

Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting

Monday, February 9th, 2026 | 7:00 p.m.

1) Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Leighton called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2) Roll Call

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Gallardo called roll. Supervisors Leighton, Gallardo and Kane were in attendance. Ms. Hannah and Mr. Ksiazek were not in attendance. Also present were Township Manager Eden Ratliff, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla and various department heads

3) Upcoming Meetings and Events

a) Next Board of Supervisors Meeting – Monday March 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

4) Special Items

a) Black History Month Proclamation

Mr. Gallardo read the proclamation aloud, recognizing the significance of Black History Month. The proclamation emphasized the importance of education, reflection, and community engagement in celebrating Black history and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society

b) CDBG Application – Delta Community Supports

Mr. Valla announced that Delta Community Supports, a nonprofit serving adults with intellectual and/or physical disabilities, is seeking funding through the Bucks County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Delta recently acquired a new Bucks County adult day program facility and is requesting \$216,000 in CDBG funding to replace outdated and inefficient HVAC equipment with a new energy-efficient system. The Township's role is to assist in fulfilling the public notice requirement for the application.

c) Retirement Recognition – Bill Whitaker & Paul Kopera

The Board of Supervisors recognized Bill Whitaker for his 46 years of dedicated service to Middletown Township in the Public Works Department. Public Works Director Eric Gartenmayer spoke about Mr. Whitaker's long tenure, his valuable knowledge, and his significant contributions to the department and Township. Mr. Whitaker was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his service and commitment. The Board expressed its gratitude and congratulated Mr. Whitaker, noting he will be greatly missed and wishing him well in his retirement.

The Board of Supervisors recognized Paul Kopera for his nearly 20 years of dedicated service to Middletown Township. Mr. Ratliff highlighted Mr. Kopera's enthusiasm, commitment to putting residents first, and his significant contributions to the Township's parks, trails, and recreation initiatives. Mr. Kopera was also recognized for his strong

relationships within the community and his extensive knowledge of the Township's history. The Board expressed its sincere appreciation and wished him well in his retirement.

The Township presented a video tribute featuring staff sharing memories and expressing appreciation for Mr. Kopera's mentorship, leadership, and humor. Former Township Manager Stephanie Teoli Kuhls, Assistant Director Patrick Graham, members of the Youth Aid Panel, and members of the Board of Supervisors offered remarks recognizing Mr. Kopera's dedication, leadership, and lasting contributions to Middletown Township. Speakers highlighted his role in expanding recreation programs, building community partnerships, mentoring staff and youth, and enhancing the Township's parks and community events.

Mr. Kopera was presented with a plaque and additional recognition in appreciation of his nearly 20 years of service. The Board and community members expressed their sincere gratitude and wished him well in his retirement, noting his lasting impact on the Township and its residents.

5) Public Comment – Non Agenda Items

Sheldon Post, Middletown resident, commented on the Board's potential public comment policy, expressing opposition to implementing a time limit and to separating public comment on agenda and non-agenda items, stating these changes could discourage participation and limit meaningful input.

Mr. Post also raised concerns regarding the clarity of Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board agenda items, noting that some descriptions are difficult for residents to understand. He requested that agenda items include clearer, more descriptive information to improve transparency and public awareness.

Additionally, Mr. Post inquired about road core sampling work conducted on his street. Public Works Director Eric Gartenmayer explained that core samples are taken to evaluate pavement conditions and assist in designing roadway improvements.

Mr. Post concluded by commending the Public Works Department for its snow removal efforts.

Missy Kitzmiller, Middletown resident, thanked and recognized Paul Kopera for his years of service and stated his retirement leaves a significant gap. Ms. Kitzmiller requested transparency regarding the hiring/transition process, assurance that the selected leadership's qualifications align with the responsibilities of the role, and additional support for remaining staff to maintain successful programs and events.

Michael Morris, Middletown resident, congratulated Bill Whitaker and Paul Kopera on their retirement and thanked them for their service. Mr. Morris expressed support for improving the clarity of agenda descriptions to enhance transparency and recommended that agenda items be written in a more understandable format for residents. He also suggested that speakers slow their pace during meetings to improve accessibility for viewers.

Mr. Morris inquired about recent stormwater work in his neighborhood and expressed appreciation for the ongoing improvements.

Additionally, Mr. Morris asked about the status of the previously discussed Request for Proposals (RFP) for pension management services and encouraged the Township to consider using the RFP process for professional services to promote transparency and ensure competitive pricing.

