

MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

REGULAR MEETING

August 19, 2025

The following were in ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS

Brett McCreary, Chair
Jay Blackwell
Kathleen Hall
Jeff Logan
Brian Wickenheiser

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

James Bennett, Township Planner
Michael Knouse, P.E., Township Engineer
Isaac Sweeney, P.E., CED Director
Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

OTHER

Joe Swartz, Township Commissioner
Steve Hoffman – Cumberland County Planning Dept.

CALL TO ORDER AND PROOF OF PUBLICATION

Mr. McCreary called the August 19, 2025 meeting of the Lower Allen Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm. He announced that proof of publication was available for review.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Mr. **BLACKWELL** motioned to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2025 Regular Meeting. Mr. **LOGAN** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

SLD #2025-04 – Liberty Forge Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development Plan

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Jake Creager, RGS Associates, Brian with EG Stoltzfus and Jason Wheeler from TPD for traffic presented the plan on behalf of the applicant. The plan proposes to subdivide the existing lot into two lots. Lot 1 will consist of the existing golf driving range, miniature golf course, and eating establishment. Lot 2 will consist of 137 single-family detached dwelling units and 56 attached twin side by side dwelling units for a total of 193 dwelling units. Lot 1 is located at 3921 Lisburn Road and Lot 2 is located at 3804 Lisburn Road. The subject lot is located R-2 Single-family Rural Residential District and Open Space Development Overlay District.

A rendering of the plan was demonstrated, highlighting the locations of the main entrance and the emergency access. The portion of the property that falls within Upper Allen Township, which has approved the plan, will primarily be open space and stormwater area. The open space in the plan meets ordinance minimum requirements of 25 % including the amenity space, dog park, trails, meadow and stream restoration. Sidewalks will connect all spaces and trails along Lisburn Road to connect to the trail at Lower Allen Community Park. The open space areas will be maintained by the HOA. The planned stormwater infrastructure retention facilities will reduce the current rate of runoff and three of the existing ponds will be filled in. All permits are under review with conservation district. Public water is planned for the development.

Mr. Stoltzfus reviewed the plan configurations, showing that units would be approximately 2–3-bedroom, 2800 square feet, slab on grade and basement units. The amenity spaces planned include a pool, outdoor pavilion and sports courts. There are 40 acres of open space included in the plan. The age 55+ concept was selected due to the surrounding demographics, and the age restricted concept helps to reduce the burden on public infrastructure.

Mr. Jason Wheeler, the traffic engineer from TPD, noted that the original traffic impact study was submitted to PennDOT and accepted by the township. The impact on the existing driveway locations and the intersection at Main Street and

Lisburn Road was determined to be negligible. He proposed removable bollards or a gate be placed just beyond the residence located adjacent to the emergency access point. The main access located at the south of the site will have a boulevard style entrance with a center median and marked crosswalk to connect pathway to public facilities.

Township Comments

Mr. Knouse referenced the comment letter of August 7, 2025, and reviewed the requested modifications, items A through Q. Under zoning, he noted the need for confirmation of trail system compliance. He also indicated the need for lighting in the community parking community area and clarification of the turning exhibit on the plan. He noted the need for the HOP, water and sewer. The traffic impact study was reviewed and approved by the traffic engineer.

The existing agreement concerning access to the Yellow Breeches from the driving range must be memorialized in the plan. Additionally, details of the emergency access area are needed. For stormwater comments, most items are clean-up issues and the need for DEP comments related to the managed release concept.

Commissioner Comments

Mr. Logan noted the unusual number of waivers and requested additional feedback from staff on each. The following modifications and waiver requests have been submitted for consideration:

a. Section 192-31.A – To provide existing conditions within 150’ of the boundary. Mr. Knouse confirmed staff support for the waiver.

b. Section 192-56.D & Section 192.57.B(1)(H)[1] – To provide a cul-de-sac for Links Drive to the property boundary. Mr. Knouse confirmed staff support for the waiver.

c. Section 192-57.B.(3)(c)[2] – To provide a maximum slope of 7% for the first 20’ of the driveways. Mr. Knouse acknowledged the challenges associated with the detailed slopes of the driveway. Mr. Logan and Mr. McCreary noted the slope would result in dangerous, steep 20-foot driveways.

