



Upper Mount Bethel Township
387 Ye Olde Hwy
PO Box 520
Mt. Bethel, PA 18343-5220
Phone: (570) 897-6127 Fax: (570) 897-0108
www.umbt.org

UPPER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' WS MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 27, 2026 – 7:00 PM

*This meeting was held in person and live streamed through the Upper Mount Bethel Township Facebook page and YouTube channel.

I.

Supervisor Bermingham called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance were Supervisor Bermingham, Supervisor Erler, Supervisor Friedman, Supervisor Eckman, Supervisor Albert, Manager Graziano, Township Solicitor Karasek, and Township Engineer Coyle.

II.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Supervisor Erler would like to amend the agenda, adding Supervisor and Township Officials Data Center Visit.

MOTION by Supervisor Friedman to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 5-0.

III.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charles Baltic, Township Resident, commented on the pros and cons of data centers. Many residents made good points at the last meeting. If the Township wants to regulate this development, it has to do so reasonably. Charles commented on the statement of principles and about where you want to devote resources from a CBA.

Stephanie Donnelly, Township Resident, commented on the meetings that have been held with Township officials and Slate Belt Holdings for months. Stephanie asked when were the meetings held, who attended and why was this community never told. Residents deserve to be partners, not bystanders, they deserve transparency, honesty, and a Board that puts its residents first. Supervisor Erler clarified that after every meeting that was held, it was mentioned at a BOS meeting.

Chris Finan, Chief MBFD, announced that a new digital sign is being installed at the Fire House.

Shane Svant, Township Resident, commented on the water system and what chemicals get released back into the environment. Shane commented on eminent domain for power lines coming from LMBT. Solicitor Karasek stated that eminent domain is a local government action. Shane responded that eminent domain is a federal government action. Solicitor Karasek stated that PA has a condemnation act, it is not a federal government action.

Jason Abbott, Sandy Shore Dr., commented on the Validity Challenge that was filed hours before the Curative Amendment and did the Validity Challenge ZHB application include a site plan. Solicitor Karasek stated that the zoning officer would have reviewed the application and determined that it was administratively complete.

Genevieve Terpstra, LMBT Resident, stated to the Board not be enticed by money and do not give in to large corporations, protect what we have.

Rachael Lynn, commented on data centers concerns, water, electric, property rights, wildlife, noise, local ecosystems, light pollution, and the surrounding community.

Philip Tobin, Stone Church Dr., commented on his love for living in the area.

Ron Angle, Township Resident, commented on the different types of development that were once proposed in the now Slate Belt Holdings property that no one wanted. Supervisor Bermingham and Supervisor Friedman negotiated with Talen Energy, Supervisor Friedman demanded \$50mil. Talen came back and said as long as it will be used for the benefit of the Township they will give it to us.

Paul Taylor, Turkey Ridge Rd., commented on open loop systems, cooling towers/close loop chiller tower. All the chemicals that Shane spoke of are already in our drinking water, wastewater, and wastewater treatment plants. Paul stated that a data center should be the least intrusive and pollutant to the township.

Anthony Kyzer, Lenape Tr., commented on putting limits and restrictions on data centers. The township needs protection.

Petra Phillipkowski, commented on nuclear power plants and are there plans to build one. Supervisor Friedman stated that there is no nuclear power allowed in the I3 Zone. Manager Graziano stated the developer is talking about natural gas, not nuclear power. Manager Graziano stated the RTK Law regarding meetings.

Sara Murphy, Million Dollar Hwy., commented the process of a ZHB.

Andrew Stone, Township Resident, asked Solicitor Karasek when this goes before the ZHB, should members that a vested (profit) interest in this development, whether direct or indirect, recuse themselves from the vote. The Chair and Alternate ZHB members seem to have a vested interest in this coming to light. Solicitor Karasek stated that under the Public Officials Act, if you are involved in something in which you or your immediate family would stand to have some pecuniary benefit, you have a conflict under the Act and probably should consider recusing.

Russ Horn, Township Resident, would like to know how he would benefit from any of that? He is not involved in any of it.

Lee McDonald, Township Resident, stated that what he just heard was complete and ridiculous fiction and one of the stupidest and most ignorant things I've heard in a long time. He has respect for all the ZHB members.

Judy Henckel, Robin Hood Rd., commented on history. When the electric property was purchased, there was talk about nuclear power plants. If there has to be a data center there, it better be the best data center.

Chris Farley, commented on current data centers and what they will do to our environment.

Joe Torre, Institute Rd., asked what is the purpose, what do we accomplish and what good is it going to do to have a data center? Engineer Coyle stated that it is best to wait to see what is submitted and the actual use. Supervisor Erler stated that there are eight (8) different types of data centers, we don't know what they are proposing. The regulations that we can go with will encompass all of them.

Chris Cioffi, Township Resident, commented on current drought issues at his campground and the amount of water data centers consume.

Stavros Barbounis, Potomac St., stated that what we get with a business coming in town is economic development, smart development that would benefit the township. In regard to data centers using a lot of water, yes in the past, that's not the case anymore. Talen has the money to put in a system that will protect us.

