

The Knox County Regional Planning Commission
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March 19, 2026

The regular meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) was held on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. in the Knox County Service Center 117 E. High St., Suite 161, Mount Vernon, OH.

Vice Chairman Steve Bratton called the meeting to order. Darrel Severns, Secretary for the Commission, called the roll.

The following voting representatives were present:

James DeChant	Berlin Township	Dave Marietta	Monroe Township
Steve Bratton	Brown Township	Alan Doup	Morgan Township
Christa Ciotola	Butler Township	Brian Frazier	Morris Township
Bob Elliott	Harrison Township	Darryl Frazier	Union Township
Monica Severns	Jefferson Township	Ray Brewer	Fredericktown
Marta Hill	Liberty Township	Elizabeth Bonaudi	Gambier
Chase Cochran	Milford Township	Barry Lester	Commissioner
Joey Moore	Miller Township		

Others present:

Darrel Severns	Knox RPC	Cheryl Splain	Knox Pages
Rob Clendening	KSWCD	Daniel Hardwick	Guest: Centerburg
Kyle Shackle	KPH	Rob Jameison	Guest: College Township
Landon Magers	KPH	Larry Nelson	Guest: Landowner
Nate Overholt	KPH	Drenda Keesee	Commissioner

**Alternate*

A quorum was present with 15 voting representatives.

Approval of Minutes – Steve Bratton

Ms. Severns moved to approve the February 2026 minutes. Mr. D. Frazier seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Financial Report – Marta Hill

Ms. Hill presented the Financial Report for February 2026. The expenses were \$2,940.43. Income for the month was \$28,064.50. The month began with \$89,046.49 and ended with \$114,170.56.

Ms. Bonaudi moved to approve the February 2026 financial report as presented. Ms. Severns seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Old Business

Nominating Committee – Steve Bratton

Election of Officers - Slate of Candidates: Steve Bratton, Brown Township - RPC Chairman; Jason Rogers, Hilliar Township – RPC Vice Chairman; Marta Hill, Liberty Township – Treasurer; Steve Bratton, Brown Township -

*Land Use Chairman (*this office is elected but not part of the Executive Committee and was nominated at this past Land Use Committee meeting).

Ms. Hill moved to close the nominations and approve the 2026 Slate of Officers as presented. Ms. Ciotola seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Petition to Change RPC meeting time – Darrel Severns

At the last meeting we had sent around a petition to collect signatures for changing the time of the RPC meeting. It needs to meet a consensus for a meeting time before going to the Bylaws Committee. The newly elected Vice Chairman of RPC, Jason Rogers is the Chairman for the Bylaws Committee. Mr. Severns will let him know that we need to have a meeting. Anyone in this group who would like to volunteer to be on this committee is more than welcome to join. We need to get feedback from everyone as to what is a good time for the RPC meetings. Within the next meeting or two we will have that for you.

New Business

Executive Committee Report – Darrel Severns

Null

Secretary's Report —Darrel Severns

Mr. Severns stated we are considerably above average on the number of lot splits. At last count we were almost to 20 above what we had last year at this time. We are almost to 50 lot splits in the book, and we are almost to the end of the quarter for the year. The size of the splits varies, more so of five (5) acre lots, but there are small building lots and large lots as well. There were no subdivision lots, just individual lots that were split.

Land Use – Steve Bratton

Everyone should have the Land Use Report handout. We met Tuesday, March 17th and have two (2) items of business.

Clinton Township Rezoning Application – Steve Bratton and Larry Nelson

The Land Use Committee met on March 17th. Mr. Larry Nelson is here regarding the rezoning application for P/N12-01698.000 located at 8926 Columbus Road, Mount Vernon, the former Pacemakers Dragway. He is wanting to split off 35 acres to create a residential mobile home park. The application is to rezone it from current Rural Residential Agriculture (RRA) to Residential Mobile Home Park (RMHP). The park will have both public water and public sewer service. It will be developed according to County standards and governed by the Ohio Department of Commerce. There are two (2) other mobile home parks nearby. The park is also close to the Heart of Ohio Trail which borders the rezoned site. The existing entry will be upgraded. The existing dragstrip surface would be used as a roadway between housing pads for residences.

