

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday  
August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Joseph Knowles, Council President  
Ed Kisselback, Council Vice President  
Stacey Champion, Council Member

**SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:**

Joseph DiGirolamo, Mayor  
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary  
Ken Ferris, Township Solicitor  
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor  
Philip Wursta, Township Engineer

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of their microphone.**

**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:**

**Council President Knowles** opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, MAYOR AND STAFF:**

**Council President Knowles** introduced the Mayor, Council Members and Supporting Staff.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Council President Knowles** indicated the Public Comment will be heard at the time the agenda item is heard. Seeing no one come forward the first of two Public Comments was closed.

**4. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

**Council Vice President Kisselback** motioned to approve the Council Meeting Minutes from July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 as presented. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF A PRELIMINARY LAND DEVELOPMENT FOR:**

**Applicant:** School Lane Charter School  
**Location:** 3340 & 3350 Tillman Drive  
**Proposed Use:** Gymnasium  
**Zoning Classification:** PCD – Planned Commercial Park District  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-035-001-004 & 02-035-001-00

**Nick Rose, P.E.**, Protact Engineering, Inc., introduced Karen Lane from the School Lane Charter School and Jerry Atley from the Elias Organization, the Project Architect.

**Mr. Rose** submitted the Certified Mail Notices, Proof of Delivery, to the Township Solicitor.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** asked the applicant if they were looking for a Preliminary and Final for the Land Development.

**Council President Knowles** asked the Township Solicitor, Mr. Pizzo, if they were ready for a Preliminary and Final and Mr. Pizzo indicated that if the presentation went well, then they can make it a Preliminary and Final.

**Mr. Rose** indicated that School Lane Charter School has the two buildings on Tillman Drive. They have building 3340 on the left and 3350 on the right, which is the current building. The applicant wants to take the paving in the middle of the site and replace it with a gymnasium building. There is no actual plan to increase the number of students, or to increase staff.

There is only a minimal amount of impervious coverage that is proposed. Even though there are basins downstream designed to handle it all, they are proposing some stormwater management just below the building and the applicant will comply.

**Council President Knowles** asked the applicant if there was parking at the back of the lot.

**Mr. Rose** indicated that there was parking all the way around the site, and that will stay.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** asked the applicant when will they have the stormwater management in place for the Township Engineer to review.

**Mr. Rose** indicated they could have that information to the Township Engineer in a couple of weeks. It was on the plan, but the letter just asked for it to be put into a Storm Report, which the applicant can certainly do and have it within a matter of weeks.

**Vice President Kisselback** asked the Township Engineer, Mr. Wursta, if he was okay with the applicant getting the stormwater report to him in the next couple of weeks. Engineer Wursta indicated that was fine.

**Mr. Rose** indicated that the building was approximately 25,000 sq. ft. The existing buildings are about 60,000 square feet. Although the gymnasium is a large building it is a relatively simple project just because it is replacing impervious coverage.

**Council President Knowles** asked how much of the 25,000 square feet is a gymnasium and how much is additional space beside the gymnasium?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that the gymnasium itself is about 25,000 square feet and then in addition to that there are two-story sets of classrooms and some office spaces. There are three classrooms in the new part which is for a band and two Performing Arts classrooms. They are adjacent to the first-floor gym space. The second story has three additional classrooms. Six altogether with some business offices that they will be putting into the second story.

**Council President Knowles** asked if the plan is to cater or serve the current number of students?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that they will be keeping the number the same as what they had originally proposed back in 2012/2013.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked is the number they proposed, is that what has been approved by the Fire Department? Is that the maximum capacity approved by the Fire Marshall? Or is it a larger number by the Fire Marshall?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that it was her understanding that it wouldn't be larger. The classroom space is larger than their capacity of 25 students. The band room is over 1,000 square feet. Band could be more than 25 students, but right now the 9 through 12 band is 12 students. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade band is about 50 students, but they don't all play together at the same time.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** asked how many offices?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that there are 10 small offices upstairs. The current business office space that is in 3340 in the corner will be turned into a small instruction space for special education students.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** asked if that would allow them to increase their students?

