



The Almshouse Neshaminy Manor Center 1260 Almshouse Road
Doylestown, Pennsylvania 18901 215.345.3400 FAX 215.345.3886
E-mail: bcpc@buckscounty.org

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Craig E. Bryson, *Chairman*
R. Tyler Tomlinson, Esq., *Vice Chairman*
Edward Kisselback, Jr., *Secretary*

Joan M. Cullen
Richard Donovan
David R. Nyman
Carol A. Pierce
Tom Tosti
Walter S. Wydro

Evan J. Stone
Executive Director

January 4, 2021

To: Bucks County Municipalities

From: Evan J. Stone, PLA, Executive Director
Bucks County Planning Commission

RE: **Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC) Activities and Procedures
2021 Update**

Hello and Happy New Year! I hope this finds you all well as we continue to navigate the global pandemic and remain hopeful that newly released vaccines will enable us to resume a more normal existence.

As has become my practice, I annually send this letter as a refresher for both existing as well as newly appointed managers, elected officials and board members. This update simply serves as a reminder and reinforcement about our responsibilities and the timeline for which various reviews are to be completed. Like all of you, the COVID pandemic necessitated that our department adapt our procedures to ensure that the delivery of our services and required duties were still met.

As we move into 2021 and continue to navigate the pandemic landscape, we wanted to outline the schedule of board meetings for the BCPC and to inform you about our latest electronic submission procedures for applications. *Most notably for 2021, all application review fees have been increased effective January 1, 2021 and a new 2021 application has been issued.*

What follows is a description of the procedures and timeline we use for our BCPC reviews. We have also included procedures on the recording of plans where subdivision and land development has been waived. As always, we welcome your discussion and participation in the review process and appreciate your understanding and cooperation with the timeliness of review submissions as noted below.

BCPC Board Meeting Schedule

The BCPC Board is a nine-member advisory commission appointed by the Bucks County Commissioners. The BCPC Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 PM. Until further notice, these meetings are being conducted virtually. Meetings are open to the public via telephone participation. The meeting schedule, call in information, and meeting packets are posted here on the planning commission's website: <http://aboutus-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/>. We encourage you and your residents to check frequently for updates. Feel free to host this link on your own municipal website.



Procedures for Reviews of Subdivisions and Land Developments (Act 247)

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), BCPC staff receives and reviews plans for all new subdivisions and land developments proposed in the county's 54 municipalities. The BCPC now requires digital/electronic submission of all proposed plans and supplemental reports, such as traffic impact studies and planning modules. The newly updated 2021 Subdivision and Land Development Review Application can be found at:

<http://www.buckscounty.org/government/PlanningCommission>

Our latest submission procedures are attached herewith. When received, all applications are reviewed for completeness. The official review clock starts once the application is logged into our system database and the required fees are physically received. We must complete our review within 30 days of receipt, as required by the Municipalities Planning Code.

Act 247 reviews are distributed as soon as they have been completed by staff. Reviews are sent to municipal officials with copies to the applicant and the applicant's consultants, if requested.

The reviews for subdivisions and land developments do not have to be officially approved by the BCPC board. Procedurally, all reviews completed in the month prior and up to our cut-off date, are included in each board member's packet and are presented to the BCPC Board at their next meeting.

The individual projects are not discussed at the meeting unless there are questions raised by board members or the public. Each review letter contains the date of the BCPC board meeting when it will be on the meeting's agenda. After completion of the board meeting, all packets are posted to the BCPC website and can be found here: <http://aboutus-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/>

As a reference tool, our interactive web-based GIS map of all proposed land development activity in the county can be found on the county's Maps and Data Portal:

<https://development-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/>

Recording of Subdivisions and Land Developments

The BCPC no longer physically signs record plans. Requirements for the recording of approved subdivision and land development plans can be found here:

<http://www.buckscounty.org/government/RowOfficers/RecorderofDeeds>. A BCPC number is required to be placed on all approved subdivisions and land developments, indicating that the BCPC has reviewed the plan in accordance with PaMPC requirements. However, we understand that there are circumstances where the subdivision and land development process has been waived and therefore no BCPC review is required. In these cases, "N/A" may be placed on the BCPC signature line, but ***the applicant must provide a letter to the Recorder of Deeds from the municipality stating that the process has been waived.*** The letter will be scanned at the Recorder's office and provided to us electronically so that we may officially sign off on the plan.

