

April 14, 2026
Public Hearing

The public hearing for the proposed Waterford VFD Zoning Map Amendment, was held Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., in the Municipal Building and called to order by Chairman John Beaufort. The hearing was presided over by Solicitor Daniel Hudock, Esquire.

Members Present: John Beaufort, Paul Knupp, Wade Stoner, Stephanie Verna, and Dan Resenic.

Others Present: Township Manager Michael Strelic, Solicitor Dan Hudock, and Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Rick Krouse.

Solicitor Hudock presented that the purpose of the hearing was to allow the public to express their opinions regarding the proposed Zoning Change that was requested from the Ligonier Township Volunteer #1 (Waterford) organization, from A, Agricultural and V, Village to C-1, Neighborhood Commercial. This matter was previously before the Planning Commission, who recommended the change. Solicitor Hudock stated that Supervisors Beaufort and Knupp have recused themselves, and will continue to do so pursuant to advice received from the Pennsylvania Ethics Commission. The court reporter swore in the members of the public who indicated they would speak.

Public Comment

Lee Demosky spoke on behalf of the applicant as their solicitor. Mr. Demosky presented a packet of information to Supervisors as “collective exhibit A” and provided a summary.

Robert Derk spoke on behalf of the applicant as the president of Ligonier Township VFD #1 (Waterford). Mr. Derk provided a summary of the history of the fire department. Mr. Derk also spoke about the fundraising activities undertaken by the fire department. Mr. Derk spoke about the access to the property from Route 271. Mr. Derk stated he has resided in the Waterford area for approximately 35 years. Mr. Derk enumerated the businesses along Route 271 between the 711 split and the Waterford VFD site. Mr. Derk stated that the fire department did not have any contact with the Ligonier Country Market until after submitting the rezoning request to the Township. Mr. Derk commented on the reasoning why the rezoning application was submitted. Mr. Derk stated that the Planning Commission unanimously recommended the request for approval.

Supervisor Wade Stoner questioned Mr. Derk and Mr. Demosky on a number of items, including: the fire department’s relationship with the Ligonier Country Market; any issues historically with being zoned A-Agriculture; any issues in the future with being zoned A-Agriculture; plans for future additions or expansions; membership trends; why the rezoning application was chosen instead of other options such as a text amendment; spot zoning, and; urgency of the rezoning. Supervisor Stoner commented about possible litigation from spot zoning.

Supervisor Dan Resenic questioned Mr. Derk about communications between the Waterford fire department and the Ligonier Country Market. Mr. Derk stated he is not aware of any communications in writing prior to the submission of the application to the township.

Dawn Kissell spoke regarding the fire department's request for rezoning. Mrs. Kissell stated that she supports the fire department and would like to help them. Mrs. Kissell stated that a solution that would keep the agricultural character of the neighborhood while helping the fire department would be a text amendment to allow public safety facilities in A-Agriculture. Mrs. Kissell stated that she had submitted correspondence and signatures to that effect.

Christy Boyd spoke regarding the letter circulated by Dawn Kissell. Mrs. Boyd stated she is supportive of public safety and our volunteer firefighters. Mrs. Boyd stated that all fire departments (Waterford, Wilpen, Darlington) exist in zones that do not allow public safety facilities. Mrs. Boyd stated they are not in favor of rezoning the properties to Commercial.

Larry Springer stated that he is a lifelong resident and his family has lived in Ligonier for generations. Mr. Springer stated he lives across from the Waterford VFD, and that he has been a member of the fire department for over 30 years. Mr. Springer spoke to the history of the Township's zoning code and his opinion on zoning restrictions.

Susan Ylvisaker stated she is a strong supporter of Waterford fire department. Mrs. Ylvisaker commented on changing zoning to add public safety to Agriculture. Mrs. Ylvisaker commented on rumors regarding Waterford VFD's ongoing viability, and what could happen if the fire department went defunct. Mrs. Ylvisaker asked that the Board look down the road.

Edwin Gordon stated that he supports the Waterford fire department. Mr. Gordon stated that more thought should be given to variances rather than rezoning. Mr. Gordon stated he is a neighbor of the Waterford VFD property.

Michelle Black stated that she supports the fire department. Mrs. Black commented on the proposed rezoning. Mrs. Black asked about the timeline for rezoning, and whether the Ligonier Country Market could operate on the property if the property was not rezoned. Mr. Hudock answered her question regarding the Ligonier Country Market.

Linda O'Sullivan asked about farmers markets in the Township's zoning ordinance.

Claudine Depaul stated that the Ligonier Country Market had been determined to be a farmers market, not a retail establishment.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Supervisor Dan Resenic and seconded by Supervisor Wade Stoner. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Strelac
Township Manager