We saw no reason not to recommend that the parcel be rezoned. The township seems to be in favor of the rezoning. A question was raised about the supplementary district regulations, Article 16, there is nothing mentioning sewer and water, so where is the sewer and water coming from? Is it well and septic? They will have sanitary sewer and water from the City of Mount Vernon, through the Clinton Water and Sewer District. There will be 130 lots available. The park backs up to the bike trail. Currently the racetrack is using part of the bike trail for parking and the County Commissioners have agreed to allow Mr. Nelson to move the bike path towards the southside of the property. There are some areas that are 90-100 feet wide, but they only need 12 feet for the bike path. There needs to be something that shows the easement for the bike path. The vote tonight is a mandated thing by the ORC. We cannot charge for the meeting tonight, even though Clinton Township is not a member of the RPC. Any other guidance they may ask from us could be billable hours that we could charge to Clinton Township.

The Land Use Committee's recommendation was to recommend approval of the Clinton Township Rezoning Application as presented.

Mr. Marietta moved to approve the Clinton Township's Rezoning Application as presented. Ms. Severns seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Subdivision Regulation Revision – Steve Bratton, Darrel Severns

The copy of the draft regulations with comments and notes are not available yet. Mr. Shackle has to email his comments and notes regarding the Health Department related items. Mr. Severns has not received any comments or notes from anyone else. We are still looking at mid-summer for completion. We are waiting on Ms. Moeller for more information. We are also waiting on Mr. Keaton for design standards so we can incorporate them into the regulations.

Ms. Hill moved to adopt this report as presented. Ms. Severns seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Social Improvement and Economic Development Committee – Darrel Severns

Null

Education and Outreach Committee – Darrel Severns

Null

Transportation Committee – Jim Hughes

Null

Knox County Commissioner – Barry Lester

We are still moving forward with storm damage at the fairgrounds. We are still moving forward with demolition of the old gray house at the fairgrounds. That will be a beautification project when it is torn down by the Commissioners for a really nice Welcome sign with flowers and Ohio flag and the US flag. We also gave the fair board the Community Grant Touchpoint. On the far point of the fairgrounds that sit close to the old school grounds, the employees of the fair ride campers are pulled right up by the kiddie rides. This grant will enable fair board to build a new pavilion in the center of the fairground and block off that lower section, so the employees of the fair rides can park their campers there and use the pavilion for themselves. The idea is to get the campers away from the kiddie rides and moved to the far end. It would put the pavilion/stage closer to the where the fair board building is located.

The flag is waving red at some of the things he has been receiving. Data centers which everyone has heard about. If you are not properly zoned, you cannot broad brush this and say that Knox County will not accept data centers. Trump and the Federal government have passed a thing that says that the data centers must provide their own energy source. One of the things we have got going for us, except for two townships in Knox County, Wayne and Middlebury, solar is out of the question. Those two townships have to come to the Commissioners' office for approval of solar. But what scares him is this whole thing is land use and our aquifer. Our aquifer is really abundant here in Ohio, especially in Knox County. We are a very large target for these data centers. In the township meetings, you can pass a resolution that dictates data centers. Before you pass a resolution, Mr. Lester highly recommends that you run it by the County Prosecutor. Because it is not covered by the ORC yet, we can prohibit it because of the energy resource. We have four (4) townships that are unzoned. If the township is going to do this, you need to make sure to follow all the requirements and procedures. Do your research on data centers. We are listed as number five (5) choice in the nation for data centers.

Knox County Commissioner – Drenda Keesee

Commissioner Keesee stated she received two emails from residents in Morgan Township regarding putting up of a telecommunications cell tower located where seven homes have been built. They are very upset about the tower. Morgan Township did their job in their resolution, problem is it being agriculture and it trumps all of their zoning laws. Ms. Pever wrote up a statement and wanted the Trustees to sign it, it was regarding this situation, and they did not feel comfortable signing something that stated it trumped their zoning regulations. They did not sign it and send it back. They then sent them a form to sign that stated it was zoned as agriculture and they did sign that and send it back. There was nothing the Trustees could do about it as it did not go against their resolution. If it was zoned as residential it would be different. The problem is it's a telecommunication tower. Mr. Doup stated that he is not certain why a cell tower is not a telecommunication tower. They basically operate under the same rules. There really is nothing they can do according to the prosecuting attorney. We do not want to do anything that will get Morgan Township sued.

Ms. Ciotola stated she has been following Bill HR2289 introduced to Congress that would dramatically reduce the ability of cities and counties to properly oversee wireless telecommunications while granting sweeping advantages to the industry. The bill rewrites Federal law and overrides, and basically steamrolls the local authority. On December 3, 2025 it passed House Committee with 26 to 24. They were trying to federalize it. She is not sure where it is at right now. It basically strips local control.