6) Consent Agenda Items

- a) Consideration of authorizing payment of February 9, 2026, Bills List in the amount of \$2,587,139.07.
- b) Consideration of approving the January 5, 2026 and January 12, 2026 Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Middletown Township Board of Supervisors.
- c) Consideration of authorizing advertisement of bid specifications for various 2026 projects.
- d) Consideration of adopting Resolution #26-09R appointing bank signatories.
- e) Consideration of adopting Resolution #26-10R declaring a snow emergency beginning January 24, 2026.
- f) Consideration of authorizing Change Order #2 in the amount of negative \$87,349.89 for the 2025 Middletown Township Road Program.
- g) Consideration of authorizing Payment Certificate #2 (Final) in the amount of \$59,026.03 for the 2025 Road Improvement Program.
- h) Consideration of enacting Ordinance #26-01 to adopt amendment to the Police Department Ordinance, removing job descriptions from codification.
- i) Consideration of enacting Ordinance #26-02 to adopt the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code with modifications.
- j) Consideration of affirming termination of the police services contract with Sesame Place (SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment LLC.)

Ms. Kane requested that the Board be notified as 2026 bid projects progress so they may remain informed. Mr. Ratliff confirmed that updates will be provided to the Board and included in future department head reports for public awareness.

Mr. Ratliff also addressed the item regarding affirmation of the termination of the current police services agreement with Sesame Place. He stated that Middletown Township maintains a positive relationship with Sesame Place and expects that relationship to continue. The Township is pursuing updated contract terms to ensure taxpayers are not subsidizing the service and will provide updates as negotiations continue.

Action: Ms. Kane made a motion to approve the consent agenda items A-J, seconded by Mr. Gallardo.

Eric Bruno, Middletown resident, commented on Consent Agenda Item F, noting that the project was completed approximately \$87,000 under budget, and commended the Township for the cost savings. He also acknowledged the Township's efforts to reduce expenses through renegotiated contracts and expressed appreciation for the Township's fiscal responsibility.

A motion carried by a vote of 3-0.

7) Consideration of Amended Final Land Development Application S/LD #25-1 at 1411 Highland Avenue TMP #22-016-183 R-2 Residential Zoning District, to add a small addition and reconfigure existing parking lot.

Mr. Ennis presented an amended final land development application for the daycare expansion at 1411 Highland Avenue. The project previously received approval in June 2025. The amendment replaces the originally proposed second-story addition with a one-story addition that wraps around the existing accessory building. Parking will be reconfigured to improve drop-off and pick-up circulation.

The Planning Commission recommended approval in January 2026. Impervious coverage is slightly reduced due to added landscaping, and Township engineering staff confirmed compliance with stormwater management requirements.

Action: Ms. Kane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gallardo, to grant amended final land development plan approval for the proposed expansion to the daycare facility at 1411 Highland Avenue SLD 25-1 with the following conditions:

- **Application shall comply in full with all requirements of the Middletown Township subdivision and land development ordinance and the Middletown Township zoning ordinance unless relief was granted by the body having jurisdiction**
- **Any remaining review comments shall be addressed in full.**

Daniel Caprello, Middletown resident, expressed concerns regarding stormwater management and neighborhood notification. He stated his residence was not among those notified and asked whether downhill neighbors were included in the notification process.

Township staff confirmed that public notice was provided in accordance with the Township's zoning ordinance requirements. Engineering staff further explained that the applicant submitted a stormwater management report demonstrating compliance with Township regulations and that prior review comments had been addressed. It was confirmed that the plan under consideration reflects the stormwater design being presented for approval.

A motion carried by a vote of 3-0.

8) Consideration of Minor Subdivision Application S/LD #25-9 at 830 Old Lincoln Highway TMP#22-013-213, R-2 Residential Zoning District, for construction of one new single-family dwelling with the existing dwelling to remain.

Jim Ennis, Director of Building & Zoning, presented the subdivision and land development application to subdivide one existing lot into two conforming residential lots at 830 Old Lincoln Highway. The existing 58,200 square-foot lot will be divided to create one new

vacant lot with frontage along Richardson Avenue, intended for the construction of a single-family dwelling.