d. Section 192-57.C.(1) – To widen the pavement width of Lisburn Road. Mr. Knouse noted the default PennDOT requirements for Lisburn Road. Mr. McCreary cited traffic issues. The applicant explained they were only intending to address the requirement and not to provide a turning lane.

e. Section 192-57.C.(1) – To provide a minimum center line radius of 260’ for Street D and Street E. Mr. Knouse noted the waiver was related to the interior design and nature of the development. The Township’s critical point is emergency vehicle access and seeks clarity on the turning template. The applicant indicated that signage would provide direction on restrictions of on-street parking in the turning radius locations. However, parking is only enforced through the HOA.

Mr. Logan asked whether there was a plan for managing snow accumulation areas from plowing and suggested adding them to the plan. The applicant responded that maintenance would be handled by maintenance.

Mr. Wickenheiser asked whether the risk from increased traffic had been assessed. The township traffic engineer noted that the township scoping for a traffic impact study would be completed to determine if additional improvements were needed. It was noted that age-restricted developments are less likely to generate the traffic of typical developments.

Ms. Hall asked if the plan considered public transit access. The applicant indicated that public transit was not contemplated.

Members discussed the possibility of a pedestrian crossing between the community and the driving range facility. Mr. Wickenheiser cited public safety concerns about a crossing at that location on Lisburn Road, where drivers travel at a high rate of speed.

f. Section 192-57.C.(1) – To provide a minimum stopping distance of 200’ for Street and permit a stopping distance of 170’. Mr. Knouse noted the waiver related to internal streets.

g. Section 192-57.C.(6)(b)[3][a][i] – To provide a 150’ minimum offset between streets that intersect from the same street, and to permit 108’ where Street E and Street F intersect with Street D. Mr. Knouse indicated the waiver request related to the turning exhibit which is necessary to make any determination.

h. Section 192-57.C.(8) – To provide curbing along Lisburn Road and Old Forge Road, and to provide eight inches vertical curbs along the streets. Mr. Knouse said the modification would facilitate construction. Several members expressed concern about flooding during heavy rain events. The applicant will review the stormwater management plan and noted a new culvert would be added to mitigate any flooding concerns.

i. Section 192-57.C.(9) – To provide sidewalks along Lisburn Road and Old Forge Road, and private street frontages. Mr. Knouse noted that the plan included a walking path along Lisburn Road that would extend to the LACP and showed their location on the plan rendering. Internally, sidewalks were planned for placement only on one side of the street. Commission members expressed concern about limiting sidewalks to one side.

Also, Mr. McCreary asked the applicant to commit to completing the wearing course on streets within twelve months of completing construction of each phase to mitigate stormwater issue and unnecessary future repairs.

j. Section 192.57.C.(9)(c) – To provide level landing areas where the sidewalk exceeds 5%. Mr. Knouse noted the waiver addressed the main access from Lisburn Road and aims to achieve consistent slope for the road and sidewalk.

k. Section 192-58.C.(6) – To provide street trees within the public right-of-way or immediately outside the public right-of-way. Mr. Knouse indicated the waiver was to accommodate utility installation.

l. Section 192.58.E.(10) & Section 192.59.C.(2) – To provide planting islands designated to collect stormwater and additional paving for parking spaces adjacent to parking islands. Mr. Knouse noted that the proposed alternate was appropriate.

m. Section 192-63.C.(12)(b), Section 184-19.G.(20) & Section 184-19.G.(21) – To provide pavement base drains in all proposed private streets.

n. Section 192-63.A.(2)(a)[1], Section 184-19.G.(16), & Section 184-19.H.(7) – To provide Type C inlets tops with 10” reveal and to permit slant top inlets with no inlet sump for all inlets within private streets.

o. Section 192-63.C.(1)(a) – To provide sidewalks no closer than five feet (5’) from the curblin and permit sidewalks to be two feet (2’) from the curblin.

p. Section – 184-14 – To provide 75% release rate for two (2) years and within drainage area POA.002. Mr. Knouse noted the request is related to the open space area and is appropriate.

