

COMINS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Comins Twp. Hall @ 6:00pm July 9, 2025

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE 6:01 PM

ROLL CALL: (TAKEN)

Kyle Yoder	Present (Chair)
Michelle Knepp	Present (Vice Chair)
John McConnell	Present (Secretary)
Jerome R Kunnath	Present
John Kuziel	Present

GUEST: Denise Cline NEMCOG

PUBLIC COMMENT

None. No public comment received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Motion by Michelle Knepp, seconded by Jerome R. Kunnath. All in favor.

ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW - ARTICLE 4: DISTRICT STANDARDS (with map review)

Discussion led by Denise Cline (NEMCOG). The Commission reviewed the draft zoning ordinance, focusing on district standards pulled from the current ordinance and the associated zoning map markups (future land use).

Key items discussed:

- Zoning map review: Confirmed and adjusted classifications on the map marked up in prior meetings.
 - Commercial (C) designations added/confirmed for relevant blocks including areas near Steiner Museum, storage facilities (e.g., Dan's storage units), town hall/office areas, and adjacent vacant lots.
 - Overlay district for mixed use extended to the edge of town proper to allow broader mixed-use development along the corridor.
 - Some areas confirmed as primarily residential (FF or similar).
 - Note: Prior markups (including five buildings area and Lady Slipper Drive) to be incorporated by consultant; current map reviewed for accuracy.
 - Full disclosure: One member noted ownership of property in the commercial area under discussion but no conflict of interest as changes reflect actual/existing use.
- Article 4 District Standards (R-1 District focus; other districts and remaining Article 7 items to be continued):
 - Boilerplate language reviewed (official zoning map, district boundaries, application of regulations, unlisted uses, etc.). Planning Commission role in classifying similar unlisted uses noted.
 - R-1 minimum lot area: Current standard 21,780 sq ft (approx. 0.5 acre). Extensive discussion on reducing this for new lots to better reflect existing development patterns in the township (e.g., quarter-acre lots in Fairview and other areas).
 - Consensus leaning toward 10,890 sq ft (1/4 acre / ~10,890 sq ft).

Some discussion of even smaller (e.g., 5,000 sq ft) but 1/4 acre preferred to avoid non-conforming issues while allowing reasonable development.

- Minimum lot width: Keep at 100 ft (standard).

- Minimum dwelling unit size: Current 720 sq ft. Agreed to reduce to 320 sq ft to align with the township's existing tiny home ordinance (stand-alone permitted with water/septic per health dept. rules). This makes the prior 720 sq ft obsolete.

- Setbacks (R-1): Front 30 ft, Side 10 ft, Rear 50 ft. For corner lots, street-side setback 25 ft.

- Discussion on measurement: Setbacks to be measured from the foundation (with eave overhang considerations). Easier for administration than strict eave measurement.

- Decks and patios: Decks (raised platforms, attached or detached) subject to principal building setbacks. Ground-level permanent patios (e.g., poured cement) should generally meet the same setbacks for consistency (visibility, emergency access). Loose stone/gravel patios may be treated differently. Definitions to be confirmed/updated.

- Building height: Two and a half stories or 35 ft, whichever is less (kept as current).

- Other: Exemptions for certain structures (belfries, towers, etc.) noted. Application of use regulations reviewed (permitted vs. special uses; unlisted uses classified by PC or via ordinance amendment).

- Additional notes:

- Zoning Administrator position remains vacant following resignation. Discussion on recruitment challenges and options including partnering with neighboring townships (e.g., Lincoln Township, Harrisville). Suggestion to post on Indeed and contact regional candidates. Former ZA Rob may be contacted informally.

- Article 7 (renewable energy and other sections) previously reviewed in part; remaining portions to be addressed.

- Map and standards to be refined by NEMCOG based on input; next review will continue with additional districts/standards.

NEXT MEETING: To be determined (typically second Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM; August 2025 date to be confirmed).

ADJOURNMENT:

Jerry (Jerome R. Kunnath) made a motion to adjourn, seconded by John K. (John Kuziel). All in favor. Meeting adjourned. (Time not recorded in transcript.)