
MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD
MAY 14, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

VISITORS PRESENT

Joe Rentko, Black Forest Engineering
Chuck Fitzgerald, Bowan Consulting Group Ltd
Kris Reiss, T&M Associates
Kelly Yan, Pennrose
Coren Bomback, WRT
Yasmine McBride, WRT

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Matthew Deschler, Solicitor
Cathy Fletcher, Bureau of Planning and Zoning
Craig Peiffer, Bureau of Planning and Zoning
Geoffrey Karanja, Bureau of Engineering

The May 14, 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 April 9, 2026

Motion #1: Mr. Pongracz

Second: Mr. Malozi

Result of Vote: The motion carried 3-0-2. Ms. Cohen and Mr. Burgos abstained.

AGENDA ITEM #2: LAND DEVELOPMENT

Property Location: 1224 Eaton Avenue

Property Owner: PAJ Ventures LP

Developer/Engineer: Joe Rentko, Black Forest Engineering

Proposed Work: The applicant proposes to maintain the existing single-family detached dwelling and existing driveway and construct three single-family attached dwellings (aka townhomes or rowhomes) and two single-family semi-detached dwellings (aka duplex or twins) for a total of five new dwellings; 11 off-street parking spaces, emergency turnaround, dumpster enclosure and other site appurtenances. Vehicular access for the new dwellings is proposed via a new ingress/egress drive along the east end of the property.

Discussion: Mr. Rentko gave a brief overview of the changes made since the March 2026 Planning Commission meeting. Sidewalk has been added from Eaton Avenue to each unit and a recreational area with a half basketball court was added near the parking lot. The area designated for fire truck turnaround has been widened, which

satisfied the Fire Marshall's comments. Mr. Rentko provided updated architectural plans to the Planning Commission. Each unit will contain three bedrooms.

Mr. Melosky asked for more details on the materials that will be used for the façade. Mr. Rentko answered the materials used will be vinyl, aluminum and stone. Mr. Melosky asked if brick will be used as shown in the rendering. Mr. Rentko replied that he was not sure if brick is still proposed. Mr. Pongracz stated that the drawings show stone and vinyl. He suggested keeping the brick to better tie the building into the neighborhood.

Mr. Peiffer recalled from the previous meeting two key items to be addressed for the Land Development to be approved: comments from the Fire Marshall, which have been addressed by the Applicant and approved as of April 24, 2026, and the architectural floor plans must reflect the civil set. Mr. Peiffer explained that when a building permit is submitted, the units must reflect the 20' x 30' size which appears on the civil set.

Mr. Melosky asked for the location of the sidewalk. Mr. Rentko answered it will be between the proposed 1222 Eaton Avenue and the basketball court.

Mr. Malozi asked if all comments from the Fire Marshall were addressed. Mr. Rentko replied he had a conversation with the Fire Marshall and submitted a plan that was deemed compliant with the fire code. Mr. Malozi asked the Applicant if they are going to comply with all comments. Mr. Rentko answered that is correct. Mr. Malozi asked if a storm water management report would be submitted. Mr. Rentko responded he is willing to submit a report, one was not originally submitted because the project is under 10,000 square feet of impervious coverage. Mr. Karanja asked for a report to be provided to the Engineering Bureau.

Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant is willing to use brick as shown in the rendering. Mr. Rentko answered he cannot speak for his client, but he will strongly recommend the use of brick.

Motion #2: Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Land Development at 1224 Eaton Avenue, subject to the following conditions: all the conditions and comments of the April 23, 2026, letter shall be met to the satisfaction of the City.

Second: Ms. Cohen

Result of Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #3: SKETCH PLAN

Property Location: 2355 Avenue A

Property Owner: Two Farms, Inc.

Developer/Engineer: Chuck Fitzgerald, Bowman Consulting Group Ltd

Proposed Work: The Applicant proposes to construct a 5,194 SF Royal Farms Retail Store, with 12 fuel pumps under a 4,581 SF canopy, 43 off-street surface parking spaces, signage, dumpster enclosure, and underground stormwater management facilities.

