

MINUTES
Planning Board Regular Meeting
E.S. Douglass Community Center, 1185 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Chair Walden called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Chair Matthew Walden, Vice Chair Kim Wade, Jennifer Garner, Monica Brickey, Andrew Speck, Jason Scribner and Michael Skolnick were present.

Jennifer Garner made a motion, which was seconded by Jason Scribner, to approve the Minutes of the April 2025 regular meeting with one noted correction. The motion carried.

DISCUSSION:

2040 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Projects

Planning Director BJ Grieve explained the historical context of Planned Developments and the requirement for landowner consent. He discussed the challenges of amending a Planned Development when all landowners refuse to sign off on the changes; and how changes in market conditions and development plans have led to difficulties in obtaining landowner consent for amendments. Mr. Grieve also highlighted the impact this requirement has on the Town's ability to implement the Comprehensive Plan and adapt to changing circumstances. He suggested a text amendment to allow for Planned Developments to be amended without requiring landowner consent, but only with sufficient notification. He explained the potential benefits and drawbacks of that approach, including the possibility of public controversy, and sought the Board's input on whether staff should initiate the text amendment or if it should be privately initiated by developers.

Discussion ensued.

Bob Koontz of Koontz Jones Design highlighted the need for flexibility to adapt to changing market conditions and Comprehensive Plan requirements.

Michael Skolnick made a motion, which was seconded Andrew Speck, that the 100% property owner consent requirement be amended to require a notification process and public hearing process instead.

Mr. Grieve next introduced the topic of accessory dwelling units and provided the current limitations and potential changes to the standards to allow more than one ADU per site to provide a long-term affording housing option.

The challenges of implementing missing middle housing, including ADUs and townhomes, to address workforce housing needs was also discussed. Concerns were raised about the feasibility and demand for ADUs, given high construction costs and potential misuse. The discussion highlighted the need for data from other communities and the importance of balancing affordable housing solutions with neighborhood character and market realities.

The conversation shifted to housing projects, including a new subdivision process with administrative review, bonus densities, flexibility for missing middle options, and reduced setbacks and building separation. Infrastructure challenges, such as outdated plumbing and sewer systems, affecting property values and development, were discussed. The Board explored the idea of special assessment districts and municipal service districts to fund infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Grieve stated that staff has been working on updating the sign code, which is one of the Phase 2 Comprehensive Plan implementation projects.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Grieve stated that a revised plan for Village Walk to incorporate townhomes and reduce infrastructure costs had been continued to the July 2025 Town Council regular business meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Grieve stated that the June agenda would include amendments to the sign code, a major subdivision preliminary plat application and a Morganton Park South Preliminary Development Plan.

Jennifer Garner made a motion, which was seconded by Monica Brickey, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Cindy Williams
Secretary to the Planning Board

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.