

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 18, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jonathan L. Bolton, Chairman
Robin Ruhmel, Vice Chairman
Paul Geissinger, Secretary
Kyle Bartosh
Lane Donatelli
Jason Szewczak
Casey Zelena

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Elisa Highley, Keystone Consulting Eng.
Andrew Hoffman., Township Solicitor

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Chairman Bolton read the Fair Housing Statement as required.

Atty. Hoffman facilitated the Planning Commission reorganization and asked for nominations for Chairman. Mr. Geissinger made a motion for the current leadership to remain in place, seconded by Mr. Szewczak. Nominations pass 7-0.

A) SUBMISSION REVIEW:

1) INDEX #2073-26A – AMERICAN PROMO. EVENTS/TNT FIREWORKS

2180 MacArthur Road
Special Exception
Zoning District: C-2
Original Submission Date: 2/12/26
90-Day Expiration Date: 6/12/26

Debbie Ivins representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated March 10, 2026 and Ms. Rackus dated March 11, 2026 were received.

Ms. Ivins reviewed the Special Exception for placement of a tent to sell fireworks with a storage container, port-a-potty. Hours of operation, precautions, and safety measures will be the same as they were in previous years.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion recommend the Special Exception.

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Donatelli. Vote taken 7-0 to recommend.

2) INDEX #2030-23A – HOLLY RIDGE APARTMENTS

9 Packer Avenue
Land Development
Zoning District: R-5A
Original Submission Date: 2/5/26
90-Day Expiration Date: 6/5/26

Joseph Rentko, Black Forest Engineering and Darryl Sorensen, owner representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated March 13, 2026 and Ms. Rackus dated March 13, 2026 were received.

Mr. Rentko reviewed the plan for apartment buildings by consolidating 4 parcels into one 3-acre parcel with one existing apartment building with five (5) unit and 2 proposed buildings with nine (9) "owner-occupied" units each. Site is clear of contaminants and infiltration was done for stormwater management. He reviewed some KCE comments re: Cherry Street & driveway radii. Access to existing building will be maintained during construction.

Mr. Rentko asked about the comment in Ms. Rackus' letter re: sidewalks towards the back of the property on Lehigh Avenue. Mr. Rentko stated a sidewalk deferral might make sense for that section to the back. They will be installing sidewalks in front of the property.

Ms. Ruhmel questioned the 'owner-occupied' statement. Mr. Rentko clarified that one single owner would own all three buildings, but they will be rentals. Ms. Ruhmel also questioned if there would be a ground level walk out in the back of the building, and Mr. Rentko stated there would not be. The design is for a slab on grade 3-story building.

Mr. Zelena expressed concern with 360° access to apartment buildings and lack of emergency access to the back of the building. Mr. Rentko stated there will be a 25-foot fire lane, which meets code, however there will be no access to the rear of the buildings.

Mr. Sorensen stated they originally designed it as one 18-unit building, but the Engineer at the Zoning Hearing Board meeting suggested separating it into 2 buildings so there would be access on 3 sides. Mr. Rentko said he would be willing to meet with the Fire Chief to discuss.

Mr. Zelena also asked about the small sidewalk by the ADA ramp that doesn't go anywhere. Mr. Rentko stated that design items will be addressed during the architectural drawing for the final plan.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table the plan. Motion by Mr. Zelena, second by Mr. Donatelli. Vote taken 7-0 to table.

3) INDEX #2071-25A – SILO DRIVE SUBDIVISION

5270 Silo Drive

Major Subdivision

Zoning District: OS-2

Original Submission Date: 10/31/25; Revised Submission Date: 2/23/26

90-Day Expiration Date: 2/19/26; Extension Expiration Date: 7/31/26

Paul Szewczak, Benchmark Engineering, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated March 13, 2026 and Ms. Rackus dated March 12, 2026 were received.

Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark) reviewed the Silo Drive subdivision plan. He stated that Silo Drive has been developed over the past 15 years into a series of small flex buildings and there are about 12.5 acres left. They would like to construct a permanent cul-de-sac at the end of the drive, carve out a 9.5 acre piece of land, and the remaining 4 acres will get attached to the lot on West Coplay Road. Once the road and building are completed, they would like to 'turn the road over to the Township' and make it a public road. They will extend sidewalks all the way around, there's a little stormwater work to be done and they will extend the water line to the new building. DVS Enterprises owns all the land, and the intent is to retain everything but the 9-acre parcel.

Mr. Geissinger asked if there were any concerns or requirements re: the lots having 2 driveways/accesses. Ms. Rackus doesn't believe there are issues with having 2 driveways.

Mr. Zelena wanted to clarify the 'no new' impervious coverage statement on the plan re: the installation of sidewalks. Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark) stated that they will be removing enough already paved surfaces, that adding the sidewalks will be 'a wash' re: impervious coverage.

Chairman Bolton reviewed the waiver request and stated that there needs to be a more detailed plan in order to approve any waivers.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table. Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Bartosh. Vote taken 7-0 to table.

4) INDEX #2072-25A – SILO DRIVE INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

5270 Silo Drive

Land Development

Zoning District: OS-2

Original Submission Date: 10/31/25; Revised Submission Date: 2/23/26

90-Day Expiration Date: 2/19/26; Extension Expiration Date: 7/31/26

Paul Szewczak, Benchmark Engineering, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated March 13, 2026 and Ms. Rackus dated March 12, 2026 were received.

Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark) reviewed the plans for a 100,000 sq. ft. industrial building. They currently do not have a tenant. Blue Creek Investments will seek out the tenants prior to construction. It will be designed to be multi-tenant, there will be provisions for offices and car parking, a truck court and roughly 10 dock doors and drive-in doors. There will be one central detention pond. The use will be light warehousing or light manufacturing. Designed with 2 entrances to isolate cars from trucks if possible and the cul-de-sac meets length restrictions. After testing, there are no environmental issues noted.

Mr. Geissinger asked if the 'private lateral' is suitable to become a CWSA lateral. Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark), stated that the applicant had to install new sewer lateral line several years ago and they have been in contact with CWSA. Mr. Szewczak (Whitehall), wanted to clarify if it was going to be a Distribution Center, to which Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark), stated that it's too small to be a Distribution Center.

Mr. Bartosh questioned the additional parking shown on the plan that might have to interact with the trucks. Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark) stated that the design was for multi-tenant and the additional parking is built-in as a precaution to address all possible impervious coverage and stormwater issues, but the plan is to 'bank it' and make it green space. If they do end up with a second tenant and there are concerns with the car/truck traffic flow, there is enough flexibility to create another driveway.

Mr. Zelena inquired about the 360° access for emergency vehicles and Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark) stated there should be access to the back and they will discuss with the Fire Chief.

Mr. Bolton asked who would be controlling the tenants that go into the building. Mr. Szewczak (Benchmark) stated the Blue Creek Investments would control the tenancy (not more than 2). Mr. Bolton was concerned with trucks parking on the street for long periods of time. Mr. Szewczak

(Benchmark) stated there would be enough room for 2 trucks to park within the complex, while not interfering with the gate and reiterated there would be a separate entrance for passenger cars.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table. Motion by Mr. Szewczak (Whitehall), second by Mr. Donatelli. Vote taken 7-0 to table.

5) INDEX #2074-26A – PROSOLVE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS – ROOMING/BOARDING HOUSE

855 Third Street
Conditional Use
Zoning District: C-1
Original Submission Date: 2/24/26
60-Day Expiration Date: 4/24/26

Mildred Roxana Salazar, ProSolve, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated March 13, 2026 and Ms. Rackus dated March 11, 2026 were received.

Ms. Salazar reviewed the comment letters. Ms. Salazar spoke with St. John's Church and they will allow parking by agreement. The Conditional Use is requested as residential use; there is no treatment on site and residents will be supervised. The house is already inspected and licensed by the Commonwealth of PA.

Mr. Bolton reviewed specifics in the comment letters, beginning with KCE's letter and the request for a scaled site plan sealed by a design professional, which were not received. They asked for a waiver for this item. Ms. Rackus clarified that the site plan and parking plan requests are included in the Zoning Ordinance, and the Planning Commission cannot give relief for those items. Only the Zoning Hearing Board can determine if relief can be granted.

Atty. Hoffman stated ProSolve would need to submit an application to the Zoning Hearing Board for variance relief. He reviewed some of the specifics related to the Zoning Ordinance and what will be needed for ProSolve to move forward. Ms. Rackus will resend the Variance application to Ms. Salazar.

Mr. Bolton reviewed ProSolve's two options, either get an extension for the Conditional Use and apply for a Variance with the Zoning Hearing Board, or the Planning Commission will have to recommend denial.

Atty. Hoffman stated ProSolve would need to get an extension of 120 days in order to allow time to get in front of the Zoning Hearing Board, then come back to Planning, then to the Board of Commissioners. The whole process will take several months and he encouraged the applicant to retain an attorney.

Ms. Rackus clarified that there is no Certificate of Occupancy (CO) because Development cannot release a clear CO for the use ProSolve is proposing.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table. Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 7-0 to table.

6) INDEX #2075-26A – SANTIA PONS MINOR SUBDIVISION

3002 S. Fifth Avenue
Minor Subdivision
Zoning District: R-4
Original Submission Date: 2/25/26
90-Day Expiration Date: 6/18/26

Bradley Rock, Lehigh Engineering and Santia Pons representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated March 13, 2026 and Ms. Rackus dated March 11, 2026 were received.

Mr. Rock reviewed the comment letters. They've submitted to LVPC but have not heard back yet. They requested an exemption for a planning module and are waiting on a response. Ms. Rackus clarified that if the Board of Commissioners requires sidewalk installation, the security will have to be posted before the plan is recorded. If they grant a deferral, then that's a non-issue. Also, she noted that they would have to request relief for both South Fifth & Chestnut Streets, since the whole property is effected by the sidewalks.

Chairman Bolton, once again, noted that the deferral must meet all the requirements, in order to be granted by the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Rock asked if the sidewalk deferral could be withdrawn and fee refunded if they decided it would not be feasible, which Ms. Rackus replied affirmatively.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table. Motion by Mr. Bartosh, second by Ms. Ruhmel.

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

ANNUAL REPORT

Motion to approve by Mr. Geissinger, second by Mr. Szewczak, report approved.

SALDO AMENDMENT – Plan Submission Requirements

Ms. Rackus stated that there needs to be more thought put into this amendment and she would like more time to discuss with Atty. Gross. Mr. Bolton and several members agreed that when things get ironed out, they would like a face-to-face meeting with the Board of Commissioners to clarify what they would like as well.

C) OTHER:

Approval of November 2025 Meeting Minutes. Vote taken 7-0 to approve.

D) ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.