

**MIDDLESEX TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026**

**START TIME: 7:00 p.m.**

**END TIME: 10:10 p.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Wes Beard  
Robynn Eppley  
Jim Gehr  
Tracy Gleim  
Doug Graham  
Larry Claycomb

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mark Carpenter, Zoning Officer  
Zach Zook, Township Manager  
Eileen Gault, Secretary/Treasurer

**MEMBERS & STAFF ABSENT:**

Tom Ryan  
Bud Grove, Township Engineer  
Margie Flatley-Carpenter, Secretary

**Call Meeting to Order:**

Tracy Gleim called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Discussion and Possible Action on minutes of February 23, 2026:** The Planning Commission minutes are under review by the Commission's solicitor; therefore, no approval action was taken. This allows members additional time to review the minutes.

**Public Comment:** Jody Shivell, Teaberry Drive, expressed concern that the Township newsletter distributed to residents did not include information about the proposed data center project. The resident stated that several people in the community were unaware of the project, and some believed the site was still planned for residential development. The resident suggested that better communication could have prevented confusion and recommended that a letter be mailed to all Township residents explaining the project, including its location and relevant details. Ms. Shivell emphasized the importance of sending information to residents promptly, so they can learn about the project and attend meetings if interested.

Township staff explained that the newsletter is produced quarterly and that timing sometimes limits the ability to include the most up-to-date information. Staff acknowledged the concern and indicated that the Township is working to improve communication and include more information about ongoing projects such as the data center. Township representatives noted that meeting information is also posted publicly and included in the newsletter.

John Manta, Wolfs Bridge Road, requested that the meeting begin with the Pledge of Allegiance; the board and all in attendance then recited the Pledge.

**TPF 26-2 Final Major Subdivision Plan for Pennsylvania Digital 1 (PAX-1) Data Center:**

Justin Ross, representing Carlise Development Partners, presented the first item before the board, the final major subdivision plan. He explained that the plan follows the previously approved preliminary major subdivision plan and represents the next administrative step in the process. The plan proposes consolidating four existing tracts into one parcel and then subdividing the property into five lots. The subdivision would create five lots labeled 1A, 1B, 1C, 2, and 3.

Mr. Ross noted that the final plan is substantially the same as the preliminary plan previously reviewed by the Commission. The project team received a review letter from HRG, and no significant changes were made to the plan. One waiver request was included for the plan scale requirement due to the size of the project, which would allow the plan to be presented more clearly.

The Commission discussed the timing of action on the plan, noting that the Board of Supervisors would not meet again until March 27, 2026, and that the Planning Commission would meet again on March 23, 2026. It was noted that draft county comments were available electronically, though they were not printed for the meeting because immediate action had not been anticipated.

Pam Wenner, Teaberry Drive, asked for clarification about what the Commission was being asked to approve. It was explained that the Commission was reviewing the subdivision plan only, which involves combining the existing parcels and dividing them into five lots, and that other development phases would be addressed separately.

John Manta, Wolfs Bridge Road, asked whether there would be any tax advantage to the Township if the parcels remained as they currently are rather than being combined and subdivided. Township representatives explained that tax revenue would not be affected by the consolidation itself, as property taxes are primarily based on the value of improvements on the land rather than the parcel configuration. It was also noted that if a landowner meets the Township's subdivision and land development ordinance requirements, the Township cannot deny the subdivision request.

**TPF 25-25 Preliminary Land Development Plan for Pennsylvania Digital 1 (PAX-1) Phase 1-B Data Center:** Representatives of the applicant, including Charles Courtney, Justin Ross, and Pete McGrath introduced the project and noted that this was the first presentation of the plan to the Planning Commission. The team stated that the plan is currently in the preliminary stage and that review comments have been received and are being addressed as the plans are updated.

The applicants explained that the submission is a preliminary land development plan rather than a final plan. They noted that preliminary review allows flexibility because certain building details, equipment selections, and design elements will be finalized later in the process. Updated technical information, including a noise study, will be provided with the final submission once equipment and building specifications are finalized. Building façade information required by the zoning ordinance will also be provided during later stages of the review process. The applicant reviewed the site layout and relationship to the previously discussed subdivision plan. The infrastructure area previously approved (referred to as Lot 1A) includes the electrical substation and internal

circulation road. The current plan (Lot 1B, or Campus 1) proposes six data center buildings located in the northern portion of the property. The presentation included an overview of the property boundaries, nearby roads, the PPL transmission line crossing the site, and natural features including a creek, floodplain, and wetlands. The applicant explained that the power infrastructure and internal access road approved in the earlier plan would be constructed first and would provide access and utility service to the proposed data center campus.