Municipal Reviews

Reviews of Ordinances, Comprehensive Plans, Ordinance Amendments, School District Actions, and Municipal Land Acquisition

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Sections 304 and 305) requires that the county planning commission review and comment on all municipal actions, including the following:

1. The location, opening, vacation, extension, widening, narrowing or enlargement of any street, public ground, pier head or watercourse;
2. The location, erection, demolition, removal or sale of any public structures located within the municipality;
3. The adoption, amendment or repeal of any comprehensive plan, official map, subdivision or land development ordinance, zoning ordinance or provisions for planned residential development; or
4. The construction, extension or abandonment of any water line, sewer line or sewage treatment facility; or
5. Any proposed action of a public school district relating to the location, demolition, removal, sale, or lease of a school district structure or land. The BCPC has 45 days in which to review and comment on any school district action.

The BCPC procedure for what we deem "Municipal Reviews" is as follows:

1. BCPC receives the application for municipal or school district activity. Municipal applications may now be submitted electronically as well. All municipal proposals and official correspondence should be submitted to: planningcommission@buckscounty.org and copied to Evan Stone at estone@buckscounty.org, and Michael Roedig at maroedig@buckscounty.org. Please do not send proposals to individual staff planners. A municipal proposal is not considered "received" until an acknowledgment email is received back from planningcommission@buckscounty.org.
2. We schedule the review, in most cases, for the next BCPC board meeting, which is the first Wednesday of the month.
3. The BCPC maintains a calendar of "cut-off" dates to ensure that municipal applications which are received, can be adequately reviewed by staff. If the application is submitted after our cut-off date for the next BCPC board meeting, it will be reviewed at the following meeting. A list of the cut-off dates for the remainder of 2021 is attached. Generally speaking, the cut-off date is the Friday that occurs two weeks before the first Wednesday of the next month. ***The BCPC has 45 days in which to review and comment on the proposal.***

In the event of extenuating circumstances, in which reviews are needed in an expedited time frame, we encourage the municipality to contact staff to discuss the timeframe and specific details of the proposal.

4. There is no fee for municipal proposals submitted by a municipal government or school district.
5. Municipal reviews must be approved by the BCPC Board at their regular monthly meeting.
6. No copies of municipal reviews will be distributed prior to the BCPC meeting and approval by the Board. This is to avoid the distribution of review comments that are unofficial and not yet approved by the BCPC Board. The Board may make changes to the review at their meeting.

7. The review comments will be sent to the municipal government following the BCPC meeting after the review has been approved by the BCPC Board.
8. Municipal officials who wish to discuss their applications for new plans, amendments, or other actions are welcome to call staff and discuss them with us prior to the completion of the draft review comments. You are also welcome to attend the BCPC Board meetings at which the review will be reviewed and approved and offer any suggestions or comments. We will not send a preview copy of the review, but the draft review comments are available at the meeting.
9. Should a zoning or a subdivision and land development ordinance amendment be adopted by the municipal governing body, a copy must be sent to our offices within 30 days, as required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

In closing, I encourage all of you to visit the Maps and Data Portal as we continue to refine and add more content. Most notable in 2020 we launched our new Municipal Dashboard. The Municipal Dashboard provides all residents with a one stop location for information on all 54 municipalities in the county. The portal can be found at the following link. Please feel free to share this as well with your residents.

<http://dataportal-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/>

We look forward to working closely with you on planning and development issues, and as always, we welcome your feedback and comments. Feel free to contact me, or our Director of Planning Services, Michael Roedig, directly, with any questions or comments.

Stay healthy.

Sincerely,

Bucks County Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "EJ Stone".

Evan J. Stone, PLA

Executive Director

enclosures

BCPC Municipal and Act 247 Subdivision and Land Development Application Instructions Issued January 1, 2021

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and to ensure the timely review of subdivision and land development applications, the BCPC has adopted the following **new electronic submission procedures effective immediately, until further notice.**

Procedures for Reviews of Subdivisions and Land Developments (Act 247)

As a result of the COVID pandemic, all proposed plans and supplemental reports, such as traffic impact studies and planning modules are to be submitted electronically. The newly updated 2021 Subdivision and Land Development Review Application can be found at:

<http://www.buckscounty.org/government/PlanningCommission>

The new procedures for electronically submitting an application are as follows:

1. A completed BCPC application form is to be emailed to: planningcommission@buckscounty.org and copied to Evan Stone, BCPC Executive Director, at estone@buckscounty.org, and Michael Roedig, BCPC Director of Planning Services, at maroedig@buckscounty.org. Please do not email applications to individual staff planners. **Do not mail/submit the fee check or plans until Steps 2 and 3 below are completed.**
2. The application form will be reviewed for completeness then an acknowledgment email will be sent back from planningcommission@buckscounty.org, including the assigned BCPC number and a link to a ShareBase folder to upload the plans and supplemental documents. **Once the documents have been uploaded to the folder, please reply to the planningcommission@buckscounty.org email with the ShareBase link confirming the upload of the submission documents.**
3. An email will be sent back from planningcommission@buckscounty.org confirming the review fee and BCPC number. **Please indicate the BCPC number on the fee check along with the tax parcel number(s) of the subject parcel(s) in the submitted application. Once this payment is received by the BCPC, the plan will be officially logged in, and the required PaMPC 30-day review clock will start.**
4. Please mail the confirmed fee check noting the assigned BCPC number, plan name, and TMP number(s), via the USPS to the BCPC at 1260 Almshouse Road, Doylestown, PA 18901. This will ensure proper crediting of the fee with the application.
5. If an application is deemed incomplete or the fee is calculated incorrectly, this will be communicated back to the submitting party in an email from: planningcommission@buckscounty.org.

Act 247 reviews are distributed as soon as they have been completed by staff. Reviews will be emailed to municipal officials with copies to the applicant and the applicant's consultants, if requested. **Either on the application or in the submitting email, please provide the email addresses of all parties to receive a copy of the review.**

BCPC Municipal and Act 247 Subdivision and Land Development Application Instructions**Planning Module Reviews (Act 537)**

Planning Modules are to be submitted electronically. All planning modules and official correspondence should be submitted to: planningcommission@buckscounty.org and copied to Evan Stone, BCPC Executive Director, at estone@buckscounty.org, and Michael Roedig, BCPC Director of Planning Services, at maroedig@buckscounty.org. Please do not send proposals to individual staff planners. **Submissions must include a DEP code.**

The application will be reviewed for completeness then an acknowledgment email will be sent back from planningcommission@buckscounty.org, including the assigned BCPC number and a link to a ShareBase folder to upload the planning module and supplemental documents. Once the documents have been uploaded to the folder, please reply to the planningcommission@buckscounty.org email with the ShareBase link confirming the upload of the submission documents. An email will be sent back from planningcommission@buckscounty.org confirming the receipt of the planning module.

Municipal Reviews

Reviews of Ordinances, Comprehensive Plans, Ordinance Amendments, School District Actions, and Municipal Land Acquisitions

Municipal applications are to be submitted electronically. All municipal proposals and official correspondence should be submitted to: planningcommission@buckscounty.org and copied to Evan Stone, BCPC Executive Director, at estone@buckscounty.org, and Michael Roedig, BCPC Director of Planning Services, at maroedig@buckscounty.org. Please do not send applications to individual staff planners. A municipal proposal is not considered “received” until an acknowledgment email is received back from planningcommission@buckscounty.org.

Municipal reviews are distributed after they are approved by the BCPC Board at their monthly meeting. Reviews are emailed to municipal officials with copies to the municipal solicitor. If additional parties require a copy, please indicate on the submitting email and please provide their email addresses.

Recording of Subdivisions and Land Developments

The BCPC no longer physically signs record plans. Requirements for the recording of approved subdivision and land development plans can be found at:

<http://www.buckscounty.org/government/RowOfficers/RecorderofDeeds>. A BCPC number is required to be placed on all approved subdivisions and land developments, indicating that the BCPC has reviewed the plan in accordance with PaMPC requirements. However, we understand that there are circumstances where the subdivision and land development process has been waived and therefore *no BCPC review is required. In these cases, “N/A” may be placed on the BCPC signature line, but the applicant must provide a letter to the Recorder of Deeds from the municipality stating that the process has been waived. The letter will be scanned at the Recorder’s office and provided to us electronically so that we may officially sign off on the plan.*

BCPC Municipal and Act 247 Subdivision and Land Development Application Instructions

BCPC Board Meeting Schedule

Until further notice, the BCPC Board will meet virtually on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 PM. Meetings are open to applicants and the public. A public telephone call in number will be posted to the BCPC website no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting. All meeting information can be found here: <http://aboutus-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/>

For updated information from the County, and our COVID-19 response please visit:

<https://covid19-bucksgis.hub.arcgis.com/>