Discussion: Mr. Fitzgerald gave a brief overview of the Sketch Plan. There is a current traffic study being done and there will be improvements recommended for the intersection of Airport Road and Avenue A. Elevations were submitted for the Planning Commission to review. Mr. Peiffer stated City staff commends the Applicant for taking the City's suggestions into consideration regarding the appearance of the building. The applicant is encouraged to use a sloped roof in lieu of a flat roof and the City encourages the use of transparent glass as opposed to spandrel panel glass.

Mr. Melosky asked if signage for Royal Farms will face Airport Road. Mr. Fitzgerald replied there is no signage proposed. Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant is opposed to having a Royal Farm sign facing Airport Road. Mr. Fitzgerald answered that he will speak with his team and believes that can be incorporated. Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant is open to changing the roof to a slope roof. Mr. Fitzgerald responded he will speak with his team and follow up with the City.

Mr. Fitzgerald addressed the comments from the City's review letter regarding the location of the fuel canopy. The City recommended the fuel canopy at the rear of the location, while the Sketch Plan shows the fuel canopy on the side. Mr. Fitzgerald explained the location of the canopy is believed to be safer because it can be seen from the road.

Mr. Peiffer stated the comments in the City's review letter encourage pedestrian and other alternate forms of transportation access to foster a relationship between the public sidewalk and the store so there is greater visibility and transparency. The letter recommends alfresco dining as option for the food that will be served. If the fuel canopy cannot be placed in the rear, the City encourages the Applicant to construct an interesting fuel canopy that is reflective of the nearby airport. Mr. Melosky agrees with Mr. Peiffer's and the City's recommendations and asked if the Applicant is open to the suggestion. Mr. Fitzgerald replied that is part of the proposed plan and will be shown on the plans at formal submission.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated there is existing sidewalk on Avenue A, and the plan proposes extending the sidewalk along Airport Road. Because the City's review letter suggested providing additional pedestrian access, Mr. Fitzgerald agreed and stated a crosswalk to the building will be added to the plans.

Mr. Peiffer highlighted comments from the City's May 8, 2026, review letter. The prominent comments in the letter were from the City's Traffic Engineer, stating concerns that the right turn exit only signs will confuse drivers, causing illegal left-hand turn exits to occur. Adjoining properties would also be restricted to turn-right only if a concrete median were to be installed on Avenue A. Truck movement is also a concern a large truck has the potential to block intersections. Zoning comments require bicycle parking per the Zoning Ordinance. The City wants to ensure the climate action plan is followed by the Applicant as well. Lastly, LANTA wishes to continue dialogue with the Applicant regarding the placement for the bus stop.

Mr. Melosky asked if the Applicant is willing to comply with the letter and what has been discussed. Mr. Fitzgerald stated the Applicant is willing and open to discussion. Mr.

Melosky asked about adding a vehicle entrance to the property from Airport Road. Mr. Fitzgerald stated the property owner would like to incorporate as many entrances as possible.

Ms. Cohen asked if the grass pad as it appears on the plans will stay. Mr. Fitzgerald said the site will be open grass space and if the spot is proposed for something else, they would come back in front of the Planning Commission. Mr. Peiffer recommended another Sketch Plan submission because there is potential for a fast casual restaurant on the site as well and that would be the highest number of trip generations. Ms. Cohen spoke of her concerns with sidewalk along Airport Road and egress onto Airport Road. There is concern that traffic will back up on Avenue A attempting to get back on Airport Road.

Mr. Malozi asked if there was currently proposed access to the site from Airport Road. Mr. Fitzgerald answered that is not due to North bound merging traffic. Mr. Malozi asked if the full access driveway shown fully on Royal Farms property, Mr. Fitzgerald responded, yes and drivers can make a right or left. Mr. Malozi noted that addressing LANTA comments is important. Mr. Malozi asked what safety concerns led to the location of the fuel canopy. Mr. Fitzgerald answered that the major concern is visibility in the site but stated that moving the canopy to the rear is an option they will look into. Mr. Malozi asked if lower visibility of the fuel canopy causes more incidents. Mr. Fitzgerald explained when there is a facility open 24 hours, the more visibility the safer the site.