The applicant continued the presentation of the preliminary land development plan for the Pennsylvania Digital data center campus. The plan includes the first cluster of six data center buildings located along an internal circulation road known as Data Center Drive. The main entrance to the campus will include multiple access lanes, a guard shack, and a security building for visitor check-in. A secondary gated access point will be provided for employees and emergency vehicles.

The applicant explained that each data center campus will be enclosed by a security fence, typically about ten feet high. The fencing will not extend around the entire 700-acre property but will instead surround each individual campus. Each campus will function independently with its own security systems, utilities, and water systems.

Commission members asked questions about water and wastewater usage. The applicant stated that sanitary wastewater would primarily come from employee use and estimated approximately fifty employees per building for planning purposes. The projected wastewater flows were described as conservative estimates used for infrastructure planning, and actual staffing levels are expected to be lower. Wastewater will include sanitary flows and blowdown water associated with the cooling system.

The applicant described the layout of a typical data center building. Each two-story building will include a receiving area, office space, and large equipment halls that house computer server systems. Exterior to the building will be water storage tanks used as buffers for cooling operations. Each building will also include a generator yard containing emergency backup generators and related mechanical equipment.

Commission members asked several questions regarding the backup generators, including fuel storage, noise, and testing. The applicant explained that the generators are intended strictly for emergency backup power and would typically have approximately 24 hours of fuel capacity. Additional centralized fuel storage has not yet been finalized and would be subject to additional permitting and regulatory review if included in the final design.

The applicant also noted that the generators are equipped with acoustic enclosures designed to reduce noise. Operation and testing of generators would be limited and regulated through air permitting requirements. Generators are typically tested periodically, often monthly, to ensure functionality, though not all generators would be tested simultaneously.

The Commission and audience also discussed the expected noise levels and operation of the generators. The applicant stated that the equipment is designed to meet required sound standards

on the property line and that additional technical details will be provided as the project moves further through the review process.

The applicant continued the presentation by providing additional details on the layout and operation of the proposed data center campus. The generator yard for each building was reviewed in greater detail. The plan shows approximately twenty-four generators per building along with associated electrical switchgear equipment. Commission members noted that this could result in many generators across the full campus buildout and raised concerns regarding potential fuel storage quantities, environmental safeguards, and overall operational impacts.

The applicant stated that the generator configuration shown represents the expected layout based on discussions with a prospective tenant, though final equipment specifications will not be confirmed until the tenant completes procurement. The generators will be enclosed in acoustic housing designed to reduce noise, and a sound wall is proposed around the generator yard to further mitigate sound. The wall is anticipated to be similar in height to the generator structures. The applicant indicated that additional details, including equipment specifications and updated noise modeling, will be provided prior to final plan approval once the tenant and equipment selections are finalized.

Commission members discussed generator operation and testing procedures. The applicant explained that generators are typically tested periodically to ensure proper operation, though not all units would be tested simultaneously. Commission members requested that a maintenance and testing plan be provided, including potential limits on testing hours, and suggested consideration of blackout periods to minimize disturbance during nighttime or weekend hours.

The discussion also addressed applicable noise standards under the Township's zoning ordinance. The applicant acknowledged that noise compliance must meet ordinance requirements at the property line and stated that updated noise studies will be prepared as more detailed design information becomes available.

The applicant then reviewed water and wastewater systems associated with the campus. A utility building will house equipment for inbound water treatment and outbound wastewater pretreatment. Water from the Municipal Authority will be softened and treated before use in the cooling systems. The plan includes several large on-site water storage tanks, currently shown at approximately two million gallons each, which will store water used primarily for cooling operations. Water usage will increase during high-temperature periods when evaporative cooling is required.

Wastewater from the cooling system, known as blowdown water, will be stored in separate tanks and gradually discharged to the municipal sewer system in accordance with pretreatment requirements. The applicant explained that cooling water may be recirculated multiple times before being discharged and that water quality will be maintained through pH and chlorine balancing. Commission members requested additional information on chemicals or treatment additives used in the cooling process. The plan also includes stormwater management facilities and associated infrastructure consistent with previously approved elements of the project. Fire protection systems will include a dedicated firewater supply and a fire loop around the campus buildings.

The applicant presented conceptual images of similar data center facilities previously constructed by the development team to illustrate the general appearance of the buildings. Final building fades will comply with Township zoning requirements related to materials, architectural treatments, and buffering.

The applicant concluded by briefly describing general operations of the facility. Data centers always operate continuously with staff on site, though many employees typically work during standard daytime business hours. Personnel will include engineering technicians responsible for facility systems and technicians managing network and computing equipment.

## **Public Comments**

Arlene Darlington, Wertzville Road, raised concerns regarding water usage and discharge, specifically questioning what safeguards are in place to ensure discharged water does not impact private wells. Justin Ross responded that water discharge will be monitored by the Middlesex Township Municipal Authority (MTMA) including routine sampling. Jim Gehr clarified that discharge will go into the sewer system, not into nearby creeks. Mark Carpenter responded that MTMA oversees discharge compliance, with enforcement measures such as fines; the facility will be regulated similarly to other users (e.g., truck stops, restaurants).

