Barrett Township Supervisors
Minutes of Special Workshop Meeting on April 29, 2026 – 6:30 P.M.

A special workshop meeting of the Barrett Township Supervisors was held on Thursday, April 29, 2026, at the Administrative Offices on Route 390 in Cresco, PA. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Grant Hilfiger

Present: Grant Hilfiger, Bill Pipolo, Sean Anlauf, Darryl Speicher, Patti O'Keefe, Nichole Irvin and the public.

Grant Hilfiger opened the meeting by clarifying that this is a workshop session for reviewing Chapter 375 Code of Ordinances (Property Maintenance Ordinances) page by page. No motions or decisions would be made; the session is strictly informational and conversational. Barrett reminded attendees that the most updated draft was available at the back of the room and that any prior drafts would be outdated if changes were made at the next meeting. The meeting was attended in person and via Zoom.

Adoption of 2024 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)

The township is considering adopting the 2024 edition of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), replacing the older edition currently in use. This workshop reviewed the ordinance page by page to identify necessary revisions and corrections.

Ch. 375 Property Maintenance Fines and Penalties

Discussion centered on whether the "each day a violation continues shall be deemed a separate offense" language was too aggressive, and how the escalating fine schedule works in practice.

- **Mark Fisher**: Raised concern that daily fines could accumulate rapidly — for example if a property owner is on vacation for a week, they could rack up 7 days of fines before even receiving notice.
- The board clarified that written notice must be served before fines begin, and that there are correction time periods built into later sections of the ordinance.
- Daryl Speicher confirmed that the fine schedule on page 10 is escalating — first offense $100, second offense within 12 months $250, third $500, fourth and subsequent up to $1,000 — and that this is the worst-case scenario, not a daily $600 charge.
- The board noted that appeals, enforcement penalties, and other options exist, and that the simplest resolution is to fix the violation.
- The escalating fine schedule on page 10 was accepted as written.
- The "each day" language was acknowledged as a worst-case enforcement tool, not a routine practice.
- A numbering error was identified in the draft ordinance.
- **Hazel Gifford** identified that section references "106.3" and "106.4" in items 4 and 5 on page 3 should both read "107," as Section 107 covers violations and prosecutions in the IPMC, not Section 106.
- The board acknowledged the numbering mistake and noted that this correction will be made in the next draft.

Grass, Weeds, and Vegetation Height — Section 302.4 (Pages 5–7)

Extensive discussion on whether to adopt IPMC Section 302.4 regarding weed/grass height, how to define a "yard" versus a "meadow" or natural habitat, and how to handle properties intentionally left to grow for ecological reasons.

- The board noted that 302.4 requires inserting a specific height in inches; the current ordinance uses 10 inches.

- **Sam Jones**: Raised the issue of two clients on Route 390 who intentionally allow milkweed to grow for monarch butterfly habitat, asking how a meadow would be distinguished from an unkempt yard.
- **Multiple residents**: Discussed the difficulty of defining "meadow" vs. "yard," especially for larger properties.
- Patti O'Keefe suggested adding "meadow or naturalized area not originally intended to be grass" to the existing definition language, alongside setbacks from neighboring properties or roads.
- **Mark Fisher** recommended removing the grass/weed section from the maintenance ordinance entirely and addressing it separately at a later date to avoid holding up the rest of the ordinance.
- **Sarah Kelly** (via Zoom): Submitted a comment supporting the inclusion of weed/grass provisions.
- **Conclusion**
    - Section 302.4 of the IPMC will NOT be adopted.
    - The existing weed/grass definition on page 6 will be removed
    - The topic of grass, weeds, and meadow definitions will be addressed separately, potentially as a standalone ordinance.

Prohibited Conditions — Display of Permits (Page 7, Section 375-8A)

Discussion on whether requiring display of building/zoning permits belongs in the property maintenance ordinance.

- The board noted that the Planning Commission flagged this as redundant with building codes, which already require permit display.
- **Mark Fisher** asked whether a contractor who failed to display permits could be cited under any other section.
- The board decided that the requirement is already covered in building/zoning codes.

Prohibited Conditions — Display of Permits

Discussion occurred on whether requiring display of building/zoning permits belongs in the property maintenance ordinance. Barrett noted that the Planning Commission flagged this as redundant with building codes, which already require permit display. Mark asked whether a contractor who failed to display permits could be cited under any other section. General consensus was that the requirement is already covered in building/zoning codes. The section requiring display of permits was agreed to be removed from the property maintenance ordinance as redundant.

