

**MINUTES**  
**Bloomfield Borough Council**  
**Public Hearing**  
**June 4, 2024**

Bloomfield Borough Council and the Bloomfield Borough Planning Commission met this evening in a hearing of the governing body in the Bloomfield Borough Council Chambers with the following Council members present: J. Kevin Fitzpatrick and Jessica L. Grindle.

Also present: Planning Commission Chair - Melanie Rowlands, Planning Commission Secretary - Kevin McCarty, Planning Commission Member - Suzanne A. Dell, Borough Employee - Damon Hartman, and Borough Zoning & Enforcement Officer - Becky Smiley.

Vice President Fitzpatrick called the public hearing to order at 5:30 p.m.

**(Kevin F.)** Good Evening. My name is: Kevin Fitzpatrick. I am the Vice President of the Bloomfield Borough Council and also serve on the Bloomfield Borough Planning Commission.

Tonight's hearing is being recorded for accuracy of the minutes.

If anyone present is recording the meeting, please identify yourself.

Also, everyone, please sign-in at the podium if you have not already done so.

This public hearing is an opportunity for residents of the borough to be heard on proposed changes to 2 existing Ordinances:

- Zoning: For Fences and Walls within the Borough, and
- Subdivision and Land Development

The text of the revised ordinances has been available on the borough website as well as hard copies located in the borough office, the county courthouse law library, and the vestibule of the Perry County Times.

Following a few opening remarks on each topic, we will take questions and comments from residents specifically about these ordinance updates.

- We will limit individual comments to 2 minutes if needed and try to keep on track to allow residents to be heard.
- We will split the available time for this hearing between discussions about these 2 Ordinances. **Please Note:** there are no individual requests or proposed developments being covered tonight.

You are welcome to attend Borough Council meetings and/or Planning Commission meetings to discuss projects or other topics.

Allow me to introduce our other Planning Commission members:

Melanie Earnest Rowlands, Kevin McCarty, and Suzanne Dell. Roger Watson is absent this evening.

I will ask Melanie as Chairperson to make a few introductory comments before we take public comments on each proposed ordinance amendment.

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**(Melanie Rowlands)** Good Evening. I've served on the Bloomfield Borough Planning Commission for over 16 years. If you have read our existing and proposed ordinances, you know that a lot of effort goes into balancing needs and desires within the community.

First, we will discuss the proposed addition to the Zoning Ordinance regarding **FENCES and WALLS** within the Borough. This update adapts the existing Tri-County Model Zoning Ordinance to best suit our small town of New Bloomfield.

We want to balance the needs of residents to enjoy security and privacy while maintaining an attractive community.

Fences are permitted 'by right' in all districts.

- There are limitations on things like height, materials, and where exactly they can be placed, such as no barbed wire, no junk, no neon colors, and not within the 'right-of-way' for a street.
- Height exceptions are considered for safety, like at a ball field, power plant, communications tower, etc., and of course for Retaining Walls.
- Zoning permits apply, but most ordinary fences do not involve building permits.
  - Dimensions and materials are part of the permit process

So, I will turn this back over to our Council Vice President to recognize residents with questions and comments on our first topic. If requested, I can clarify particular details of the ordinance text. Thank you!

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**(Kevin Fitzpatrick)**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Any residents or property owners of Bloomfield Borough who wish to comment, please stand and state your name and address. There being none, we will move on to the next ordinance.

Next, we will move on to comments on the proposed amendment to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Melanie, please provide us a summary

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**(Melanie Rowlands)** Thank you, Kevin.

The proposed Subdivision and Land Development amendment replaces the existing ordinance passed in 1975 (having had few updates since then) with an adaptation of the existing Tri-County Ordinance in a way that best suits the needs of the small town of New Bloomfield.

.. We also incorporated a few more recently published modifications based on Federal studies to reduce stormwater issues while lowering costs and increasing public safety.

Most individuals never deal with subdivision and land development, but we are impacted by the outcomes of activities in these areas.

The new rules attempt to clarify the current rules on what information is submitted, how information is submitted and what specifications are permissible.

Applicants' agents such as surveyors, landscape architects, architects and engineers will benefit by having up to date rules that are similar to those in other municipalities. Saving paid professional time may save money for applicants and that lets people invest in the final product, rather than a process.

So, I will turn this back over to the Council Vice President to recognize residents with questions and comments on this topic. If requested, I can clarify particular details of the ordinance text. Thank you.

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**(Kevin Fitzpatrick)**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Any residents or property owners of Bloomfield Borough who wish to comment, please stand and state your name and address. There being none, we will move on to the next ordinance.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for coming out to discuss these topics and to share your views.

As advertised, Council will vote on each of the proposed ordinance amendments at our regularly scheduled council meeting that follows this public hearing.

Thank you. Meeting Adjourned.