**Ms. Lane** indicated it would not, they are not looking to increase students, but their special education population has changed quite a bit. They now need small instruction spaces, not just for students with special needs, but that are what they would consider language and mathematics needs. They also have behavioral support and autistic support.

**Councilwoman Champion** indicated that would be additional staff.

**Ms. Lane** indicated that they were just basically moving some of the students around. It is not additional staff; they have one room and one teacher who is floating through four different rooms with her sets of students because that is all the space they have.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** asked how many students do they have in high school?

**Ms. Lane** indicated the grades are 7 through 12 and there are approximately 525 students.

**Council President Knowles** referred to Mr. Pizzo and indicated that he would assume that when they build the new building the Township Fire Marshall will go in and determine what they need and are required to put in the new building and how many students are allowed in the building.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that the Fire Marshall has already reviewed the plan and commented from a planning perspective as to what the plan needed in respect to fire lanes and things of that nature. As far as the maximum capacity of the buildings, that is rated by the Fire Marshall's office. It is not part of the Land Development. It is part of the Use and Occupancy process, the maximum capacity is determined.

**Council President Knowles** asked the applicant if the Fire Marshall's report was a will comply with all of the requirements?

**Mr. Rose** indicated that the applicant would comply with the Fire Marshall's requirements.

**Mr. Rose** indicated that they have been through the two review letters from the Township Engineer's office, the memo for traffic and the memo for engineering. The applicant has worked with the Township Engineer's office to make sure none of those issues were anything significant and had solutions to all of those.

**Council President Knowles** asked the applicant if they had additional parking if there were any special events?

**Mr. Rose** indicated that they actually have considerably more parking than they need. They are required by Ordinance to have 277 parking spaces and they have over 280 parking spaces, but they don't need nearly that many because there are students that don't drive.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked where they got the general assembly area of 3,000 square feet?

**Mr. Rose** indicated that it was in the gymnasium, assuming they put up chairs.

**Councilwoman Champion** indicated that the other 22,000 square feet are the offices inside the gymnasium area and is straight up and open. There are two floors on one side. There is no interior rendition here to understand what the applicant is talking about it, which would have been very helpful to understand better, had it been attached.

**Ms. Lane** indicated that the classrooms and the business offices are on top of each other in the area of the gym in front of Tillman Drive, which is the front entrance of the building.

**Council President Knowles** indicated the stormwater management is a will comply as to whatever they require to be done the applicant is willing to do.

**Ms. Lane** indicated they would comply with all requirements.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** asked the applicant if they would be willing to agree to limit the number of students in the future to possibly a 10% increase?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that would be something between the school and the district. To date they have not done that, and they usually have gone by what their capacity is.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked if the student capacity for each classroom was 25 and have, they reached that capacity limit?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that they were under that but have a lot of classrooms that seat 5 and 6 students by the nature of the international classroom.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked what is the total student capacity and how would the parking look for that?

**Mr. Rose** indicated that 277 is just the number that is required by the ordinance, 287 is what they have.

**Ms. Lane** indicated that they currently have about, at most, 15 to 20 students that drive. As for the teachers in both campuses they have about 65 staff members. They do have overflow parking agreements with the church next door to them. They allow them to use their parking lot on the weekends and in the evening if necessary. In return the church next door allows School Lane to use their parking lot for the same in the same space if there is not an event for them. There is actually a gated walkthrough that the church next door created.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked it was a “Gentleman’s Agreement” or a written agreement?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that it was a “Gentleman’s Agreement.”

**Council President Knowles** asked how long School Lane Charter High School has been at that location?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that they opened that campus in 2015/2016.

**Council President Knowles** indicated, besides the safety of the children for capacity, the approval comes from the State.

**Ms. Lane** indicated currently their charter doesn’t have a cap on attendance and enrollment, for them it has been open. They did have a number when they were building the high school that they were trying to reach. They haven’t even come close to that number in the years that they have been open at the high school mostly for a variety of reasons. COVID didn’t help them much, and now they are building back up their numbers.