Prohibited Conditions — Broken Furniture, Appliances, and Scrap Materials (Page 7, Sections B & C)

Discussion on how to distinguish between residential and commercial applicability for sections covering broken furniture, appliances, and scrap materials, and whether a 30-day storage limit is appropriate.

- Grant Hilfiger proposed that broken furniture (mattresses, recliners, sofas, interior chairs) and scrap appliances (washers, refrigerators, ovens, air conditioners, etc.) be reorganized between Sections B and C.
- **Mark Fisher** raised concerns that commercial businesses, like his own construction business, regularly has scrap materials and dumpsters that cannot be stored inside a building, making a blanket 30-day rule difficult to comply with.
- Multiple residents: Agreed that Section B (scrap appliances) should be limited to residential properties, while Section C (broken furniture/interior items) should apply to all districts.

- Discussion on "fully enclosed structure": Agreed that "enclosed" means a structure with a roof and four sides, not just a fence, to prevent hoarding behind fencing and issues like tire piles breeding mosquitoes.
- **Conclusion**
    - Scrap appliances (washers, refrigerators, ovens, air conditioners, ranges, dryers, microwaves, dishwashers) to be moved from Section C to Section B, with Section B limited to residential properties.
    - Broken furniture (mattresses, recliners, sofas, interior chairs) to remain in or move to Section C, applicable to all districts.
    - "Fully enclosed structure" confirmed to mean a roofed, four-sided structure.

- **Prohibited Conditions — Broken Furniture, Appliances, and Scrap Materials**

- Discussion focused on how to distinguish between residential and commercial applicability for sections covering broken furniture, appliances, and scrap materials, and whether a 30-day storage limit is appropriate.
- Barrett proposed that broken furniture (mattresses, recliners, sofas, interior chairs) and scrap appliances (washers, refrigerators, ovens, air conditioners, etc.) be reorganized between Sections B and C. Mark raised concern that commercial businesses (e.g., his own construction business) regularly have scrap materials and dumpsters that cannot be stored inside a building, making a blanket 30-day rule difficult to comply with. Multiple participants agreed that Section B (scrap appliances) should be limited to residential properties, while Section C (broken furniture/interior items) should apply to all districts.
- Discussion on "fully enclosed structure" confirmed that "enclosed" means a structure with a roof and four sides, not just a fence, to prevent hoarding behind fencing and issues like tire piles breeding mosquitoes.
- It was decided that scrap appliances (washers, refrigerators, ovens, air conditioners, ranges, dryers, microwaves, dishwashers) will be moved from Section C to Section B, with Section B limited to residential properties. Broken furniture (mattresses, recliners, sofas, interior chairs) will remain in or move to Section C, applicable to all districts. "Fully enclosed structure" was confirmed to mean a roofed, four-sided structure. The 30-day storage limit was retained.

Prohibited Conditions — Inoperable Vehicles (Page 7–8, Section D)

Discussion on the provision that inoperable vehicles must be stored within a fully enclosed structure, and exceptions for antique/decorative vehicles.

- Grant Hilfiger noted this is a significant issue in the township, with some properties having 30+ abandoned vehicles.
- **Karl Weiler** referenced a provision allowing vehicles to be screened from public view as an alternative.
- Planning Commission recommendation (relayed to the Board): Tractors and antique-type machinery used as landscape features should be explicitly allowed.
- Brick Linder's decorative truck in a landscaping bed was cited as a specific example.
- **Conclusion**
    - Language to be added at the end of item 3 (Section D) to allow antique or decorative tractors/machinery displayed as landscaping features.

- **Prohibited Conditions — Inoperable Vehicles**

- Discussion addressed the provision that inoperable vehicles must be stored within a fully enclosed structure, and exceptions for antique/decorative vehicles. Grant Hilfiger noted this is a

significant issue in the township, with some properties having 30+ abandoned vehicles. Karl Weiler referenced a provision allowing vehicles to be screened from public view as an alternative.
- The Planning Commission recommendation (relayed to the Board) suggested that tractors and antique-type machinery used as landscape features should be explicitly allowed. Brick Linder's decorative truck in a landscaping bed was cited as a specific example. Language will be added at the end of item 3 (Section D) to allow antique or decorative tractors/machinery displayed as landscaping features. General agreement was reached that the section is otherwise acceptable.

