

West Finley Township
Planning Commission Meeting

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

The Planning Commission of West Finley Township held a meeting on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the West Finley Township Building. Vice-Chairman Mark Adams, Melinda Duncan, Tracey Smith, Al Lash, Angela Lash and Tim Moore. Secretary/Treasurer, and Mary Eileen Dindal were also present. Chairman David Pritt, Henrietta O'Brien and Tredd Barton were absent.

CALL TO ORDER by Vice-Chairman Mark Adams at 6:30 p.m., followed by pledge and prayer.

PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve prior meeting minutes by Vice-Chairman Mark Adams, second by Tracey Smith; all in favor, ayes, 3 – motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Angela Lash shared research she had done about other townships with comprehensive plans, most townships do not have one but wished that they had, especially related to data centers. She spoke to Freedom Township, who is of similar size to us, and they recommended that we contact DCED to apply for a comprehensive planning grant. Such is available to apply for online, and the same login information that may have been used for other grants must also be used for this one. Freedom Township did provide Angela Lash with a copy of their comprehensive plan for reference. However, Angela did mention that most of the plan is “gobbledygook,” mostly wrote to appease with several demographic charts and maps. Also, she was informed that there is a website that provides such demographic information free of charge. Tracey Smith asked if she thought that after Angela Lash had spoken with Freedom Township, does she think we have the capability to create a comprehensive plan on our own. Angela Lash answered by saying no, Freedom Township said that we should still use professional services to make sure “I’s are dotted T’s are crossed.” It was further encouraged that we should shop around, not to be in a rush or scrambling. Also, not allow companies to convince us to change zoning maps. We should follow sound legal advice as to prevent getting “snookered,” and practice due diligence. Most members are still in agreeance that the cost of Strategic Solutions cannot be justified. Attendees took a moment to express gratitude for Tracey Smith and Angela Lash’s efforts.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mark Adams spoke to Amwell Township, and they have a plan that is currently being reevaluated. Angela Lash contacted East Finley Township to possibly review their comprehensive plan however she was told that it could not be readily located at the time. Melinda Duncan questioned how often those plans need to be updated and are other townships frequently updating such?

Angela Lash said that Freedom Township has protected rural areas through the Conservation District. Mark Adams replied by informing attendees that West Finley Township is already a participating member of the Conservation District programs, which are overseen by Washington County. Therefore, Mark Adams believes that Freedom Township might have an easement of sorts. Tracey Smith asked if being a

member of the Conservation District s helpful to us as a township. Mark Adams answered by saying yes, it does but it can unfortunately vary due to who is holding office within the district. He continued to explain that the township has had grants in the past with other departments within the Conservation District. It was also clarified that if we use a grant funded by the district that we are required to adhere to their protocol and procedures.

Tracey Smith brought up the issue of signing documents in perpetuity with certain companies that ultimately take away access of the property owner; process of credits and payouts, it's all "smoke and mirrors." Tim Moore understands protective measures for the sake of protecting something else but does not agree that property owners should lose rights to their own property. Mark Adams further added that if so, the property owner is still held responsible for cleaning and maintaining anything placed on the property.

In reference to an application for funding, Tracey Smith suggested that we include unique highlights of our township, the "more colorful the better." She watched a webinar that indicated the more effort that is put into an application, the more likely it is to be accepted. Also, we will have to prove that the township has enough funds (at least 50%) to put toward the application.

Regarding the transition of engineering companies, a gray area was spoke of as "open permits." Tim Moore and Tracey Smith believe there should be an overlap between the two during the process. Some did not agree and thought otherwise. Nonetheless, prices will have to be adjusted, and attendees would like to review pricelists of Harshman Engineering; Mark Adams and Melinda Duncan expressed that accepting any costs/fees will require a vote of acceptance/denial. Tim Moore would prefer the permits to be taken care of in-house to save the township \$24.00. Tracey Smith and Al Lash added that the cost of permits are overpriced for structures such as a "pre-fab" shed. Tim Moore recommends that we make sure all the "BS" is cut out of the process/pricing. It was agreed among members and attendees that anything related to safety is acceptable. Recommended to the Board of Supervisors that the acceptance or extent of using Strategic Solutions for the township Comprehensive Plan be tabled.

PERSONNEL

Organization of new members was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

Was shared by Angela Lash during public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Mark Adams, second by Tracey Smith, all in favor – 3 ayes, motion carried.