

TINICUM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
April 22, 2025 – 7 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members

Dr. David Upmalis, Chair; Terry Johnston, Vice Chair; John Clement, Secretary; Neil Sullivan; Luke Sorenson; Dan Ullman; Melissa Gufstafson

Roll Call of Members

Present: Dr. David Upmalis, Chair; Luke Sorenson; Neil Sullivan; Melissa Gufstafson; Terry Johnston, Vice Chair; Dan Ullman

Absent: John Clement, Secretary

Number of Public in Attendance: Various members of the community

Call to Order: Dr. Upmalis

Public Comment: None

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Mr. Sorenson and seconded by Mr. Sullivan to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Commission on April 8, 2025. Mr. Ullman and Mr. Johnston abstaining due to absence. Unanimous Vote to Approve.

MOTION by Ms. Gustafson and seconded by Mr. Sorenson to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Commission for February 25, 2025. Mr. Johnston abstaining due to absence. Unanimous Vote to Approve.

Agenda Items

New Business

1. 102 Ridge Valley Road – Zoning Hearing Board for Use A4 – Kennel.

The applicant requests a variance to operate an animal rescue operation.

Tom Lynch, the applicant, described the non-profit rescue operation that he runs at his home, which involves rescuing and rehoming animals (mostly dogs and some cats) that are scheduled in most cases for euthanasia in shelters, mostly from Philadelphia but other areas as well. He holds meet-and-greet

adoption events at various locations in the area, including pet supply stores in Doylestown, Tractor Supply, local cafes, etc. If a potential adopter is interested, they can submit an application. If they meet the criteria for being a responsible pet owner, their application is approved.

The commission discussed a number of issues, including the fact that while a kennel is allowed in the applicable district, a minimum of five acres is required, while Mr. Lynch's lot is 2.25 acres. It was pointed out however that a small animal rescue doesn't rise to the scale of operations involved with running a commercial kennel, and Mr. Lynch confirmed that according to State Law, a kennel license is only required when more than 25 dogs are being housed. Mr. Lynch said he usually has about 15-20 dogs at any given time and pays for all their care and food out of his own pocket. Mr. Sullivan added that he is listed as one of the adjoining neighbors but has never heard any noise or complaints related to the rescue.

Dr. Upmalis said that as the owner of five dogs – all foster fails – he is very sympathetic to Mr. Lynch's cause as a service to the community, stressing that it seems Mr. Lynch is doing everything he can to be respectful to neighbors and avoid potential nuisance factors.

MOTION by Dr. Upmalis to recommend that the Board of Supervisors not oppose the application for a Variance. UNANIMOUS vote to Approve.

2. Environmental Mapping

Mr. Ullman said he had been asked by the Land Preservation Committee to consult with Princeton Hydro on a quote for providing the Township with updated maps, along with creating interactive maps to make it easier for residents to determine which overlays apply to their property. Mr. Johnston said he has a number of colleagues who work with Princeton Hydro and has worked with them on a number of occasions. He said the cost was in line with the services provided and that it is in the Township's responsibility to keep the maps up to date, adding that he would recommend that the Board of Supervisors engage with Princeton Hydro as the maps are at least ten years old and an update is overdue and that interactive maps would be invaluable to residents in a variety of ways. Both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Sorenson discussed both the challenges of providing data for such a project and the value of having a more powerful and useful mapping tool. A wide-ranging discussion followed with Ms. Danko regarding future changes to Township procedures, administrative equipment, maps and document updates. It was agreed that the project would be revisited at a future date.

Old Business

1. 140 Bunker Hill Road
Conditional Use Application for a Minor Subdivision
Owners: Robert and Cristy Kreuscher

Edward M. Wild of Obermeyer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, attorney for the applicants, explained the history of the application and the reasons for the continuance from the last meeting of the Planning Commission, adding that there was an open-ended extension on the application. Dr. Upmalis pointed out that the Township was under the impression that the extension ended in June, and Judith Danko, Township manager, confirmed that that was the case. Mr. Wild said he would resend the open-ended extension to the Township.

Dr. Upmalis said that because materials for the corrected application had only been received that morning he would prefer to again continue the discussion to the next meeting so that the township's engineers, professionals and the Commission would have adequate time to review the materials. The commission agreed.

2. Groundwater Ordinance

Tom Eckhoff, Current chair of the Bridgeton-Nockamixon-Tinicum Groundwater Management Committee, introduced consulting hydrologist Arthur Bayer via Zoom. He explained the origins and the research for the draft groundwater ordinance, which was adopted by Nockamixon Township and is currently being considered by Bridgeton Township as well. The goal is to make sure that all the neighboring townships have groundwater ordinances that are consistent with one another since in many cases the underlying water supplies cross township lines. Both Mr. Ullman and Mr. Johnston expressed the opinion that, given the thorough and well-researched nature of the proposed draft, the expertise of the Committee should be respected, and that they would recommend adopting the suggested changes to the Township's groundwater regulations. Mr. Sørensen also agreed but asked whether the lack of an exemption for a single home needed further discussion. Mr. Sullivan said he was in favor of carving out an exemption for single-family homes, reasoning that single-family homes on large lots are Tinicum's strongest defense against overdevelopment, and adding that he felt that there were numerous ordinances that Tinicum had adopted that were meant to apply to dense development and not intended for single-family homes and were therefore more more onerous and served as disincentives for single family properties.

Dr. Upmalis said that the task before the Commission was to recommend to the Board of Supervisors whether to consider the draft ordinance or not, and that more granular changes could then be discussed at a future meeting. Dr. Upmalis also asked if the Bucks County planning commission had been involved in review when the ordinance was passed in Nockamixon, and it was confirmed that Nockamixon

had gone through a multi-year long process of revisions with the Bucks County Planning Commission. It was agreed that a redlined version of that process would be helpful to review.

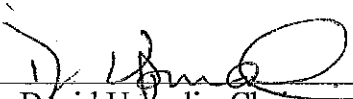
MOTION by Dr. Upmalis to recommend the Board of Supervisors consider reviewing a new groundwater ordinance and refer it back to the Planning Commission for further review particularly as it might affect owners of newly constructed single-family homes. Seconded by Mr. Johnston. Unanimous Vote to Approve.

Adjournment

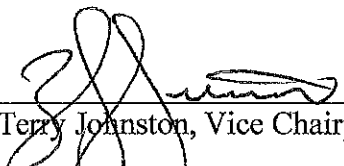
MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Johnston. Seconded by Sorenson. Unanimous Vote to Approve.

Date: 5/27/25

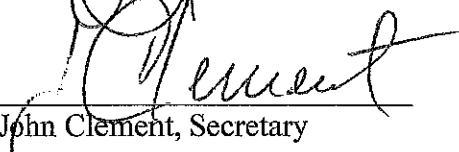
Approved By:



Dr. David Upmalis, Chairperson



Terry Johnston, Vice Chairperson



John Clement, Secretary