Prohibited Conditions — Bulk Materials and Landscaping Equipment (Page 8, Section E)

Discussion on whether landscapers and tradespeople who store equipment at their homes would be in violation.

- Multiple residents raised concerns about the many landscapers in the township who bring equipment home nightly and on weekends.
- The board noted that the section references "machinery or equipment not associated with active maintenance," which would likely exempt working landscaping equipment.
- Suggestion: Homeowners with a home occupancy permit running a business could be treated differently.
- Old, non-functional equipment could be classified as a "landscape feature" under the antique provision discussed earlier.
- **Conclusion**
    - Active maintenance equipment is considered exempt under the "associated with active maintenance" language.
    - Home occupancy permit holders may receive additional consideration.
- **Prohibited Conditions — Bulk Materials and Landscaping Equipment**
- Discussion occurred regarding whether landscapers and tradespeople who store equipment at their homes would be in violation. Multiple participants raised concern about the many landscapers in the township who bring equipment home nightly and on weekends. the board noted that the section references "machinery or equipment not associated with active maintenance," which would likely exempt working landscaping equipment.
- Suggestions were made that homeowners with a home occupancy permit running a business could be treated differently, and that old, non-functional equipment could be classified as a "landscape feature" under the antique provision discussed earlier. Active maintenance equipment is considered exempt under the "associated with active maintenance" language. Home occupancy permit holders may receive additional consideration. No formal change was agreed upon; existing language was deemed sufficient.

Sidewalks, Walkways, and Snow/Ice Removal (Page 8, Section G)

Discussion on the requirement for commercial properties open to the public to clear sidewalks within 24 hours of a storm's end.

- **Details**
    - General agreement that 24 hours after cessation of a storm is a reasonable timeframe.
    - Sarah Kelly (via Zoom): Asked why the Planning Commission recommended eliminating this section.
    - Barrett: Confirmed the section will be kept; the Planning Commission's recommendation to remove it was not supported.
- **Conclusion**
    - Section G (sidewalk/snow removal for commercial properties) retained.

- **Sidewalks, Walkways, and Snow/Ice Removal**

- Discussion addressed the requirement for commercial properties open to the public to clear sidewalks within 24 hours of a storm's end. General agreement was reached that 24 hours after cessation of a storm is a reasonable timeframe. Sarah Kelly (via Zoom) asked why the Planning Commission recommended eliminating this section. Grant Hilfiger confirmed the section will be kept; the Planning Commission's recommendation to remove it was not supported. Section G (sidewalk/snow removal for commercial properties) and the 24-hour post-storm clearance requirement were both retained.

Enforcement and Penalties — Authority to Issue Tickets and Warning Process (Page 9)

Extensive discussion on who can issue tickets, whether a warning should precede a formal violation, and how timelines should be documented.

- Grant Hilfiger described an example where he personally posted a violation notice for a sewage spill after the SEO emailed the documentation, raising the question of who is authorized to post notices.
- General agreement: Any public official of the township — including police officers, health officers, code enforcement officers, or any other authorized official — can issue tickets; the SEO writes the violation, and an authorized person can post it.
- Multiple residents: Strongly advocated for a warning (phone call, letter, or email) before a formal violation is issued, to allow voluntary compliance.
- Grant Hilfiger agreed a warning should be a courtesy but not a mandatory standard, given the variety of property owners (absentee, corporate, unresponsive).
- Patti O'Keefe noted the Planning Commission had previously recommended that fines not be the first step, and that a warning letter should precede enforcement.
- Discussion on timeline: Agreed that 7–10 days from documented violation notice should be the standard before a citation is issued.
- Darryl Speicher suggested adding language such as "the township will work with property owners to achieve voluntary compliance" before the enforcement escalation language.
- Daryl Speicher proposed "7 days from documented violation notice" as the trigger for issuing tickets.

- **Conclusion**
    - Language to be added stating the township will seek voluntary compliance before issuing citations.
    - 7 days from documented violation notice established as the standard before a citation can be issued.
    - Warning (phone call, letter, email, or posted notice) is encouraged as a first step but remains at the discretion of the code enforcement officer.

