahas gave information on the locations of the entrances to the buildings and parking will be in the Polk Street Garage. The Bethlehem Parking Authority has been contacted to lease parking spaces. Mr. Nahas explained there are no street trees along East 3rd St or Mechanic Streets because of the overhang roofs of the upper floors. More ground cover was added at those locations at the request of the EAC.

Mr. Peiffer spoke about the July 2, 2026, review letter. There will be tapping fee, tree fee and a Recreation fee that must be paid for this project, and an easement is required as the sidewalk along Mechanic Street is on private property. City staff met with the Applicant and came to the agreement with the five-minute parking area on Mechanic

Street. He noted that due to the topography of Polk Street and East 3rd Street being a principal arterial, neither street could accommodate parking or loading. The City wants to maintain the No Parking at the intersection of East 3rd Street and Polk Street. More discussion is needed between the City and the Applicant on the look of the facade along Polk Street. The City encourages the use of bird-friendly glass on the structure and recommends that the Applicants contact Muhlenberg College for assistance in the matter. Lastly, the review letter suggests ways to handle the stormwater, and the Applicant has agreed to investigate those options.

Mr. Melosky asked for more details on the Polk Street elevation. Attorney Durso stated there has been discussion of a mural. The Applicant is looking at different materials to see what will work out best. Mr. Civitella stated that they are looking at different options and will continue dialogue with the City to make the best choice.

Ms. Cohen spoke about the comment in the EAC letter stating a green roof is mandatory due to the number of trees being removed and asked if the statement was correct. Mr. Peiffer answered it is a recommendation not a requirement. Attorney Durso stated the Applicant will explore that option, but there is no guarantee.

Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant will work with Muhlenberg College regarding the glass used in the windows to prevent accidents with birds. Attorney Durso replied that they will be contacting Muhlenberg College.

Mr. Malozi asked if all parking will be in the Polk Street Garage. Attorney Durso replied that was correct. Mr. Malozi asked if this item can be a condition for approval. Mr. Peiffer responded that condition is in the April 20, 2021, approval letter. Mr. Malozi asked if a document stating this condition would be recorded. Attorney Deschler answered the Applicant shall submit a copy of the lease to the City. If there comes a time when there is not a lease, then the Applicant will be in violation of their approved Land Development and actions can be taken.

Mr. Pongracz asked if the Polk Street Garage has the parking spaces available to lease. Attorney Durso replied the Applicant has a lease in the works with Bethlehem Parking Authority; it has not been fully executed yet. Mr. Peiffer commented that Mr. Fernstrom of the Bethlehem Parking Authority has informed the City that the Polk Street Garage does have the capacity to lease parking spaces for the proposed Land Development and other projects recently approved.

Mr. Melosky asked if there would be enough space on the sidewalk for outdoor dining if a restaurant is leased in the commercial space. Attorney Durso replied there is some space for dining on the sidewalk.

Mr. Melosky asked how many trees would be removed. Mr. Nahas answered 17 trees will be removed. Mr. Peiffer added four trees will be replaced along Polk Street and a fee in the amount of \$13,000 will be due at the time of execution of the developer's agreement. That fee would go directly to the Forester's office for replacement of trees elsewhere throughout the City. Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant is considering a green roof. Attorney Durso replied they are exploring options, but there is no guarantee.

Public Comment: Janet Barry, 2815 Shakespeare Rd, voiced her concerns about the number of trees being removed and none being replaced. Ms. Barry asked if the roof could have solar panels or a garden.

Shad Yoder, 3116 Chester Road, voiced his concerns on the influx of traffic with the 80 new dwelling units being proposed. Mr. Yoder also spoke about his concerns regarding the removal of 17 trees. Planting infant trees does not take the place of the mature trees being removed. Mr. Yoder stated the Planning Commission should make a green roof as a condition. Attorney Duro replied that is not within the Planning Commission authority. Mr. Yoder believes an ordinance change should be implemented to have developers make buildings more green.

Motion #4: Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Land Development contingent upon meeting all the conditions of the City's July 2, 2026, review letter, complying with all conditions from the April 20, 2021, approval letter including leased parking in the Polk Street Garage, and further architectural treatment improvements along the Polk Street façade.

Second: Mr. Melosky

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

AGENDA ITEM #5:

Property Location: 1405 North Boulevard

Property Owner: Domenic Villani

Developer/Engineer: Black Forest Engineering

Proposed Work: The Applicant proposes to demolish the structure and all site appurtenances and construct a three-story multi-family (apartments) structure containing sixteen (two-bedroom) dwelling units; a 21 space off-street parking lot, with vehicle ingress and egress from East Blvd; 3 off-street parking spaces, with head-in/back out access from North Blvd; a dumpster pad and enclosure located at the rear of the parking lot; utilities, landscaping and other site appurtenances.