1474 was originally the number when they put in the Charter to create the 9, 10, 11 and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. What they didn’t realize was you can think of the 25 students per classroom, which works really well in an elementary school. But with a high school, especially when you hit 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, where they are taking credits and particular courses and have the International Baccalaureate Program. They offer the Diploma Program, but not all of their students take that course and have seen a lot of classes that are closer to 10. Thinking that they need classes for 25 and only so many classes, they actually have come to the realization that they need classes that might be a little smaller that seat 10 to 12, maybe 15. Also, they realized they needed additional lab space.

It is an interesting different dynamic than elementary school. It just never occurred to them that they would have plenty of space. They always knew they wanted to build the gym as it is an important component for any high school. The addition of classrooms came from the fact that they are so tight capacity wise. The Special Education would be much better if they had a room where they were most of the day, rather than having to travel around the building to what was open and available.

**Council President Knowles** asked what percentage of the Cornwell’s Charter School students that graduate come to the high school?

**Ms. Lane** indicated that they are currently enrolling 125 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Out of the 125 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders this year they have lost 35. But a 65 to 70 percentage of the students do attend the High School. This year they opened up 11<sup>th</sup> grade for enrollment for the Diploma Program. They have been receiving a lot of students from other schools that want the challenge of the Diploma Program which starts in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Council President Knowles** asked Solicitor Pizzo if Council had enough with the Charter School agreeing to the stormwater management and the Fire Marshall's office to do a Final and Preliminary?

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated yes, if all of the items in the various review letters are all will comply items and the representatives of the school have represented that they are, then if Council is so inclined, they can make this a Preliminary and Final. The only additional would be that whatever the requirements are in terms of submission of an application for a final land development would be complied with. They are under the Township Ordinance that additional documentation has to be submitted. School Lane will provide that to the Department of Building and Planning as part of the condition for preliminary and final approval.

**Council President Knowles** asked Solicitor Pizzo if their notices were in order?

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that the notices do appear to be in order.

**Council President Knowles** indicated that the preliminary and final land development for School Lane Charter High School located at 3340 and 3350 Tilman Drive for a gymnasium is in a Planned Commercial District and asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this addition?

The following constituent came forward:

**Patricia Moroz**, 2918 Murray Avenue, indicated there is a drainage ditch between her property and the back of the high school. The concern goes back to 2011/2012. At that time Parx Casino did some work on the drainage which was the first phase. There was supposed to be another phase that addressed further down along stream toward the Poquessing Creek behind her property. The second phase was never done and indicated that she had an email from Mr. Ron Gans dated June of 2011 where he indicated that it was the first phase and there were concerns about erosion that was raised by the Lanigan Engineers. The information was given at the Township Planning meeting and she wanted to bring the matter up to Council.

**Council President Knowles** asked Mrs. Moroz if she would give her name and address to the Assistant Council Secretary, Debora McBreen, and will have the Township Engineer make sure that he comes out to her property to look at her situation. This may be an opportunity that it gets done correctly.

**The Mayor** indicated he would follow up with the Township Engineer, Mr. Phil Wursta, and have the matter looked into.

Seeing no one else come forward, the Public Comment portion was closed.

**Council President Knowles** indicated Council would consider the Preliminary and Final Land Development and would be conditioned upon the stormwater being approved, accepted and will comply with anything that is required. Also, any additional matters besides what is in the report for the Fire Marshall's office will be a will comply. Any engineering will be submitted to the Building and Planning Department will be a will comply.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** accepted as a motion from the President to put on the floor.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that all of the items identified in the June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Preliminary Land Development Plan review prepared by WK2 are all will comply items. The items identified in the May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 review memorandum from the Township Fire Rescue Department and the items identified in the June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 Land Development Accessibility review and prepared by Brian Moss. The July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Traffic Impact Fee letter from WK2 which obviously indicated that there is no Impact Fee for the property.