- **Enforcement and Penalties — Authority to Issue Tickets and Warning Process**

- Extensive discussion occurred regarding who can issue tickets, whether a warning should precede a formal violation, and how timelines should be documented.
- Grant Hilfiger described an example where he personally posted a violation notice for a sewage spill after the SEO emailed the documentation, raising the question of who is authorized to post notices. General agreement was reached that any public official of the township — including police officers, health officers, code enforcement officers, or any other authorized official — can issue tickets; the SEO writes the violation, and an authorized person can post it.
- Multiple residents strongly advocated for a warning (phone call, letter, or email) before a formal violation is issued, to allow voluntary compliance. Barrett agreed a warning should be a courtesy

but not a mandatory standard, given the variety of property owners (absentee, corporate, unresponsive). Patti O'Keefe noted the Planning Commission had previously recommended that fines not be the first step, and that a warning letter should precede enforcement.

- Discussion on timeline resulted in agreement that 7–10 days from documented violation notice should be the standard before a citation is issued. Darryl Speicher suggested adding language such as "the township will work with property owners to achieve voluntary compliance" before the enforcement escalation language. Daryl proposed "7 days from documented violation notice" as the trigger for issuing tickets.
- Language will be added stating the township will seek voluntary compliance before issuing citations. Seven days from documented violation notice was established as the standard before a citation can be issued. Warning (phone call, letter, email, or posted notice) is encouraged as a first step but remains at the discretion of the code enforcement officer. Documentation (timestamped photos, certified mail, posted notice) is required to establish the start of the timeline.

Enforcement and Penalties — Rewriting Section 375-9

Discussion on whether the Planning Commission had recommended a full rewrite of Section 375-9.

- Grant Hilfiger referenced a Planning Commission video of the 12/3/2025 meeting in which a full rewrite of 375-9 was recommended.
- Patti O'Keefe could not recall the specific reason for the rewrite recommendation.
- Grant Hilfiger noted that the current draft may already incorporate many of the Planning Commission's suggestions from that session.

Vacant Property Registration — General Requirements (Pages 11–13)

Discussion on the vacant property registration program, including fees, exemptions, inspection process, and the requirement to post contact information on vacant properties.

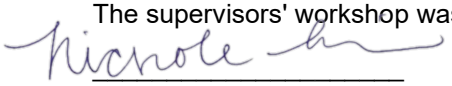
- Fee: Current draft fee of $500 was discussed; participants suggested $250–$300 as more appropriate given the scope of inspection (exterior walk-around, no septic/electric/structural engineering).
- Exemptions discussed and confirmed as already included: active construction/renovation with permits, seasonal use properties maintained in good condition, properties listed for sale or lease with a licensed real estate agent, active military personnel.
- **Hazel Gifford** raised the question of whether township residents who own and actively maintain a vacant property nearby should be exempt from the registration fee.
- Grant Hilfiger suggested a case-by-case waiver process through the Board of Supervisors rather than a blanket exemption.
- Hunting camps were confirmed to fall under "seasonal use" exemption.
- "Loophole" identified: Listing a property for rent at an unrealistic price (e.g., $20,000/month) to claim the "listed for rent" exemption; noted that the listing must be with a licensed real estate agent, which provides some check on abuse.
- Posting contact information on vacant properties (Page 13, Section B): Multiple residents objected strongly, arguing it advertises vacant homes to potential burglars.
- Grant Hilfiger and the rest of the board agreed that contact information should be on file with the township only, not posted publicly on the property.
- **Conclusion**
    - Registration fee to be reduced; $250–$350 range suggested as appropriate to cover inspection costs.
    - Waiver process for actively maintained vacant properties to be added, subject to Board of Supervisors approval.

- Section B requires posting of contact information on the property to be removed; information will be held on file with the township only.
- Seasonal use, active military, active renovation, and listed-for-sale exemptions confirmed as already included.

Vacant Property Maintenance

- Grant Hilfiger specific examples of vacant properties with trees through roofs, broken pipes, smashed windows, and wildlife infestation.
- Multiple residents discussed the process for restoring electric service to a long-vacant property (requires a "cut card" from a licensed electrical inspector sent directly to PP&L).
- The board confirmed that boarding broken windows and securing structures is covered under the property maintenance ordinance; 90-day limit on temporary boarding before permanent repair is required.
- **Conclusion**
  - Utility restoration procedures are covered under existing building codes, not this ordinance.

The supervisors' workshop was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.



Nichole Irvin
Recording Secretary