

Benner Township Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2025 7:00pm

Call to Order:

The regular scheduled meeting of Benner Township Planning Commission was called to order on July 24, 2025 at 7:00pm by Willis Houser.

Members Present: Willis Houser, Lynn Chaplin, Lee Copper, Judson Mantz, Josh Fitz

Also in attendance:

Sharon Royer, Township Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Lesniak, PV Code

Sierra Stamm, Township Staff Assistant

John Elniski, 817 Seibert Rd

Jacob Michael, 221 E. Bishop St.

Ron Borger, Penn Terra

Allen and Treva Strouse, Buffalo Run Rd

Jan and Greg Thomas, 851 Seibert Rd

Joyce Smith, 877 Seibert Rd

Deena and Darrell Hubert, 1151 Seibert Rd

Minutes:

The minutes from March 24, 2025 were given to all present board members to review. Mr. Houser accepted a motion to accept the minutes, Mr. Copper motioned and Mrs. Chaplin seconded.

Votes: Willis Houser: Yes Lee Copper: Yes Lynn Chaplin: Yes Josh Fitz: Yes
Judson Mantz: Yes

Persons To Address the Board:

Burrowes Warehouse- Penn Terra

Ron Berger, was present from Penn Terra Engineering to present the Burrowes Warehouse off High Tech Drive. There is an existing warehouse building and medical office supply place, along with self-storage unit. Owners would like to construct 7,000 square foot warehouse on the same site, on existing gravel. Utilities will be present on sight and have 4 bay doors on building. Owners wanted a place to storage construction materials. County presented conditional approve, still need to get FAA clearances due to the airport. That clearance has been submitted, but will take time to obtain. All technical comments have

been addressed Mr. Houser verified with Mr. Lesniak on his thoughts, Mr. Lesinak stated they were reviewed, there were things that needed changed, and they have been completed. Mr. Lesniak stated everything meets zoning. Mr. Houser made sure all comments from Centre County in a prior email were corrected, Mr. Borger stated they have been corrected and most are down to just needing signatures to show Chris. Mr. Borger showed Mr. Fitz they lay out of where thing on the property will be situated. Mr. Houser looked for a motion to pass to the Supervisors or deny. Mr. Fitz motioned to move it to the supervisors and Mr. Copper seconded that motion.

Votes: Willis Houser: Yes Lee Copper: Yes Lynn Chaplin: Yes Josh Fitz: Yes
Judson Mantz: Yes

Bellefonte Airport Campground: Conditional Use- John Elniski

John Elniski, was present to represent the Bellefonte Airport Campground. Mr. Elniski reviewed the reason for resubmission of plan as the recreation areas have been adjusted. Mr. Elniski stated Mr. Lesinak was very sick during last hearing and was unable to assist with guidance on this plan when they went through the Condition Use Hearing. They denied the original plan due to not meeting the ordinance, which they then added additional recreation areas 2 weeks prior to court but that did not give enough time. Mr. Elniski stated they are back with updated recreation areas, and he has talked to Mr. Lesinak to make sure everything meets the ordinance. Mr. Elniski described a fenced area that will separate the campground from the airport itself, and it is way beyond minimum distance from the runway. Mr. House questioned where the water source would be. Mr. Elniski stated either a well or try to help with connecting Grove Park to Hampton Hills, was going to talk to water authority. Public sewer on property. They would rather not get license for water if not needed. Mr. Houser reviewed the minimum on that, and questioned pump stations. Mr. Elniski explained this is just a conditional use and thing may change over the hoops of the County and Chris, but this is what it is looking like now. Mr. Lesinak stated he saw the design and he returned comments that have been address, and he stated it does meet the ordinances. Mr. Lesinak would like to see a subdivision but he understands that this is still early and he cannot do that currently. Mr. Lesinak reviews the minimums for recreation spaces based on acreage of the campground, and how he is showing what is needed, per 14.18. Mr. Lesinak stated water and sewer need to be address but it cannot be guaranteed until you can proceed with it. Plan presented does meet. Mr. Elniski stated there is an “over-the fence rule”, that they must investigate and it not going to go over 30 acres or over 100 sights. He is just trying to show something can be done. Mrs. Chaplin questioned if it will be mainly seasonal, Mr. Elniski stated he does not know yet as they will be having 40 tiny homes on RV trailers and it was clarified that they will be over night stays and no residents. Mr. Elniski stated they have people who camp now that fly in, and fish in Spring Creek. Mrs.

Chaplin stated this seems like a disturbance to the residents. Mr. Elniski stated that those homes were suppose to have hangers, and had a taxiway to the properties and were bought and built for that. Mrs. Chaplin asked how many people know this is part of there property. Mr. Elniski stated they are responsible and have no complaint from the public, and they will continue this as a family-owned operation. Mr. Elniski had to address an audience comment on why his mother was not presenting, it was made known she is in her 80s and she has a fear of crowds. Mrs. Chaplin questioned what will be going under the site, and Mr. Elniski stated that it will be stormwater drainage. Mr. Chaplin was worried about restoration of property if it was not successful, Mr. Elniski stated that it will most likely not happen based on his research on how well other airports are doing. Mrs. Chaplin stated she will pass it along, but stated it is terrible idea. Mr. Elniski stated that the engineer thinks it is a good idea. Audience questioned, what has changed on the plan, it was answered by Mr. Elniski that it was the court ruling on the recreation area. Mr. Elniski stated audience will need to address questions/concerns at the hearing in August. Audience questioned were to look at a deed, Mr. Houser answered to go to the Records Office. Mrs. Chaplin stated that abandoned property can be claimed by property owner over time. Audience concerned increase flight traffic and safety and secure of people at the campground. Mrs. Chaplin questions Mr. Houser what the purpose of Planning Commission is, he answered listen to comments and see if it fits into rules and regulations. Mrs. Chaplin was made aware by Mr. Lesinak that a condition of a bond could be made to cover the existing condition of the property, but it would need to be a recommendation of the Planning Commission. Audience questioned parking area, it was made clear that Mr. Elniski did not feel it would ever be full but would have plenty parking. Mr. Mantz questioned they people could camp that do not have airplanes on football weekends. It would be open to people who do not fly and they will have policies in place for campers. Mrs. Chaplin questioned enforcements, Mr. Elniski said family enforcer and possibly a seasonal person who will stay on site. Mr. Houser questioned if they should add a bond request to Mr. Lesinak. Mr. Lesinak stated he cannot tell them too, but it is something they can recommend. Mrs Chaplin and Mr. Judson wanted that bond requirement to be added. Mr. Houser reviewed that they would like add the recommendation that they add a bond to put the land back to existing status if it would be unattended for 12 months. Mrs. Chaplin motioned and Mr. Mantz seconded.

Votes: Willis Houser: Yes Lee Copper: Yes Lynn Chaplin: Yes Josh Fitz: Yes

Judson Mantz: Yes

Questions/ Comments:

Mr. Houser stated all comments were heard and to be sure to attend Supervisors meeting. He stated he does not see things happening at well ran campgrounds, and stated he see

very strict campgrounds. He stated he believes it will fit nicely if all those things are taken into consideration. Audience questioned neighboring a campground, and how it is inappropriate spot for a campground. Mr. Houser reiterated to attend upcoming meetings for this to voice your opinions. Distance from runway to campground was questioned, Mr. Elniski stated 478 ft away and minimum is 300ft.

Meeting Adjourned: Motions: Mr. Copper Seconded: Mrs. Chaplin

Votes: Willis Houser: Yes Lee Copper: Yes Lynn Chaplin: Yes Josh Fitz: Yes

Judson Mantz: Yes