IV.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Bermingham announced the American Legion is having a Retirement of the Colors Ceremony on August 9th, 1-3pm, UMBT clean-up, August 15th, Beau's playground is now open to the public, Emergency Shelter bid date is August 4th, August 10th bids will be reviewed, project will begin in the fall.

Manager Graziano announced the Gap View 5k race on October 3rd at the Park. In regard to social media posts, Manager Graziano will only respond via DM to those without pseudonyms. Officials have to obey the laws. Manager Graziano stated that are a lot of people that are against data centers, but there is also a lot of people that are for them, those that need financial help, yes, it's an economic boom for this community. \$50 million dollars, no one in this country has been offered that. LVPC supports it. Manager Graziano stated that the five Supervisors care about this, we all have to come together as a community. Manager Graziano explained the meaning for "meeting" as per the Second-Class Township code. Manager Graziano stated that there is a Park Master Plan meeting on Tuesday, July 28th.

V.

ACTION ITEM

1. Alternate IT Director- Supervisor Friedman stated that there was a meeting with our current IT Director, Stavros Barbounis, and James Albanese, who is being considered as the IT Assistant to assist Stavros with IT matters. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to hire James Albanese as an IT Assistant, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Supervisor Erler asked in what capacity is he going to be. Stavros stated that there has been discussions on getting some help with project work. Jim did express things he is not able to support or assist. He is able to support user support during the day. Stavros stated that having another IT vendor with administrative access, there is no longer any assumption of risk on his behalf, he will not be responsible for someone else's work or someone else potentially taking down the system. Stavros stated that he will be to assist where needed. Vote: 5-0.
2. Solicitor Compensation-Supervisor Friedman stated that he would like to up his current of \$160 to \$180. Supervisor Friedman stated that Solicitor Karasek had nothing to do with the increase of his compensation. **MOTION** by Supervisor

Friedman to increase Solicitor Karasek's compensation from \$160 per hour to \$180 per hour, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Supervisor Erler expressed his concerns on Solicitor Karasek's response times and midyear raises. Vote: 4-1. Supervisor Erler voted nay.

3. Alternate Solicitor-Supervisor Friedman discussed the letter of interest from William E. Hutcheson for the Alternate Solicitor position. Supervisor Friedman stated that he believed there was a conflict of interest that has been resolved. **MOTION** Amended by Supervisor Friedman to hire William E. Hutcheson, upon the termination of Adrian Cousens, as the Alternate Solicitor at a rate of \$160 per hour, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 5-0.

VI.

TABLED ITEMS

1. Ambulance Coverage-**MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to table, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 5-0.
2. Alternate Engineer-Supervisor Erler stated that is in response to our current Alternate Engineer stating that he is not prepared to handle any large-scale development in the I2-I3 zones. Supervisor Erler feels that this may be addressed in the Text Amendment. **MOTION** Amended by Supervisor Erler to hire Keystone Consultants, to replace Robert Collura, as the Alternate Engineer, at a rate of \$135.50 seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Vote: 2-3. Motion dies.
3. Eastern Industries Property Lease-Solicitor Karasek discussed the proposal of using a portion of Eastern Industries to store private trailers. Solicitor Karasek stated that his concern is the township could lose its tax-exempt status. Solicitor Karasek will reach out to the County Tax Assessor to get more information. **MOTION** by Supervisor Erler to table, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 5-0.
4. Ordinance No. 2026-01 Leash Law and Ban on Certain Motor Vehicles on Township Properties-Solicitor Karasek stated that he prepared this Ordinance for review with respect to establish a leash law on township properties, along with adopting a banned on certain motor vehicles on township properties. There was a discussion on the types of motor vehicles and other similar types. At this time, Solicitor Karasek will work on the leash law. Supervisor Bermingham stated that the Parks/Rec Board and Open Space Board should review and comment. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to table, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Charles Baltic commented. There should be a public emergency exception. The Board should get more public input on the leash law, this is an overly broad proposal. Vote: 5-0.

VII.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Capital Expenditure Fund for Future Vehicle Replacement-**MOTION** by Supervisor Albert to table, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0.
2. Data Center Committee-Supervisor Erler stated he would like to establish a committee to visit a data center, one which is comparable in size, and newer. Supervisor Friedman suggested each committee delegate someone to go. Manager Graziano will send an email out to each committee chair and ask them to nominate someone by August 10th. Stavros Barbounis stated that he can recommend locations but cannot grant access. Shane Svant commented on what type of data center will they visit, there are different kinds.

VIII.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Recess to Executive Session at 9:18 pm to discuss the Barnes lawsuit and Validity Challenge that was filed by Slate Belt Holdings.

The meeting reconvened at 9:28 pm.

Solicitor Karasek stated that discussed in Executive Session was the Barnes lawsuit and the Validity Challenge that was filed by Slate Belt Holdings.

MOTION by Supervisor Erler that we will not accept the Barnes Petting Zoo to be added to the Barnes lawsuit, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 5-0.

Solicitor Karasek thanked the Board of Supervisors for the increase in his compensation.

IX.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Supervisor Friedman to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm, seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Vote: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Beck, Recording Secretary