As a Sketch Plan no formal motion will be made on this case.

AGENDA ITEM #4: LAND DEVELOPMENT

Property Location: 1400 East 4th Street

Property Owner: Gateway of Fourth Phase I LLC

Developer/Engineer: Kriss Reiss, T&M Associates

Proposed Work: The Applicant proposes to construct in two phases:

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: Mr. Reiss gave an overview of the proposed Land Development. All oil tanks and contaminated materials have been removed from the site. The site is now clean and there is nothing more required from an environmental standpoint. Mr. Reiss explained the project is broken down into two phases. In the first phase, Building A will be mid-rise containing 44 units while Building B on East 5th Street has low-rise townhomes containing 16 units for a total of 60 units. The second phase will have similar program with a second mid-rise structure. There will be two parking lots with access from William Street in Phase 1 and a 2nd access from East 5th Street. Variances were granted by the Zoning Hearing Board in 2025 for reduction in front yard setbacks and relief from commercial space on the first floor. Mr. Reiss stated there will be a small commercial space in Building A while Building B will be all residential units. The proposed site is currently two separate properties, but Mr. Reiss stated they are proposing a lot line adjustment reflects the Phases. Stormwater management will be controlled with an infiltration basin based on geotechnical studies. An NPDES permit is required for developing the land and a PENNDOT permit is required for work being done on East 4th Street. Mr. Reiss stated they are pursuing the Green Communities 2020 certification and certification under the Department of Engineering Zero Energy Ready Home Multifamily and EnergyStar multifamily new construction. The design also includes solar ready infrastructure incorporated into the design of the building, they are in compliance with EPA indoor air plus requirements, and the proposal includes EV charging stations and native landscaping. Mr. Reiss spoke about the City's and LVPC's review letters and stated they are willing to comply with all comments.

Mr. Melosky asked if there is any affordable housing offered. Mr. Reiss replied there are 46 units that will be affordable units and the 14 would be market rate units.

Mr. Peiffer highlighted key points in the City's review letter. The Applicant shall pay a tapping fee and impervious coverage fee. There will be a need for a metes and bounds and an exhibit for the proposed access easement to the greenway. Mr. Peiffer explained the two major conditions that must be met are the Fire Marshall's comments and how to address stormwater management. Lastly, Mr. Peiffer mentioned the Zoning Officer's comments, general comments in the City's review letter, and the Environmental Advisory Committee and LVPC letters.

Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Reiss if there is anything in the review letter that the Applicant is unwilling to comply with or if the plan is to move forward. Mr. Reiss answered they are working on their response to the City's review letter and they are willing to comply with all comments except for those regarding the trees that line William Street. The landscaping architect is in contact with the City's Forester and will work with them for a solution. If it is not feasible to plant the trees along William Street, payment for unreplaced trees shall be paid in lieu of a waiver.

Mr. Melosky asked the Applicant to discuss the renderings and elevations. Ms. Bombback gave details of the proposed materials for the façade and windows. Ms. Bombback explained there is a large amount of topography where the lands significantly drops off and that land is owned by PennDOT and not part of the property. The landscaping that appears on the elevations was added as what could potentially be planted.

Mr. Melosky asked how many dwelling units will be constructed in the first phase. Ms. Bomback replied 60 dwelling units will be constructed in each phase.

Mr. Peiffer explained the renderings read three stories but there are four due to the topography which enabled the architects to develop underground parking. Mr. Pongracz asked if there would be any courtyards or communal spaces. Ms. Bomback answered there will be communal spaces between buildings to encourage community. Mr. Pongracz asked about the timeline between the phases. Ms. Yan answered that it will take one to two years, as the project is financed by the low-income housing tax credit whose timeline is set by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. Ms. Bomback added that a tax credit has already been rewarded for Phase A and they are waiting for the next round to be published. Mr. Reiss stated there will be more greenery on the next submission where concrete is currently proposed. Ms. Bomback explained there will be area that will be more intensively planted and some areas that are more encouraging for community.