Mr. McCreary asked for additional details about the interior dimensions of the garages, as it was unclear whether intended garages could accommodate two parking spaces. Mr. Logan also addressed the issue of garage space and insufficient parking availability. The applicant indicated that more information would be provided later and noted that the HOA would be tasked with managing parking enforcement.

Mr. Knouse noted the driveways are 19 feet wide and 20 feet in length and can accommodate two vehicles.

The location of mailboxes was also discussed. The details were unclear. Mr. Logan noted that if there are remote banks of mailboxes, they should be lit.

Ms. Hall asked for justification of the age-restricted site. The applicant replied that the 55+ community tends to place less demand on resources and infrastructure. Members expressed concern and skepticism about the calculations presented related to projected traffic.

Members asked that a request be made with PennDOT for a flashing pedestrian crossing at Lisburn Road to be addressed in the HOP application.

Ms. Hall also asked the applicant to consider exploring public transit options.

Public Comment

Ms. Kelly Logan, resident of Arcona, noted that Lisburn Road is too narrow and should be widened to accommodate future needs. She also encouraged consideration of sidewalks and paved paths.

Mr. Randy Davis, resident of Lisburn Estates, expressed opposition to the development, voicing concern about increased traffic and accidents along Lisburn Road and existing intersections as well as air pollution and safety issues related to limited sight lines along Lisburn Road and the steep driveway out of the development that will contribute to accumulation of ice on the road.

Ms. Janie Gun, resident living along Lisburn Road, expressed concern about the significant increase in traffic along Lisburn Road, which is already insufficient. She also noted existing stormwater management concerns which negatively impact her property. She noted the high number of waivers and asked how the open space in the proposed plan which will be in Upper Allen Township would satisfy the requirements of open space for Lower Allen. She expressed opposition to the development and a desire for the rural nature of the area maintained.

Ms. Molly Richardson, resident living along Lisburn Road and adjacent to the property, requested the owners to maintain their culverts and expressed concern about stormwater and the impact on her property. She also questioned the need for an age restricted community.

Mr. Steve Barber, resident of Raven Hill Road, identified himself as an engineer, and noted areas of the plan not adequately addressed were density calculation of dwellings per acre, as the open space credits applied are not in Lower Allen Township. He also noted the lack of emergency access and maintenance burden for Lower Allen Township when the HOA is unable to address issues. He questioned the technical integrity of several of the waiver requests and justifications offered and suggested the ultimate motivation for the developer is to maximize density and billable space.

A resident of Allen Estates expressed concerns related to lack of a turning lane on Lisburn Road and adequate access by fire and emergency services vehicles. He also expressed support for the widening of Lisburn Road to accommodate increased traffic.

Responding to a question from Ms. Hall, the applicant noted that the average price of the homes would be approximately \$550,000.

Mr. Wickenheiser noted that the proposed plan contained 17 waiver requests and had 37 comments from engineers. He proposed tabling the plan and asking the developers to work with the township and county to resolve the comments.

Mr. McCreary agreed, noting that plans typically brought before the Planning Commission included only three to four waiver requests. He indicated the need to better understand justifications and noted a major concern about traffic, potential for increased accidents and the need to widen Lisburn Road.

Mr. Logan noted that if the plan complies with Township Ordinance, then they are compelled to approve it, however it does not comply because it is too dense and the hardship presented is cost, which is not an appropriate justification to support the development.

Ms. Hall indicated the need for a clear use case presented, justification of the focus on a 55+ population through a market study, and a clear plan for aging in place and transit connections.

Mr. Blackwell added that the plan for the emergency spillway should be further analyzed to ensure that it does not empty onto the adjacent property.

Recommendation on the Plan

With no further discussion, Mr. **WICKENHEISER** motioned to table the plan allowing the developer, Township, and County to review all waivers, their justifications, and to address all comments. Mr. **LOGAN** seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Alternate Planning Commission Members

Mr. Sweeney expressed appreciation for those who volunteered to serve as alternates and noted the change would be considered by the Board of Commissioners at the meeting on 8-25-25, followed by a comment period. He confirmed that alternate members would be treated the same as full members and are permitted and encouraged to attend and participate in all meetings. Alternate members are limited to making motions and voting when they are officially serving in the capacity of an alternate.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. McCreary announced that the next meeting was scheduled for September 16, 2025.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 PM.