All of the items contained in those letters are will comply items. The applicant will comply with all of the requirements of the Township Engineer regarding stormwater management facilities and that should include additional review of the drainage facilities running between the property and the properties on Murray Avenue including but not limited to the property at 2928 Murray Avenue to make sure there is no runoff coming from the property onto any of those properties. The applicant will comply with all of the requirements of the final land development plan submission as set forth in the Township subdivision land development ordinance.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** seconded the motion as informed and verified by the Township Solicitor.

**The Mayor** asked if the facility may be used by the community and indicated that it should be added as per their discussion.

**Ms. Lane** indicated once they have their approval, the Mayor had requested a letter from School Lane indicating that the community may use the gymnasium.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that School Lane didn't commit to the School District's Facility Policy. School Lane is committing to make the facility available to the community and that will be worked through with the Administration once the facility is in operation. In many cases the School District's requirements may not be what they are going to otherwise impose on the Township.

**Council President Knowles** adjusted his motion. Council Vice President Kisselback adjusted his seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF A REDUCED PERMIT FEE FOR THE SAMARPAN HINDU TEMPLE LOCATED AT 2746 MECHANICSVILLE ROAD.**

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that consistent with the Township's waiver of certain Township fees for nonprofit organizations and community organizations the Samarpan Hindu Temple on Mechanicsville Road is planning to construct a new entrance for its facility. There is a Township Alteration of Land application fee. They have requested that those fees be reduced consistent with the Township's policies and that would result in the \$800 fee being reduced down to \$400.

**Council President Knowles** indicated that even though Council is reducing the fee, it has nothing to do with whether they are permitted to do what they are doing.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that was correct. They will have to comply with all of the Township's Building Codes, Land Alteration Codes, and the like. Anything that might be involved in construction of the new entrance.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** motioned to accept the reduced permit fee from \$800 to \$400 for the Samarpan Hindu Temple located at 2746 Mechanicsville Road. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the vote carried 3-0.

7. **CONSIDERATION OF THREE (3) ESCROW RELEASES:**

**A. Developers Request:** Faith Unity – Release #4  
**Location:** Richlieu Road  
**Tax Parcel:** 2-1-55-002  
**Amount:** \$55,204.42

**Engineer Wursta** indicated Faith Unity is requesting a release of \$55,204.42. The balance is \$12,000 which involves work regarding the bio-retention basin and a fire hydrant has to be installed.

**Councilwoman Champion** motioned to approve the Escrow Release for Faith Unity, TMP # 2-1-55-002 subject to an audit by the Finance Department. **Council Vice President Kisselback** seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

**B. Developers Request:** PA Steel – Release #3  
**Location:** 1717 Woodhaven Drive  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-060-013-017  
**Amount:** \$37,270.00

**Engineer Wursta** indicated that the work has finally been completed and the final payment is for survey and layout of the closeout and their return of a 10% contingency.

**Councilwoman Champion** motioned to approve TMP# 02-060-13-017 in the amount of \$37,270 subject to an audit by the Finance Department. **Council Vice President Kisselback** seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

**C. Developers Request:** DALFO L/D – Release #2  
**Location:** 4001 Bristol Road  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-018-003  
**Amount:** \$40,230.00

**Engineer Wursta** indicated the release is for \$40,230 and the project is coming to a close, they are holding back money for certain issues such as the completion of inspections, additional grading, etc.

**Councilwoman Champion** approved the Escrow Release for TMP #02-018-003 in the amount of \$40,230 subject to an audit by the Finance Department. **Council Vice President Kisselback** seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

8. **CONSENT TO WITHDRAW PLANNING MODULE APPROVAL AND CANCELLATION OF ALLOCATIONS OF EDU'S:**

**Project Name:** 2600 State Road  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-065-021

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that Council previously approved the Land Development Plan for 2600 State Road. One of the conditions of approval is that the applicant have the required water and sewer to serve the site. Subsequent to the Land Development approval, Council approved an amendment to the Act 537 Plan that would have provided the necessary sewer capacity to the site.

