

A regular meeting of the **Planning Commission** for July 2026 was held tonight via web-conference, Chair Thom Cross presiding. Members present were Adam Dreibelbis, Carl Freedman, Caitlin DiMarzio, and Jesse Smith. Staff present via web-conference were Robert Habgood, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning; Galya Globerman, Planner 1; Roger Phillips, Township Engineer; Chloe Mohr, Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC).

Mr. Cross called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Mr. Freedman motioned to recommend approval of the June 22, 2026, minutes. Mr. Smith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
2. Sewerage Facilities Planning Module (SFPM).
 - a. 1777 Willow Grove Avenue, Foxlane Homes-Hansen Tract (43 townhomes).

Mr. Phillips provided background on the SFPM for the 43 townhomes development. Mr. Freedman asked why part of the sewer is going through Cheltenham and part of Springfield Township. Mr. Phillips said its due to the grade.

Mr. Freedman motioned to recommend approval. Mr. Smith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Review of Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) Agenda for August 10, 2026.
 - a. 26-3818, Ancilla-Assumpta Academy (AAA) for 2025 W. Church Road.

Matthew McHugh, attorney, Lindsey Breylinger, engineer, Joseph Horan, architect, and Kerry Harp, AAA, provided the following information on the proposed Zoning Relief:

- Replacing the grass athletic field with a previous turf field.
- Build an approximately 13,443 sq. ft. two-story addition for a new gym/athletic fieldhouse.
- Construct a two-story parking structure with 94 parking spaces.
- Widening of the existing driveway from 18' to 24', except at the entrance at Church Road which will remain as existing.

Ms. Breylinger provided more information on the proposed variance to widen the driveway from 18 feet to 24 feet which will be enlarged into the school property and would not cause any changes to the existing landscape buffer next to the neighboring residential properties.

Discussion ensued with respect to the proposed driveway widening:

- The reason for widening the driveway is to make the traffic flow easier, to prevent traffic leaving the property from backing and to reduce the amount of traffic backing up on Church Road.
- The proposed circulation and flow of the traffic. Ms. Harp said the current circulation/flow for the cars and buses with traffic going one-way from Church Road to Royal Avenue.
- The proposed drop-off/pick-up of students from the buses. Ms. Harp said facility members are present to assist with traffic flow and the students moving between the buses and school.
- The safety concern regarding the unloading/loading of students occurring on the wrong side of the driveway, with talk about changing the flow of the traffic to ensure safe operations for the students.

Mr. McHugh reviewed the other four variances being requested as follows:

- A variance to have a front yard setback of 35 feet for a retaining wall from Royal Avenue in place of the required 50 feet. The retaining wall will be approximately 7 feet high and support the new turf field.
- A variance to have a building coverage of 22.4% whereas a maximum of 15% is allowed. The student population is not increasing with the proposed addition.
- A variance to increase the impervious surface to 44.3% whereas a maximum of 35% is permitted and the existing non-conforming impervious surface coverage is 40.6%.

- A determination that a parking structure does not count towards surface parking or in the alternative a variance to exceed the maximum allowable of 120%. The property was previously granted Zoning Relief to have 124 spaces. One hundred and twenty percent of the 124 spaces would allow for 149 spaces but a total of 178 spaces is being proposed.

Discussion ensued with respect to the following:

- Reason for the number of parking spaces being proposed. The applicant said there are 111 employees and that the spaces would be used for various events during the year, like sporting, school, etc. and that the spaces would help reduce overflow parking with the adjacent residential streets.
- The width of the existing landscape buffer. Ms. Breylinger stated that the width is approximately 15 feet wide with trees and shrubs.
- Whether a green roof could be added to the parking structure or the gym addition.

Resident Comment

Residents from 209 Royal Avenue gave a statement to the Planning Commission regarding the concerns they have for the increase in stormwater runoff and traffic flow. Ms. Breylinger said Stormwater Management (SWM) will be constructed to handle the new impervious surface and also some of the existing impervious surface.

A resident from 320 Sinkler Road also expressed concern with respect to the water runoff and traffic.

Mr. Dreibelbis recommended that the Planning Commission vote on each proposed variance request individually. The recommendations are as follows:

- Mr. Smith motioned to recommend approval of the building coverage for 22.4%, conditioned that green roofs be considered for the proposed parking structure and/or addition. Ms. DiMarzio seconded, and the motioned passed unanimously.
- Mr. Cross motioned to recommend approval for the impervious surface to be increased to 44.3% from the existing non-conformity of 40.6%, concerning the issues with the widening of the driveway with student safety and circulation. Mr. Freedman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Mr. Dreibelbis motioned to recommend approval for a front yard setback of 35 feet for the retaining wall in place of the required 50 feet. Mr. Smith seconded, and the motioned passed unanimously.
- Mr. Dreibelbis motioned to recommend denial of the variance for expanding the driveway from 18 feet to 24 feet pending a traffic study on the circulation pattern and student safety. Mr. Freedman seconded, and the motioned passed unanimously.
- Mr. Cross said a parking structure does not count as surface parking. Mr. Freedman motioned to recommend approval that a parking structure does not count as surface parking. Ms. DiMarzio seconded, and the motioned passed unanimously.

b. 26-3819, Ronald Ross for 846 Widener Road.

Ronald Ross provided background on the proposed Zoning Relief to allow for an accessory structure (greenhouse) to be constructed on the property. Mr. Ross said the Zoning Relief required is to have the structure on a property where part is located within the floodplain, to allow for the accessory structure to be located within the front yard of the corner lot and encroach within 10' of the dwelling.

Discussion ensued with respect to the following:

- Existing structures on the property. Mr. Ross said the prior owner had chicken coops which were removed when they moved.
- Location of the proposed accessory structure within respect to the dwelling.

- Location of the floodplain, which is located on the opposite side of the property.
- The existing buffer along the street where the accessory structure is proposed.
- The height of the accessory structure. Mr. Ross advised that it is about 7' high.

Ms. DiMarzio motioned to recommend approval. Mr. Smith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business

a. Enclave at Melrose

Mr. Freedman discussed a letter he is drafting expressing the Planning Commissions concern about the loss of the proposed community center and the proposed new community pool at Melrose. The other Planning Commission members said they did not have any concerns with the draft letter and said it should come from the Planning Commission.

Resident Comment

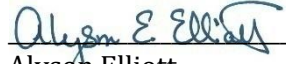
Ronda Isser discussed her concerns about the location of the proposed pool including the location and what is being offered with the pool.

Tom Petersen also expressed concerns about how the proposed pool is being handled.

5. New Business

- a. Mr. Habgood reviewed the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) decisions and advised that the application for the proposed cell tower on Limekiln Pike has been withdrawn.

6. Adjournment – Mr. Cross adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m. as there was no other business.


Alyson Elliott
Acting Township Manager

Per: Robert J. Habgood