

East Manchester Township
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
February 24, 2026

At a regular meeting held at the Township Building, the following members were present: Edward Hewitt, Mike McCowan, Mike Scarborough, Herb Nix, and Troy Rentzel. Also present: Engineer Laymon Mortorff, Zoning Officer Kate Snyder, Recording Secretary, and eight citizens.

Chairman McCowan called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

Minutes

Correction to the minutes of the meeting of January 27, 2026, as follows: page 2, paragraph/sentence that begins “YCPC comments dated...” *the date should be November 13, not ~~November 21~~*. So, the sentence should read YCPC comments dated November 13, 2025, have been satisfied, with the exception of comment numbers 5a, 5b, and 5d, signatures will need to be added to the plan for recording.” Farther down the page, before the Motion by Hewitt, second by Scarborough, insert a sentence that reads, “MPL letter dated February 4, 2026, needs to be satisfied.”

Motion by Nix, second by Rentzel, to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 27, 2026, as amended above. All members voted aye; motion carried.

Plans

Casella/265 Steamboat Boulevard, Final Land Development Plan, 1500SF building expansion

Adam Anderson from James R. Holley Associates was present on behalf of the applicant. This plan involves the expansion of the office buildings. It was noted that the gravel area has been expanded. There are 31 existing parking spaces on the site; 23 are required. A previously approved plan did not include the expansion of the gravel area.

GLB’s letter dated February 5, 2026, was reviewed. Outstanding items: 2B, sewer authority signatures; 2C, surety; 2D owner’s signature. The YCPC letter dated February 11, 2026, was reviewed. Open items: 2B, duplicate of 2D above (owner’s signature); and 4, add the waiver request to the plan. Also, any MPL items from the letter dated February 4, 2026, need to be satisfied.

Waiver request/modification: Section 208-21.A, preliminary plan. **Motion by Scarborough, second by Hewitt, to recommend approval of the waiver request as presented. All members voted aye; motion carried.**

Motion by Hewitt, second by Nix, to recommend approval of the final land development plan for 265 Steamboat Boulevard, subject to the satisfactory resolution of the following items from the letters referred to above: GLBA letter - 2B, 2C, 2D; YCPC 2B, and 4; AND the MPL letter’s items. All members voted aye; motion carried.

East Manchester Township data center ordinances

Chapter 255 (Zoning) – amendment to create a new Data Center Overlay district
Chapter 83 (Data Centers) – to establish health, safety, and public welfare standards for data centers

Discussion was held on the latest version of the ordinance. YCPC is also reviewing this ordinance. Attorney Miller noted that this ordinance has been through several public meetings and numerous comments and revisions. Tonight's meeting will provide any additional recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and a recommendation for approval of the ordinance. The BOS made a few changes to the ordinance, one being to make the data center a permitted use. Given the detail of the ordinance, the Township could consolidate the process into one LDP phase, with an applicant bringing a land development plan to the PC and BOS and being required to meet all ordinance specifications. Also, the BOS wanted to retain as much ability as possible to make modifications, rather than bifurcating the decision process. To that end, an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance is proposed (Chapter 255). Any deviations would require a zoning hearing. Plus, a stand-alone ordinance (Chapter 83) is proposed to be addressed as part of the land development process.

Attorney Miller reviewed the Zoning Ordinance amendment. The Bitzer, Lowe, and sewer authority properties were added in the overlay district. Also, the number of buildings per lot was changed/updated. Maximum height was placed at 75'. Lot coverages were updated. Setback distances were updated as well. Sensitive Receptors were identified and clarified. Buffer strips were discussed. With a 50-foot buffer strip, the plants might be spread out and wouldn't create a visual screen. With a smaller strip, the plants would need to be closer together, creating a fuller screen. Good to think about. It was noted that the overlay will cover some R-2 properties and some Agricultural properties.

The maximum height was discussed. The 75' height was added to the ordinance by the Board of Supervisors, with the idea that a higher building would be better than a building with a larger footprint. It was noted that a higher building would be harder to screen, though. Also, from another public meeting, the fire chief said that a higher building would be difficult to defend in a fire, because the Township doesn't have equipment to reach a building of that height. How about keeping the height to what the maximum current underlying district height requirements are; Agricultural (A) is 55 feet and Medium Density Residential District (R-2) is 35 feet.

Next, the stand-alone ordinance for data centers was reviewed. Attorney Miller noted the changes that were made to this ordinance. Sound studies were discussed. A preliminary sound study is required, then an interim study is required, then an as-built study is required prior to obtaining an occupancy permit. Also, within six months of occupancy, a post-construction sound study is required. Provisions are made to permit the Township to conduct post-construction sound studies if situations warrant. Replacement of equipment was discussed, and whether the Township has a list of equipment that is acceptable, taking into account sound issues.

Chairman McCowan reported that there's a small data center on the Wellspan campus in York and no one really knows it's there, so they're not all huge.

From Mr. Nix, why is our fine only \$1K/day? Attorney Miller stated we are bound by the requirements of the Second-Class Township code.

Also from Mr. Nix, can anything be done to incorporate a walking trail on the data center site, to provide a benefit to the community? Attorney Miller thinks there are multiple ways to accomplish this. Options abound. Also, Mr. Nix had a question on the preamble, and Attorney Miller explained.

From Mr. Hewitt, why wasn't the island considered? Although it is in the Industrial District, no request by that owner has been submitted to be included.

From the audience, Daniel Loych, 670 Locust Street, asked some questions. He wondered if a data center could fit into a "research and development use" already in the Industrial District. Attorney Miller strongly disagreed that a data center is research and development. Plus, if a data center were classed as R and D, the limitations are very few. Mr. Loych thinks that a data center should be confined to the Industrial District. Why not use the Industrial District on the island? He still thinks that the data center use should be classified as research and development. Mr. Scarborough noted that the Township's Industrial District is not an option for a data center. That's why the Township cannot put a data center application in the Industrial District.

Also from Mr. Loych, the residents of Saginaw proposed some solutions or options and aren't seeing any results from their input. They're seeing the data center being closer to their homes. Could part of the lot be removed from the proposal to provide more of a distance between the data center and the residents of Saginaw? Mr. Loych and Cheryl Lowe discussed the mapping and the topography of the land, but frankly, we're past that point.

So, what about the maximum height? The Planning Commission will be recommending that the Board of Supervisors reexamine that number.

Mr. Loych had a question about the buffer and the spreading out of the plants in the buffer. He would like to have a deeper buffer rather than a linear buffer, doubling the depth of the buffer and thereby doubling the number of plants within that buffer. Mr. Scarborough said that the discussion and eventual decision of the Planning Commission tonight is moving in the direction that Mr. Loych is proposing.

Also, Mr. Loych had a question on closed loop and semi closed water systems as included in the ordinance – Attorney Miller clarified that the terms mentioned in the ordinance were added to require any applicant to use one of those systems.

Motion by Nix, second by Scarborough, to recommend approval of the ordinances with the following suggestions: reconsider the buffer strip language, reduce the overall building height to match the underlying zone, and consider a larger ratio for the number of buildings per acre. All members voted aye; motion carried.

New Business

Likely a meeting in March. Stay tuned. Chairman McCowan will not be at that meeting.

Motion by Hewitt, second by Nix, to adjourn. All members voted aye; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie B. Maher, Recording Secretary