

**Lawrence County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Plain Grove Township Municipal Building
October 8, 2025
12:00 PM**

The regular meeting of the Lawrence County Planning Commission was held at the Plain Grove Township Municipal Building located at 1029 Plain Grove Road, Volant, PA at 12:00 PM on October 8th, 2025.

Attendance

Planning Commission

Board: Mary Burris, Vice-Chairperson
Cindy Morabito, Secretary
Everett Bleakney
James Blundo
Hygeia Moss-Eggleston (Alternate)
Frank Telesz

Staff: Amy McKinney, Director of Planning
Allen Miller, Deputy Director of Planning
Rebecca Shaffer, Deputy Director of Community Development
Chris Conti, GIS Planner
Mary Glass, Office Manager/CDBG Administrator

Guests: Dan Vogler, County Commissioner
Dan Kennedy, County Commissioner
Chris Sainato, County Commissioner
Maxwell Frederick, Forward Lawrence
Jeffery Bishop, Plain Grove Township Supervisor
John Logue

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Lawrence County Planning Commission was called to order at 12:03 PM by Mary Burris.

Public Comments:

None

Regular Agenda

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Cindy Morabito moved, seconded by Everett Bleakney to approve the minutes of the September 10th, 2025, meeting. Motion carried 6-0.
2. **Staff Report:**
 - **Comprehensive Plan/Greenways Plans:** Grant applications that have been submitted: DCED Comprehensive Plan Update and two to DCNR for Stavich Bike Trail (Development) Quaker Falls (Master Site plan for Phase II). Quaker Falls had damaged that required us to close the park for a few days. Contractor will be

doing the necessary repairs as soon as the materials are in. Neshannock Trail required some maintenance and that work was completed on 10/1 and 10/2.

- **CDBG:** General administrative duties. Working with Shenango Township on sidewalks at their park and Ellwood City for their Curb ramp project. Curb Ramps contract was awarded, and Shenango Bids were opened on 10/7 for their sidewalk project. CDBG Public Hearing #2 was held on 9/22. Preparing the FY2025 application that is due on October 31st.
- **ARPA:** General Administrative Duties. Quarterly report that is due on October 31st was submitted.
- **SPC:** Attended TTC meetings. Planning Directors Meeting. Active Transportation meeting. TIP meetings for the TIP Update. Public Participation Panel coordination. Public Participation meeting was held on 9/29. HPMS work is finished.
- **NORTHWEST:** Weekly calls with the Core Connect Committee.
- **RALC:** Administering the Side Yard Program and Countywide Housing and Blight Remediation Program. Administering the Ellwood City and Union Township Façade Program thru DCED. Awarded PHFA funds for 2025. Completed site visits of repository properties.
- **GENERAL:** CPDAP meetings. APA-PA Board Meetings. Forward Lawrence Board meetings. Attended State of the County.

3. Commissioner's Comments:

1. **Dan Vogler** – The County has implemented a temporary burning ban after being approached by our public safety director who was contacted by the Pennsylvania Department of Forestry. They recommended every county in the Commonwealth implement temporary burning bans. Public Safety and the Department of Forestry have consulted with fire chiefs throughout the county for their recommendations, all of which stated they felt a burn ban was warranted. The Commissioner's voted at their meeting on October 7, 2025, to implement the ban but will be watching the weather closely. Once we receive a significant amount of rain, the ban will be lifted.
2. **Dan Kennedy** – The County has put in a bid to purchase the St. Joseph's church complex located at 1111 South Cascade Street, New Castle, PA. Should the bid be accepted, the plan would be to renovate the school into offices to house Children & Youth Services. The Conservation department, the Penn State Agricultural Ext. office, and the Recycling office would be relocated to the church. They are also exploring the idea of renting the apartments to Glade Run Lutheran Services to be used as temporary living space with the purpose of reuniting families with children who are currently in foster care. Some areas will be used for storage. The hope is that with funding from Children & Youth Services, Mental Health Services, Glade Run Lutheran Services and the eventual sale of the Almria Home this project will cost the county residents zero dollars, whereas the cost to construct a new facility would be between \$20-\$50 million.
3. **Chris Sainato** – Regarding the possible purchase of St. Joseph's church property. We have been running out of space for county offices. So much so that we have had to rent a trailer to house some of the Sheriff's Department staff. If this works out, it will not cost the taxpayers any

money, it's a long-term investment and we are saving a building. We had been looking for storage space recently and found that it could cost around \$1000 a month. This property also offers us that storage space. We have been fiscally responsible in Lawrence County, and this is a great opportunity for us.

4. **Forward Lawrence:** Maxwell Frederick stated that recently, he, Diane Richardson, Dan Kennedy, Amy McKinney and Rebecca Shaffer toured the Whittaker Building which was donated to Forward Lawrence. They had Gibson-Thomas Engineering Inc., come in to inspect the structural integrity of the building and they are working closely with them to see if it would be a good fit for a small manufacturing company in the space.
5. **Old Business:** None
6. **New Business:** We would like to hold a League of Municipalities meeting in February 2026. Once we have the details a Save the Date will be sent out.
7. **James Blundo** addressed the board regarding the Allegheny Conference and the loss of Ben Bush as the CEO of Forward Lawrence. Mr. Blundo stated that he was shocked to learn that Mr. Bush had accepted an offer with the Allegheny Conference as their Vice President of Public Affairs. Although he does not begrudge Mr. Bush's decision to enrich his life and that of his family, he feels that the Allegheny Conference is supposed to be working for Lawrence County, not seeking out an individual that in 2 ½ years, had made such a positive impact on our community and economic development. He stated that he owns a business in Pittsburgh and became a member of the Allegheny Conference two years ago. At that time, he let them know that he was serving two interests by joining. One by supporting his business and the other as a Lawrence County resident. At that time, he notified them that he would represent Lawrence County in any way they would like, offering to be an ambassador between the Conference and the County should they desire it. He has challenged the Conference as he has other organizations in Allegheny County who have stated they are working for us, when it appears they are doing nothing for Lawrence County. He feels that the Conference, who is supposed to be working for Lawrence County has in effect, done us a great disservice by approaching Mr. Bush for employment when he was accomplishing great things here in Lawrence County. He stated he recently received a marketing email from the Conference which shows all the great things they have done for the counties they represent, however; Lawrence County was cropped out of that image as they have not done anything for us. He challenges the leaders of Lawrence County to publicly defend us when these types of things happen.

Action Agenda:

Subdivision and Land Developments: Two land developments were presented to the Board for review:

Wilmington Woodworks, Inc. – Hickory Township - Allen Miller reviewed the County Comments on the plan. Everett Bleakney moved that the Township take the County comments presented into consideration before approval. Frank Telesz seconded.

Motion carried 6-0.

AMG Titanium Alloys and Coatings, LLC – Union Township - Allen Miller reviewed the County Comments on the plan. Everett Bleakney moved that the Township take the County comments presented into consideration before approval. Cindy Morabito seconded.

Motion carried 6-0.

Zoning and Municipal Reviews:

New Beaver Borough - Zoning Amendment for Uses Not Defined

Act 14 Notifications:

8 Reviews since the September 10th, 2025, meeting.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 1:12 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 12:00 PM at the Wampum Train Station located at 303 Main Street, Wampum, PA.