Knox Public Health – Nate Overholt

Due to the damages from the storms last weekend, all the fiscal officers for the townships, the village administrators, and the city should have gotten an email from Mr. Overholt, the Ohio EMA for collecting damage assessments. Those assessments need to be filled out and sent back in so in the event we meet the criteria we can receive money for those damages. We need to have the data to show what our damages were in the county.

Knox Area Development (ADF) – Sam Filkins

Null

Knox Soil and Water Report – Rob Clendening

We have the second round of signups for H2Ohio projects going on right now for about a month. That is primarily for people who are already in the program adding a couple of other potential conservation practices. We are investigating the possibility of another project in the Hilliar Township area reaching out to landowners to see if we have interest from the landowners regarding the Ford Creek Ditch through the H2Ohio Conservation Ditches Program. Don't forget the Pancake Luncheon tomorrow, Friday, March 20th at noon in the Memorial building.

County, City and Village Reports

Brinkhaven/Gann – Christopher Wyant

Null

Centerburg – Daniel Hardwick

Centerburg had a proposal for a 250 house subdivision on State Route 314 and Updike Road.

Danville – Lee Meyers

Null

Fredericktown – Ray Brewer

We are doing new water lines in some areas.

Gambier – Elizabeth Bonaudi

Run water tap application on a lot split from two years ago. They don't plan on building, just want a water tap right now for a garden. Students are back this week, and we had our first annual Easter Egg hunt Saturday morning after the big windstorm.

Martinsburg – Robert Collins

Null

Speaker – Kyle Shackle, Knox Public Health

Mr. Shackle gave an overview of what his department does for RPC. This is the link to our website: <https://www.knoxhealth.com/>. We do the environmental health side of Knox Public Health (KPH). Rachel Belford, Mary Tarrh, Quentin Ferenbaugh take care of food safety. Mr. Shackle and Mr. Magers take care of solid waste, sewage, water, and manufactured home parks. Mr. Overholt, who is the Environmental Health Director, who has been here 18 years. Kathy Miller who is the MVP of the office and has been here 41 years. We do food inspections, house sewage treatment (designs for new builds, look at replacements, dye tests for sales of homes, complaints on sewage), campgrounds, pools, spa inspections, school inspections, jail inspections, private water, tattoos and body art, public health nuisances, rabies (animal bites), Vector control (fog) for mosquitoes, identify ticks, not so much for

radon anymore, public bathing beaches, manufactured mobile home parks, bed bugs, composting facilities (quarterly), solid waste facilities (Knox Co. Land Fill), and in cooperation with Ohio EPA.

How we help RPC: We look at lot splits and subdivisions in compliance with Ohio Administrator Code 370128 and 370129, Private Water and Household Sewage Treatment code. It is mainly through the Land Use Committee and looking at the lot splits when they come through. We are one of the agencies that has to give approval for a lot split. In looking at a lot split we need to ensure that there is enough room for a primary and secondary septic system and enough room to meet isolation distance for private water system if it is not going to be service on public sanitary. If sanitary is going to be available, we help coordinate that hookup. We also look at splits with an existing house, if there are any questions about the septic system that is currently there. If there is not much information in the file, we will go out and physically look at it. We also look at where the property lines are to see if there any major concerns regarding leach fields, etc. and make sure the isolation distances are established according to code. We have to work through whether or not there needs to be an easement filed. When the Household Sewage Treatment rules changed in 2015, they made it a requirement that there are no more off lot discharge for new parcels.

We have had the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for about five (5) years. For 2026 we have been awarded \$175,000. Previously we were only awarded about \$75,000 each year. This is a grant, through the EPA, to help fix septic systems that have failed. As part of that grant, we have to go out and verify that it is failing then verify it has met all the criteria for the grant and it is income based. There are three different tiers, 100 percent, 85 percent then 50 percent covered based on the poverty guidelines. At that point we submit it to a certified professional soil scientist and a designer, which is then submitted back to KPH. We then submit the job to contractors to bid. When we get the bids back, we select a contractor, then they are given so many days to complete the project. Funds may be available in July. There is about \$24,000 left from last year and is spoken for. There is the homeowner application and the criteria, forms are found on KPH's website under Sewage https://www.knoxhealth.com/public_health/environmental_health/sewage.php.

Others from the floor

Null

Mr. Marietta moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission will be April 16, 2026 in the Knox County Service Center 117 E. High St., Suite 161, Mount Vernon, OH at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darrel Severns
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

<https://www.knoxpages.com/2026/02/26/planning-commission-approves-wayne-township-zoning-update-for-home-businesses/>