POCONO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2025

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, February 10, 2025 and was opened at 6:00 p.m. by Christina Kauffman, Vice Chair.

**ROLL CALL**

Joe Folsom, present; Christina Kauffman, present; Claire Learn, present; Chris Peechatka, present; Dennis Purcell, absent; Jeremy Sawicki, absent; Kyle VanFleet, present.

Planning Commission Alternates: Bruce Kilby, present., Jordan Merring, present.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Amy Montgomery, Twp. Engineer; Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor; Krisann MacDougall, Township Asst. Secretary.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Robert Danges (Resident) - Questioned the zoning classification of the solar farm, voiced his concerns regarding erosion issues if the trees are cleared as the property is mostly shale, and the solar farm will not benefit the local community.

Dean Wehr (Resident) – Expressed his concerns regarding the proposed solar farm setbacks from residential property lines, the clearing of trees and the lack of benefit to the community.

Jeff Lehman (Resident) – Stated his concerns with the solar farm contaminating the soils from the heavy equipment that will be used to install, stripping of the land and long-term effects of decommissioning solar panels on the environment.

Maria Bras-Danges (Resident) – Stated her concerns regarding the solar farm proposal and the long-term effects on the tourism in the Pocono’s with the trees being stripped away for solar panels, health effects on residents living right next door, and if the majority of the taxpayers in the township don’t want the plan approved how does it move forward.

Dawn Eilber (Resident) – stated that leaseholders do not have the right to amend a property. She suggested that the property owners in communities affected should be involved in the planning process.

Linda Danges (Non-resident) – Questioned where the power is going for the first solar farm that clear-cut the mountain. She also questioned where the power would be going for the solar farm on the current agenda.

John Tabet (Paradise Summit LLC) – Spoke about having property rights for tree removal on property they own. He gave no guarantee as to where the power would be sold.

Patricia Cassell (Resident) – Spoke of the loss of habitat for the wildlife with the stripping of the mountain, the oxygen and natural heat barrier loss with the clear cutting of the trees.

Floyd King (Resident) – Asked why solar farms cannot be put on commercial parking lots instead of desecrating forests.

Steve Larsen (Resident) – Stated his opinion regarding the overlay as being a back-door way to change zoning. Solar Fields are NOT low impact and the R1 zoning district should not be changeable at the whim of a developer.

Charles Kepler (Resident) – Suggested looking into ways to make it more expensive for developers to buy up the mountainside rather than leasing commercial property for solar projects, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the beauty and natural environment of the Pocono Mountains.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**OLD BUSINESS**

C. Learn made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2025 meeting of the Pocono Township Planning Commission. All in favor. Motion carried.

**WAIVERS OF LAND DEVELOPMENT**

**SKETCH PLANS**

Bluewave Solar Array - Summit Rd – LDP 1439

**NEW PLANS**

**PRELIMINARY PLANS UNDER CONSIDERATION**

* Simpson Minor Subdivision (LDP #1426) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 7/8/24 P.C. meeting with approval deadline of APR. 6, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 3/10/25***. J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to recommend the plan for approval to the Board of Commissioners. All in favor. Motion carried.
* Tannersville Point Apartments (LDP# 1358) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 6/10/24 P.C. meeting. Approval deadline of March 31, 2024 ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 03/10/25*** C. Peechatka made a motion, seconded by C. Learn, to table the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.
* Brookdale Spa (LDP #1425) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 9/9 24 P.C. meeting with approval deadline of March 17, 2025 ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 3/10/25.***

J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to table the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.

* 611 Land Development LLC (LDP #1401) – Dual Brand Hotel – Hotel by Marriot -Plans administratively accepted at the 4/8/24 P.C. meeting. Approval deadline of April 18, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 3/10/25.***

J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to recommend the waiver of SALDO Section(s) 390-43. A. (10) & 390-47. C. (2). All in favor. Motion carried.

J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Learn, to recommend the waiver of Ordinance No. 2022-06 Section 365-10(I) Buffers, 365.10(I) 8 Streams a, b, c. All in favor. Motion carried.

J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to recommend the waiver of Ordinance No. 2022-06 Section 365-10 (I) Buffers, Section 365.10 (I) Wetlands a, b, c. All in favor. Motion carried.

K. VanFleet made a motion, seconded by C. Learn, to table the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.

* Swiftwater Solar Revision – (LDP 1375A) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 1/13/25 P.C. meeting. Approval deadline of April 13, 2025 ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 3/10/25.*** J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka to recommend Phase “C” for approval to the Board of Commissioners. All in favor. Motion carried.

C. Learn made a motion, seconded by J. Folsom to table the remaining phases on the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.

* 1124 Sky View Drive Mono-pine Tower (LDP# 1424) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 4/8/24 P.C. meeting with approval deadline of June 4, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 5/12/25.*** J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by K. VanFleet, to table the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.
* MCTA Transit Facilities Expansion – (LDP 1437) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 12/9/24 P.C. meeting with approval deadline of June 3, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 5/12/25.*** J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka to table the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.
* Trap Enterprises Event Center – (LDP 1438) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 1/13/25 P.C. meeting. Approval deadline of April 13, 2025 ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 3/10/25*** J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to table the plan. All in favor. Motion carried.

C. Peechatka made a motion, seconded by K. VanFleet, to table the following plans listed below. All in favor. Motion carried.

* Cranberry Creek Apartments Land Development Plan (LDP# 1369) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 7/25/22 P.C. meeting. Extension letter request received with approval deadline of August 4, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 7/14/25***.
* 135 Warner Road – JBAR Pocono LLC (LDP# 1414) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 2/12/24 P.C. meeting. Approval deadline of September 9, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 8/10/25.***
* Alaska Pete’s Roadhouse Grille (173 Camelback Road) Land Development Plan (LDP# 1387) – Plans were administratively accepted at the 4/10/23 P.C. meeting. Extension request received with approval deadline of December 31, 2025. ***Deadline for P.C. consideration is 12/8/25.***

**PRIORITY LIST**

* Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map & SALDO Amendments
	+ The review process will continue with Nanci Sarcinello, Sarcinello Planning & GIS Services on the 4th Monday of each month. (***February 24th will be our next meeting)***

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dan McCreary (Resident) – Expressed concern about a single zoning officer making a decision on the solar farm’s classification. Stated it should be considered a commercial operation as it would be selling power, therefore not allowed in a Residential zone.

Jeff Lehman (Resident) – Solar panels are NOT environmentally friendly nor are they recyclable. How is energy more important than oxygen?

Maria Bras-Danges (Resident) – Questioned the process of plans and voting them down. L. DeVito explained the process. She requested the Planning Commission to put pressure on the decision makers to protect the Pocono’s.

Patricia Cassell (Resident) – Suggested that the hotels, spas, and convention centers put the solar panels above their parking lots instead of clearing the mountain.

Robert Danges (Resident) – Stated that the access to the High-Tension wires is the reason they want to put the solar panels there. The property is all shale and stripping the trees will cause major issues with erosion.

Dean Wehr (Resident) – The view from Big Pocono is horrible where once it was beautiful.

Dawn Eilber (Resident) – Skyview Dr. Cell Tower will pollute the neighborhood. The Road is a private road.

Karen Fletcher (Resident) – expressed concerns about the proposed development in Incline Village area, increased traffic and impact on the private road which cannot be paved due to environmental concerns.

John Tabet (Paradise Summit LLC) –He is stated the power will be sold and not sure if it will come back to the community. If single family homes were to be built they would still be clearing trees.

**ADJOURNMENT**

J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by C. Peechatka, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.