Coolbaugh Township Board of Supervisors
Work Session Minutes
October 6, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chairman Weimer at the Coolbaugh Township Municipal Center located at 5520 Municipal Drive, Tobyhanna, PA.

Board Members Present:
William Weimer, Alma I. Ruiz-Smith, Clare Colgan, Lynn Kelly and Cara Rogan

Board Members Absent:
None

Staff Present:
Patrick Armstrong, Solicitor, Erin Masker, Township Secretary, Meredith Eilber, Business Manager, Tomas Keane, Director of Codes and Zoning

Staff Absent:
None

1. Discussion Regarding Proposed Zoning Text Amendment – Apartment Units Per Building

Mark Bahnick, Van Cleef Engineering, Andrew Miklos- Evergreen Farms were in attendance to discuss their proposed apartment building complex that would be located on Prospect Street in Tobyhanna. They proposed a 240-unit apartment development and requested the Board's consideration of a zoning text amendment increasing the permitted number of apartment units per building from the current ten (10) to the proposed twenty-four (24). M. Bahnick explained that the proposed 24-unit configuration would consist of three stories with eight apartments per floor, common stairways and a patio or balcony for each apartment. The applicant compared this layout with an 18-unit building configuration and stated that the larger buildings would be more economical to construct and operate while allowing the same overall number of apartments in fewer buildings.

The applicant presented conceptual site layouts indicating approximately 16% site disturbance for the 24-unit building arrangement versus 22% for the 18-unit arrangement. The applicant stated that fewer buildings and more compact parking areas could reduce impervious coverage and stormwater runoff. Mr. Weimer asked whether the buildings could be moved closer to Interstate 380 and farther from existing residences. The applicant indicated that revisions to the conceptual layout could be considered. The drawings were identified as comparisons rather than formal development plans.

Ms. Ruiz-Smith discussed building accessibility, particularly for older residents. A. Miklos stated that first-floor apartments would be designed as accessible units, while the three-story buildings would not have elevators. The proposed apartments would include a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, with in-unit washers and dryers. Ms. Kelly asked about the DEP standards for the sewer, being advised that DEP current requirement is 400 gallons per day per apartment, but M. Bahnick believes that the amount at the time of submission of the Sewage Planning Module will be less. The applicant described the development as market-rate housing with an emphasis on accommodating seniors. The concept also included a roughly 2,800-square-foot community

center, meeting and gathering space, an outdoor swimming pool and patio. Two parking spaces per unit were shown consistent with the Township ordinance; the applicant indicated a willingness to consider reducing parking if permitted.

Ms. Kelly questioned access to the development, proximity to the Tobyhanna Creek, and utilities. The applicant described a single entrance/exit and stated that buildings were approximately 250 feet from the creek. The proposal contemplated public water and sprinkler systems in all buildings. Wastewater would be handled through a large community on-lot septic system with primary and backup areas, potentially located across Route 423 from the buildings. The applicant said that public wastewater service had been explored but was not currently available. Ms. Kelly asked about the projected wastewater flows, system design, regulatory review and responsibility for long-term operation; the applicant advised that final DEP design assumptions had not yet been established. Ms. Ruiz-Smith asked about property management experience, proposed rental rates and responsibility for grounds maintenance. The Board considered the demand for rental housing and the implications of permitting 24 units per building throughout the applicable zoning district rather than only on this property. Solicitor Armstrong explained that the matter before the Board was a possible zoning ordinance text amendment, not approval of a land development plan. He had prepared a preliminary ordinance draft with the permitted unit count left blank. He and the Township Engineer could consider additional safeguards, including limitations on building length, if the Board wished to pursue an amendment.

- **Discussion:** J. Miller expressed support for carefully evaluating housing needs but raised concerns regarding the creek buffer, the broader precedent of a zoning amendment, the proposed wastewater system, responsibility for its operation and potential environmental effects on Tobyhanna Creek. Chairman Weimer thanked the gentlemen and advised that this would be on another work session for the Board to continue discussions and encouraged the applicant to attend in case there are any questions.

2. Public Comment

No further comments were heard.

There being no further comments, the work session was closed at 6:29pm.

Submitted by _____ Date _____

Erin Masker, Township Secretary

Witnessed by _____ Date _____

William Weimer, Chairman