The applicant at this time, is not going to be moving forward with the project. What they are asking to do is to have the planning module approval withdrawn, thereby taking the sewer capacity away from the site and freeing it up for use elsewhere in the Township.

The County Water and Sewer Authority and the DEP require a letter from the Township acknowledging the withdrawal of the capacity from the site and the undoing of the amendment to the Act 537 Plan. The letter before Council would accomplish that purpose.

If Council is inclined to approve the sending of the letter, there should be an acknowledgement within the letter. That at any point in time in the future if the owner of 2600 State Road wishes to proceed with construction there, they are going to have to go back to DEP and get sewer capacity issued again because it remains a condition of Council's earlier approval.

**Council President Knowles** asked Solicitor Pizzo if 2600 State Road was commercial?

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that it was actually zoned in the R55 District.

**Council President Knowles** asked Solicitor Pizzo what were they going to put there?

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that they had proposed a warehouse facility. At this point they are not going to move forward with that project. The market having changed for warehousing, they may never move forward with it.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked Solicitor Pizzo to explain the EDU's.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that typically the procedure would be that they would purchase the capacity from the County Water and Sewer Authority who is the retail sewer provider for the Township. In this case, if they are relinquishing the capacity, then the authority's capacity is to refund what was paid for the capacity back to the property owner, but the property owner is relinquishing all rights to the capacity.

Language is going to have to be added and there's an error referring to the Bensalem Township Council as a Borough.

**Council President Knowles** asked for a motion to consent to withdraw the Planning Module approval and cancellation as per Solicitor Pizzo's advice for 2600 State Road.

**Council Vice President Kisselback** indicated that he would put that in a form of a motion. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There being no one in the audience the second Public Comment was closed.

10. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that he will need an Executive Session with Council following tonight's meeting for no more than ten minutes. The purpose would be to update Council on a matter of pending litigation. No official action will be required during that Executive Session and no official action is required this evening in anticipation of that Executive Session but the Right To Know Law does require that it be announced and the public has been so advised.

Happy Labor Day everyone!

**Mayor** wished Solicitor Pizzo a Happy Birthday!

**The Mayor** attended several Township school openings today. St. Charles opens tomorrow and St. Ephrem's opens after the Labor Day Holiday. Please be careful driving. School buses have cameras on them. This Wednesday night the weather is going to be phenomenal for the Hollywood Nights Bob Seger Tribute Band concert. The Big 80's concert will be held on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Ultimate Michal Jackson Tribute Band concert will be held on Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Fall Festival is little over a month away, October 4<sup>th</sup>. Electronic Recycling Event will be held on October 20<sup>th</sup> to Bensalem Township residents ONLY! Shredding Event will be October 25<sup>th</sup> for the residents of Bensalem.

Happy Labor Day everyone!

**Councilwoman Champion** Happy Labor Day! School has started and the children are taking buses early in the morning so please be careful around the bus stops and slow down on the main roads. Good Luck to all the sports that are starting up for all the schools in the Township.

**Engineer Wursta** Go Phillies, Go Birds!!

**Council Vice President Kisselback** wished everyone a Happy Labor Day! Bensalem has the best Union people who live and work in our great Township. They do a wonderful job and can't thank them enough for everything they do. Kids are in school now so be careful of those yellow buses because they do stop.

**The Mayor** indicated that there has been a lot of work done at the Country Club. The Mayor indicated that they serve lunch at the Country Club and people should have their lunch there, that their food is very good and the atmosphere is very nice. Come out and have a great lunch at the Country Club.

**Council President Knowles** wished everyone a Happy Labor Day! Be careful with the school buses, please stop! There have been accidents with quads running around the Township. Now there are electric scooters and electric bikes riding around at night with a very, very little light headlight on the front of the scooter which you really can't see until you are right on top of the scooter. Very dangerous situation with these scooters.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

[www.bensalenpa.gov](http://www.bensalenpa.gov)

or

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Debora F. McBreen**  
**Recording Secretary**