

**/HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hilltown Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman John Apple at 7:00 PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Also present were Planning Commission members: David Bartholomew, Eric Nogami, Robert Sichelstiel, and Carol Pierce, along with Township Engineer Timothy Fulmer and Township Solicitor Jack Wuerstle.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – action on the minutes of the November 3, 2025, meeting: Motion was made by Ms. Pierce, seconded by Mr. Bartholomew, and carried unanimously to approve the November 3, 2025, meeting minutes as written. There was no public comment. Mr. Sichelstiel abstained.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: None.
3. CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS:
 - a. Front Porch Cohousing Private Zoning Petition: Township Solicitor Jack Wuerstle addressed the audience and explained the process of the Private Zoning Petition as well as how the meeting will proceed.

Township Engineer Timothy Fulmer stated the applicant filed a private request for a zoning ordinance amendment to permit a neuro-inclusive residential development with the Township on September 18, 2025. Mr. Fulmer introduced Attorney John VanLuvanee, representing Front Porch Cohousing to further discuss the petition.

Mr. VanLuvanee introduced all the professionals involved with the project. Mr. VanLuvanee advised they did not want to challenge the present ordinance and are instead presenting a proposed amendment of the Zoning Ordinance for the Township's consideration to establish a new Collaborative Living Community use that would be permitted by Conditional Use in the RR Zoning district, and would be limited to frontage only along Route 113 on parcels between 3 and 15 acres in area. Mr. VanLuvanee also presented a prospective 52 unit development plan noting it was not the subject of the hearing, but strictly for visual reference at this time.

Jim Richardson, CEO of Front Porch Cohousing, distributed a Language and Terminology Guide on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) to the Planning Commission members to aid the Board during his discussion. Mr. Richardson noted in the cohousing everyone will live independently, stressing the importance of neighborhood and community. Mr. Richardson then had various other stakeholders speak on the importance and need of this type of cohousing. Discussion ensued about the importance of this type of use.

Chairman Apple inquired how many units there would be for residents. Mr. Richardson noted there would potentially be 50 units and two additional units for community managers, noting 25 of the units would be for neurodivergent individuals and the other 25 for neurotypical individuals mentioning that most would be two-bedroom units. Mr. Apple asked if parents would be allowed to reside with the residents. Mr. Richardson stated there can be a variety of individuals residing with the I/DD residents. Mr. Apple then asked if the units will be free to buy and sell to which Mr. Richardson stated that the I/DD units would be deed restricted.

Mr. Sichelstiel inquired on how many parcels would qualify for the proposed zoning change. Mr. VanLuvanee referred the question to Mr. Fulmer who stated there are potentially six existing parcels that could qualify for the use, based on the proposed use ordinance and his review of current Bucks County Tax Mapping. Mr. Fulmer noted this does not include any potential future properties that could be subdivided or smaller properties combined.

Mr. Bartholomew inquired if the 25 non I/DD units would incur a profit. Mr. Richardson stated the I/DD units would be sold at market value, while the non-profit would do its best to offset costs for the other 25 units to enable access for I/DD individuals.

Mr. Sichelstiel asked why the applicant chose to proceed with changing the ordinance rather than a variance request. Mr. VanLuvanee advised that the changes needed to enable the proposed use are not viable for a variance request.

Chairman Apple opened the floor to public comment.

Thomas Ruvo of 1407 Rt 113 voiced his opposition to the project due to how it would personally affect him as well as changes to the neighborhood.

Stephanie Crider of 5 Glen Court voiced her concerns on the impact to the area, density, and felt that the projects intent is not clear.

Mary Hall of 3259 Bushwood Drive voiced her concerns as a realtor and resident noting she felt the project would negatively affect property values and objected to the location of the project due to traffic and density concerns.

James Thomas of 3 Glen Court stated he was against the project noting he felt the location and noise in the area would be a trigger for the residents, noting how it would personally affect him and that he felt there was lack of notice for the project.

Judy Ruvo of 1407 Rt 113 voiced her opinions as an RN noting the project sounds beautiful but that neuro-divergent persons need help and do not drive to go places and are better served in a care facility noting that the proposed property would not be safe and fair for the community.

Tim Daniels of 2537 Peachtree Drive inquired if there was an age restriction and voiced his concerns with no clinical staff on site such as a group home, noting he believes the project is for high functioning individuals who should not live alone which brings concern for safety and legality.

Paula Rowe of 779 Minsi Trail voiced concerns on the impact to her homes value due to the project being a current unapproved use in the RR district.

Scott Rubel of 1421 Rt 113 voiced his concerns on high density and impervious surfaces noting the project is a great idea but does not belong in the RR district.

Chairman Apple then closed the floor to public comment. Discussion then ensued amongst the Commission on whether to proceed with the meeting or postpone after further review of the petition and documents presented. Ultimately discussion ensued between the Commission and the Applicant about the aforementioned requested changes to the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Nogami stated he thought the concept is noble and noted there is a place within Hilltown for it, however he voiced his concerns with the zoning change in the RR district. Mr. Nogami noted he would prefer to see something similar to the age qualified zoning.

Motion was made by Mr. Nogami, seconded by Mr. Bartholomew, and carried 3-1-1 with a nay from Mr. Apple and Ms. Pierce abstaining to recommend that the Township deny the private petition for Zoning Ordinance amendment.

4. PLANNING: None.
5. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS: None.
6. OLD BUSINESS: None.
7. NEW BUSINESS: None.
8. PLANS TO ACCEPT FOR REVIEW ONLY (No Discussion): None.
9. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.
10. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS: Ms. Pierce commended Mr. Richardson for his traffic impact assessment report noting it was one of the more professional reports she has seen.
11. PRESS CONFERENCE: None.
12. ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion by Mr. Sichelstiel, seconded by Ms. Pierce, and carried unanimously, the November 17, 2025 Hilltown Township Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Deanna Ferry, DPA
Township Manager

(*NOTE: These minutes were transcribed from notes and should not be considered official until approved by the Planning Commission at a public meeting).