Phil Neiderer, Old Stonehouse Road, thanked Planning Commission members for their thoughtful questions, noting the complexity and volume of information involved. He stated that a Q&A section will be added to the website and emphasized efforts to improve communication while working under tight timelines.

Andrew Dymski, Bernheisel Bridge Rd, expressed appreciation for the Township's time and consideration. He stated that there is no oversight from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding acoustics, emphasizing that enforcement responsibility rests with the Township and its ordinances. He then commented that the Township has been highly accommodating to the proposed development and referenced urgency from PPL Corporation. Mr. Dymski noted that the Township's data center overlay ordinance was modeled after similar regulations in Virginia. He then presented two primary requests: 1) Ensure that any future noise ordinance updates do not apply retroactively to the current project and establish a binding "good neighbor" agreement tied to the project with clear accountability for violations. 2) Require post-construction noise studies to be provided and recommended that the Township strengthen its noise ordinance overall.

He then submitted his public comments and a Prince William County Noise Ordinance Update PowerPoint Presentation for the record.

Pam Wenner, Fieldstone Drive, noted minimal research she has conducted observed low-level hum, and acknowledged that noise may reach approximately seventy decibels. She did not see any fans on the roof and requested information on the location of all external fans on the project drawings. She then asked how to view the plans. Mark Carpenter advised making an appointment to review the plans. Mike Hess, HRG Engineer, explained that the ordinance includes two noise standards, including a 70-decibel standard near the power line. He clarified that standards do not

disappear during a power outage; the noise study accounts for both “power on” and “power off” scenarios.

Jenny Jackson, Briar Patch Road, asked whether this is the largest or second-largest data center in the country; it was confirmed it is not the largest. Ms. Jackson then raised concerns about potential impacts on local wildlife, including birds and bald eagles, as well as pets due to low-frequency noise. Planning members noted some birds were observed at similar facilities, but other wildlife was minimal. She then expressed concern about water pressure and availability during peak usage, particularly in summer months. Jim Gehr noted that public water conservation restrictions are rare and typically guided by the state.

Barb Simpson, Teaberry Drive, raised concerns regarding water issues at the highest points of the Meadows Development and potential impacts on property values. She noted that data centers can sometimes enhance property values, but sound and light impacts may reduce values for nearby properties. Ms. Simpson then commented that planning a data center in a residential community raises many issues, expressed disappointment about the project, and noted feelings of betrayal despite trusting local supervisors. She indicated feeling somewhat reassured after discussion.

Eric Keller, Teaberry Drive, asked whether the sound study will be conducted after project completion and if mitigation measures will be implemented if noise exceeds limits. He then inquired about planned road construction, including whether any work will occur prior to the project and emphasized that road work should be completed ahead of the project. Justin Ross responded that there are plans to rebuild the road and work with the Township when provisions are to be made.

Josh Asper, Horners Road, had questions about building elevations and if they could see them. Justin Ross noted these have not yet been fully developed. Mike Hess stated they are required for the final plan due to the absence of a defined end user. Mr. Asper asked about plans for handling and monitoring contaminants. Justin Ross explained this will depend on the filtration technology selected, which is still under evaluation and confirmed any byproducts would be transported to a regulated facility. Mr. Asper questioned why natural gas is not being used. Justin Ross stated the comparison between natural gas and diesel is still being considered. Mr. Asper then asked if the developer could provide more refined numbers for the water usage and cooling. Justin Ross said storage will be on-site and calculations depend heavily on temperature and weather data.

Jean Martin, Wild Rose Circle, asked if the water storage tanks would be underground. Justin Ross clarified that the water storage tanks will be above ground and noted they will be similar in design to the Municipal Authority’s tank located off Country Club Road.

Brian Jackson, Briar Patch Drive, expressed concern about noise, noting he lives within half a mile of the site. While generators are a concern, he emphasized that fan noise is the primary issue reported in other communities. He asked about newer fan technologies and whether this project differs from older data centers. Pete McGrath explained that older data centers relied on traditional air conditioning systems, but the industry has since engineered equipment to reduce sound levels. Justin Ross added that newer technologies, including magnetic fan blades, are being used, though he could not speak to specific studies or previously reported issues and also emphasized that the

project includes substantial setbacks (approximately 1,000–1,200 feet from the nearest homes), which, combined with newer technology, is expected to minimize noise impacts.

**Township Staff Informational Comments, with no discussion:** Supervisor Neiderer requested that the developer respond to the Cumberland County Planning Commission comments using a redline format. The meeting concluded with no additional staff comments.

**Adjourn Meeting:** Jim Gehr moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m., seconded by Wes Beard. Motion carried.