Discussion: Attorney Harak and Mr. Rentko gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. Mr. Melosky asked for more details on the materials to be used. Mr. Rentko answered it is a mix of vinyl and stone.

Mr. Peiffer highlighted key points in the City's July 1, 2026, review letter. A sanitary sewer fee and storm water escrow fee will need to be paid; documents have been submitted to DEP for the Planning Module and are awaiting approval. The City's engineer noted that there are deficient sidewalk and curbing at the site, and that they will need to be replaced. Elevation and floor plans shall be submitted for further review from City staff. The Forester commented there needs to be more variety of species for the greenery along the east and north lot lines per the new SALDO. The traffic superintendent commented there shall be crosswalks at the intersection. LANTA has requested that the bus stop be relocated from its current spot opposite the project site to the project site, and have a concrete pad installed between the sidewalk and curb that would be ADA compliant.

Mr. Melosky asked how the number of units were configured. Mr. Villani answered each floor has 4 dwelling units. After speaking with the City's Engineering Department, Mr. Villani was informed the City does not want any more infiltration done on the site. The Applicant is handling the storm water with a retention type basin. As to not create any more surface coverage on the site, it was decided to construct a vertical building instead. Mr. Villani stated they were allowing for more green space on the site. Mr. Melosky asked what zoning district the site was located within, and if any Zoning relief was required. Mr. Peiffer stated the site was within the RT (residential high-density) Zoning District, and that no zoning relief was required.

Ms. Cohen suggested an entrance to the North Boulevard side of the structure as it is the primary address. Ms. Cohen also suggested that if an entrance on the North Boulevard side is not an option, then to put an entrance on the East Boulevard side. Mr. Villani stated the sides of the structure that are facing the streets contain stone and vinyl and Mr. Rentko stated the full vinyl façade is not facing any street. Ms. Cohen voiced her concern with the size of the proposed structure compared to the surrounding neighborhood, the three back out spaces off North Boulevard, and that there is no sidewalk connection from these spaces to the entrance door. Ms. Cohen also noted that the location for the dumpster may interfere with people backing out of spaces in the parking lot and she suggested relocating the dumpster. Mr. Rentko stated that a walkway can be created for the three back-out parking spaces on North Boulevard. Ms. Cohen stated the height of the proposed structure is 30ft, which is less than the allowed height, but it does not fit in with the one-story homes found in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Rentko stated the structure is located in the corner of the lot to help with the height difference.

Mr. Melosky asked if the project was feasible with fewer dwelling units. Mr. Rentko stated he does not believe that is feasible. Mr. Melosky asked if several buildings could be connected instead of one large structure. Mr. Villani explained that the size and location were largely driven by the topography and stormwater management requirements. He also noted that if the LANTA bus stop is moved as requested, it would take 100ft of on-street parking, but as a result there is hope that it incentivizes people to use public transportation. Mr. Villani stated that North Boulevard and East Boulevard are connector roads, which is why there is a bus route there. The building was scaled down as much as they could. Mr. Melosky asked what specific elements have been chosen to tie into the neighborhood. The structure will be stone and vinyl with split rail fence around the property and an expansive landscaping package. Mr. Melosky asked if those were the three specific elements that tie it into the neighborhood. Mr. Rentko replied that significant buffering is required for the site and there is more landscaping to fill the area. Mr. Villani stated he is willing to scale down to 14 dwelling units and eliminate the three back-out parking spaces from North Boulevard.

Public Comment: Six members of the public spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting. The majority of comments focused on the size and scale of the proposed development, including concerns about the overall site elevation, building height, and the project's visual character in relation to the surrounding homes. Several comments addressed conditions along East Boulevard, including concerns about increased traffic and whether the existing stormwater infrastructure is sufficient to

accommodate runoff from the site, with some residents expressing concern about potential flooding of the roadway. Additional comments raised the need to consider potential sinkhole conditions and encouraged the project team to explore the use of pervious surfaces and additional landscaping. Public comments also included concerns regarding fire access to the building, with a request that additional building entrances be considered. The City also made reference to three letters received from the public expressing their concerns and which were provided to the Commission Chair, Solicitor and Applicants.

No motion was made, the Applicant agreed to grant an extension of time from the MPC requirements and to come back to the Planning Commission at a later date.

AGENDA ITEM #6: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Peiffer reviewed the upcoming Agenda items.

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 7:00 PM.

ATTEST:

Craig D. Peiffer, Commission Secretary