Mr. Malozi asked if the affordable housing will be in the larger buildings or town homes. Ms. Yan answered that all the townhomes will be affordable housing and the larger buildings will have a mix of affordable and market price units. Mr. Malozi asked if there would be pedestrian access around the entire site. Mr. Reiss explained the site currently has sidewalk, and any sidewalks that need to be replaced will be done.

Mr. Burgos asked if geofabric was recommended for the proposed basins. Mr. Reiss replied pervious geofabric will be utilized and will allow water to go through the pipe and stone basin. The fabric will keep the clean stones separate from the soil underneath.

Ms. Cohen asked about trees along East 4th Street as the landscaping plan does not indicate any but the renderings do. Ms. Bomback answered the renderings show what is desired to be planted at the site. Mr. Reiss stated that more trees can be added to the plan. Ms. Cohen asked if the Applicant is asking for a payment in lieu of trees on William Street. Mr. Reiss answered that was correct and stated some trees cannot be planted due to underground utilities and they would be too close to the buildings. All the trees along East 5th Street will be replaced and the trees along the Greenway are to remain. Ms. Cohen stated that trees along East 4th Street are desired. Ms. Cohen asked if there should be more access to the Greenway than the one proposed. Mr. Reiss answered that will be the only access point at this time. Ms. Bomback explained the access to the Greenway that is proposed is fully ADA accessible. Due to the topography of the site, adding another access point in another location would not be compliant. Mr. Reiss added part of the existing wall along the Greenway will be taken out to make a connection and then regraded as the site is approximately six feet higher than the Greenway. Ms. Cohen noted the EAC's review letter mentioned the installation of EV chargers and encouraged them to make those accessible too. Ms. Cohen shared her concerns about the layout of the parking lot will change with the addition to EV charging and the trash sites and landscaped island. Mr. Reiss replied that EV chargers are currently proposed and they plan on relocating the EV charging stations next to the accessible spaces. Mr. Reiss replied that no parking spaces will be lost and the landscaped island will be in the middle.

Mr. Melosky asked for the total number of parking spaces. Mr. Reiss replied 120 total spaces will be created with 60 spaces created in each phase. Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Peiffer if the amount of parking spaces meets the requirements for Land Development. Mr. Peiffer answered under the City's workforce housing policy, it is deemed compliant. Mr. Melosky asked how many parking spaces would be underground. Mr. Reiss replied they will have those numbers at the next submission. Mr. Reiss explained there will be trash enclosure outside for Building B and inside for Building A. The staff of the buildings shall remove the garbage each week for pickup.

Ms. Cohen voiced her concern that accessible EV charging spaces may limit who will park there if they do not need to charge their vehicle. Mr. Peiffer responded there is a comment from the Zoning Officer in the City's review letter pertaining to this and the City must wait for the new submission to decide based on changed plans. Ms. Cohen suggested the bike storage be covered and an EV charger space just for ADA. Mr. Peiffer agreed and stated the Applicant assured the City the minimum off-street parking requirements will be stratified. Ms. Cohen asked after their next submission whether they would be returning to the Planning Commission or if approval is being sought currently. Mr. Peiffer responded if the Planning Commission is comfortable with approval this evening and the Applicant is willing to comply with all comments in the letter, the Planning Commission can approve the Land Development with the condition the Applicant must satisfy all the comments in the City's review letter. Mr. Melosky stated that more conditions can be added to the approval if deemed necessary or the Applicant can be requested to come back before the Commission.

Mr. Malozi voiced his concerns about approving the Land Development with the comments that need to be addressed with their next submission. Mr. Reiss agreed an extension will be given in order for the Applicant to make a new submission addressing the City's latest review letter.

No motion was made at this time. The Applicant and Planning Commission agreed the Applicant will return with revised plans

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA ITEM #5: 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 5:57 PM.

ATTEST:

Craig D. Peiffer, Commission Secretary