Township staff noted the application complies with all zoning requirements and did not require any variances. The Planning Commission reviewed the application at its January 2026 meeting and recommended approval. The applicant requested a waiver from the sidewalk requirement and agreed to pay a fee in lieu of sidewalk installation, as there are no existing sidewalks in the surrounding area.

The Board discussed potential tree removal, confirming that while some trees may be removed, the area does not meet the definition of woodland and no tree replacement is required. Staff also confirmed both lots meet zoning requirements.

Action: Mr. Gallardo made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kane, to grant a subdivision and land development plan for approval for 830 Old Lincoln Highway two lot subdivision and construction of an additional dwelling SLD 25-13 with the following conditions:

- **Applicant shall comply in full with all requirements of the Middletown Township subdivision and land development ordinance and the Middletown Township zoning ordinance unless relief was granted by the body having jurisdiction.**
- **Any remaining review comments shall be addressed in full.**

Michael Morris, Middletown resident, asked whether any variances were required and about the absence of sidewalks. The applicant confirmed no variances are needed and that setbacks comply with Township standards. It was explained that no sidewalks exist along West Richardson Road, sidewalks are not permitted along Old Lincoln Highway (a state road), and a waiver is requested due to the lack of existing pedestrian connections in the area.

A motion carried by a vote of 3-0.

9) Neshaminy Consortium Presentation by Karen Ogden, Bucks County Conservation District, and consideration of authorizing drafting and advertisement of an ordinance to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Neshaminy Watershed Consortium.

Karen Ogden (Bucks County Conservation District) and Ken Jones (Neshaminy Watershed Association) presented a proposal to form a watershed consortium among participating municipalities to improve stormwater management. They explained the consortium would provide collaboration, grant support, public education, and volunteer coordination to help municipalities address MS4 requirements and watershed initiatives.

They requested the Township consider joining the consortium, designate a representative to attend bimonthly meetings, and adopt an ordinance to formalize participation. Board members expressed support, noting the benefits of grant opportunities, community involvement, and continued environmental stewardship. Mr. Valla also noted the Stormwater Advisory Committee previously reviewed the proposal and supported its consideration.

Action: Ms. Kane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leighton, to authorize the township solicitor to draft and advertise an ordinance establishing participation in the Neshaminy Watershed Consortium.

A motion carried by a vote of 3-0.

10) Consideration of authorizing advertisement of an ordinance to increase the speed limit on Big Oak Road from 25 MPH to 35 MPH and to add stop signs to Flame Drive at the intersection with Fir Avenue and Elisa Lynn Way at the intersection with Fir Avenue.

Mr. Valla presented a proposed amendment to increase the speed limit on Big Oak Road from 25 MPH to 35 MPH, based on a traffic engineering study and the improved condition of the roadway. He explained the road is primarily industrial with no residential frontage, and the prior reduction was due to poor road conditions that no longer exist. Additional signage, including a reduced speed near the railroad curve, would be installed. Mr. Valla noted no negative feedback had been received, and the Traffic Commission supported the recommendation based on the engineer's analysis.

Mr. Valla presented a proposed amendment to add stop signs at the intersections of Elisa Lynn Way and Flame Drive with Fur Avenue in the Langhorne Gables neighborhood, following a neighborhood request due to nearby school bus stops. Although stop signs are not required under the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code, the Traffic Commission recommended the addition based on typical neighborhood design and safety considerations. Mr. Valla also explained that stop signs are traffic control devices used to regulate traffic flow, and requests are evaluated based on roadway design, safety concerns, and input from the Traffic Commission and Police Department.

Action: Mr. Gallardo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leighton, to authorize the township solicitor to draft and advertise an ordinance to increase the speed limit on Big Oak Road from 25 MPH to 35 MPH and to add stop signs on Flame Drive at Fur Avenue and on Elisa Lynn Way at Fure Avenue.

A motion carried by a vote of 3-0.

11) Consideration of authorizing the Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Stipend Incentive.

Mr. Ratliff presented authorization of the Township's Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Stipend Incentive Program, a longstanding initiative that provides financial incentives to qualifying volunteers serving the Township's four fire companies and the Pennadel-Middletown Emergency Squad. In 2025, \$72,479 was distributed across five agencies. The Board previously approved an increase to the stipend in the 2026 budget, raising it from \$250 to \$599 per qualifying volunteer. A total of 121 volunteers qualified this year, reflecting an increase from prior years.

