

Pennsbury Township Planning Commission Minutes

June 10, 2026

Present: Kay Ellsworth, Joe Short, George Trammell, Dennis Smith, and Dan Boyle.

Chair Kay Ellsworth called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of May 13, 2026, were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by George Trammell and seconded by Dennis Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

1907 Hillendale Road & 901 Hickory Hill Road (Weathers and Herrera) Variance and Special Exception Applications

The applicants, who are business partners, individually own 1907 Hillendale Road and 901 Hickory Hill Road and were present and represented by their attorney Max O'Keefe, who presented a proposal for a shared driveway serving both properties from Hickory Hill Road.

The applicant explained that both properties contain significant environmental constraints, including steep slopes and riparian buffer areas. The proposed driveway location was designed after review of site conditions, with consideration given to minimizing disturbance, preserving sight distance, and improving traffic safety along Hickory Hill Road, which contains an existing curve near the proposed access point.

The applicant is seeking zoning relief associated with impacts to environmental resources. The requested relief includes disturbance within riparian buffer areas, including Zone 1 and Zone 2 buffers, and relief associated with steep slope disturbance limitations. The applicant explained that the proposed driveway alignment was selected because alternative locations would create greater grading challenges and potentially impact safety.

Township Engineer Matt Houtmann reviewed potential alternative driveway alignments, including moving the driveway entrance to the north and considering a switchback-style driveway configuration. He explained that this alternate driveway placement and design may improve safety by increasing sight distance on Hickory Hill Road and also reduce grading impacts and minimize disturbance to certain environmental resources; however, such an option would require access to property owned by the adjacent homeowners' association (Hamorton Woods) to regrade and remove vegetation to the north of Mr. Herrera's property.

Discussion occurred regarding the feasibility of obtaining a temporary grading easement from the homeowners' association. Mr. O'Keefe explained that obtaining approval could involve significant delays and uncertainty depending on the association's requirements. It was further discussed that even with an easement, additional zoning relief may still be required because the alternate driveway placement would also impact regulated environmental areas.

The Planning Commission discussed whether action should be deferred to allow the applicant additional time to investigate the alternate driveway placement. The applicants indicated that, while they would consider the recommendation, they preferred to proceed with the existing application due to scheduling concerns associated with the upcoming Zoning Hearing Board hearing.

Following a discussion, the Planning Commission determined that it would make a recommendation on the application as presented while incorporating consideration of the alternatives discussed.

A motion was made by Kay Ellsworth to recommend that the Board of Supervisors support the requested zoning relief as follows:

- For 1907 Hillandale Drive, to the extent that special exception relief is required for disturbance within the Zone 2 riparian buffer area, the Planning Commission recommends support of the request.
- For 901 Hickory Hill Road, the Planning Commission recommends support of the requested special exception and variance relief, subject to the

applicant considering the following recommendations from the Township Engineer:

1. Contacting the adjacent homeowners' association regarding the feasibility of obtaining a temporary grading easement that would allow a northern shift of the driveway alignment.
2. Considering shifting the shared driveway approximately ten feet north to reduce disturbance within the riparian buffer area.
3. Considering relocating the proposed residence further south.
4. Considering reducing or relocating the proposed rear flat area to minimize disturbance to moderately steep slopes.

The motion was seconded by Joe Short and approved unanimously.

2405 Brintons Bridge Road (Urbany) Variance Application

The Planning Commission reviewed a request from Mr. Urbany seeking zoning relief for the construction of a detached garage.

The applicant explained that the requested relief is related to setback requirements. Due to the location of the existing residence and site constraints, the proposed garage location requires approximately sixteen feet of setback relief from the required fifty-foot setback.

Mr. Urbany explained that alternative locations on the property would create additional zoning conflicts, including restrictions on locating accessory structures in the front yard area. He also provided information regarding discussions with neighboring property owners and submitted letters indicating no objections from surrounding neighbors.

The Planning Commission discussed the existing conditions of the property, including the age and configuration of the existing garage, which does not accommodate many modern vehicles. The Commission determined that the placement of the existing residence creates a unique site constraint.

A motion was made by Dennis Smith to recommend that the Board of Supervisors support the applicant's zoning relief request.

It was seconded by Joe Short and approved unanimously.

Public Comment – Property Status and Clearing Activity

A resident raised concerns regarding recent clearing activity occurring on the property commonly referred to as the "ski slope" area (formerly Chadds Peak Ski Area). The resident questioned whether there were any active development plans for the property and expressed concerns regarding potential impacts to the surrounding natural area, wildlife habitat, and neighboring properties.

Township staff advised that no active development application is currently before the Planning Commission. Staff noted that the property owner had previously contacted the Township regarding possible future development concepts but that no formal plans had been submitted.

The Township Manager advised that recent clearing activity would be reviewed to determine whether any permits or approvals were required, particularly with respect to stream buffers and regulated environmental areas.

Additional discussion occurred regarding several undeveloped properties in the Township. Township staff agreed to review the zoning status and development history of the referenced properties.

The Planning Commission also encouraged residents to participate in the Township's Comprehensive Plan update process and complete the community survey available through the Township website.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Boyle

Recording Secretary