Discussion included the importance of the program in supporting recruitment and retention, particularly for volunteers who are not Middletown residents and therefore ineligible for the Township's tax credit incentives. The Board also discussed the potential for additional outreach to promote volunteer recruitment and publicize the incentive program.

Action: Ms. Kane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gallardo, to authorize the 2025 volunteer firefighter and emergency responder incentive program

Sheldon Post, Middletown resident, expressed strong support for the Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Incentive Program, stating that volunteer emergency responders provide an invaluable service and deserve greater recognition and financial support. Mr. Post noted the stipend increase was well justified and encouraged continued consideration of future increases to further support volunteer recruitment and retention.

A motion carried by a vote of 3-0.

12) Consideration of a Letter of Understanding with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) for participation in the Regional Energy Benchmarking Program.

Mr. Valla presented a request to authorize staff to execute a Letter of Understanding with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to continue developing a regional energy benchmarking program.

Mr. Valla explained that the LOU does not obligate the Township to adopt an ordinance but allows the Township to continue participating in policy development discussions. The program would focus on municipal buildings and commercial and multifamily buildings over 25,000 square feet, requiring energy consumption data reporting to create awareness of usage. Municipal properties have already met the initial benchmarking requirement.

It was noted that there is currently no direct cost to the Township, as grant funding supports the program through at least 2027. The Board discussed potential impacts on property owners and residents, noting that these concerns would be addressed during the policy development process before any ordinance is considered.

Action: Mr. Gallardo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leighton, to authorize the Township Manager to execute a Letter of Understanding with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and Green Building United.

Lance Sagers, Middletown resident, asked for clarification regarding potential future enforcement under the proposed energy benchmarking program.

Mr. Valla explained that the model ordinance, as drafted, would only require applicable properties to report energy consumption data. There are no requirements to reduce energy usage or meet specific thresholds. Any enforcement provisions would apply solely to failure to report, similar to other code compliance matters.

Mr. Valla further clarified that any future policy changes beyond reporting would require separate legislative action and are not contemplated as part of the current Letter of Understanding.

Michael Morris, Middletown resident, questioned why the Township needs businesses' utility data, warned it could lead to future regulation, fines, and higher rents, and urged

the Board to pursue incentives instead of mandates. He suggested efficiency measures and leveraging utility rebates/grants rather than requiring reporting.

Mr. Valla responded that the program's intent is data reporting only, to understand energy use and better target voluntary incentives and recommendations and noted that expanding beyond reporting would likely require additional legal authority. Mr. Valla stated the Board is not required to act tonight and the matter could be further reviewed by the Environmental Advisory Council.

Kevin Deeny, member of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), stated that the benchmarking program is intended as an information-gathering tool to establish baseline energy data for planning and policy decisions. He emphasized that DVRPC is a planning agency and that the purpose of the program is to inform future best practices, not impose mandates.

Action: Mr. Leighton made a motion to table agenda item #12, seconded by Ms. Kane.

Eric Bruno, Middletown resident, asked how vacant commercial properties would be addressed under the benchmarking program. Mr. Valla explained that under the model ordinance, buildings that have been vacant for at least 50% of the prior calendar year (six months or more) would be exempt from reporting requirements. Only actively occupied properties would be required to submit energy usage data.

Michael Morris, Middletown resident, urged the Board to vote on the matter that evening rather than table it. He expressed strong opposition to the proposed benchmarking program, stating concerns about government overreach, privacy, potential financial impacts on businesses and landlords, and the possibility of future regulation. He encouraged the Board to reject the proposal and instead pursue incentive-based approaches rather than data reporting requirements.

A motion to table agenda item #12 carried by a vote of 3-0.

13) Department Reports

Oral reports were provided by the Township Manager, Eden Ratliff, Fire Marshall, Alan Welsh, Director of Public Works, Eric Gartenmeyer, Director of Building & Zoning, Jim Ennis, Director of Finance, Laura Hucklebridge, and Chad Mageed with our Information Technology Department. All written reports are incorporated herein.

14) Other Business

Mr. Ratliff noted the Township received a \$2 million federal appropriation secured by Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick for upgrades to the Department of Public Works facility. The overall project is estimated at approximately \$10 million.

The Board expressed appreciation for the award and recognized it as an important step forward in improving DPW operations and infrastructure.

15) Adjournment

Mr. Leighton moved to adjourn the meeting of the Middletown Township Board of Supervisors' public meeting at 10:05 p.m