

Pennsbury Township Planning Commission Minutes

September 9, 2026

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

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

The minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of June 10, 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.

Solar Panel Conditional Use Application for 103 S. Fairville Road (Alexopoulos)

Joshua Belfus, Project Manager of Integrity Solar Home Solutions, Inc. presented a proposed rooftop solar installation. The system had originally been designed for 73 panels but was reduced to 29 panels after PECO indicated the grid could not accommodate the larger system. The revised system was described as a 12.47 kW DC installation, with estimated annual production of 11.318 kWh and an anticipated 42% offset of the homeowner's historical electricity use.

The Commission discussed the proposed panel locations, including eight panels visible from the street. Mr. Belfus said the homeowner had requested the layout and that the system had been designed to work within the utility and Township constraints. Members asked about alternative locations, including placing the panels on less-visible roof surfaces or using a ground-mounted system. The applicant's representative had not evaluated the production impact of moving the street-facing panels.

Members noted that rooftop solar systems with panels or appurtenances facing or visible from an adjacent street require conditional use approval; systems with no street-facing or street-visible panels may be permitted by right, subject to applicable requirements and permitting. The Commission encouraged the applicant to discuss a revised layout with the homeowner before the Board of Supervisors hearing. Members also noted that historic resource review could still

be required if the property is within 500 feet of a historic resource, and recommended verifying that distance. The representative was advised that neighbor letters are commonly provided in applications of this type.

A motion was made by Dennis Smith to recommend that the Board of Supervisors deny the application as submitted, citing alternative panel placements that could better comply with the ordinance. It was seconded by George Trammell. The motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Amendments to Zoning Ordinance Articles 2, 17, and 20 regarding historic resources/adaptive reuse

The Commission began reviewing proposed updates to provisions concerning historic resources, beginning with Article 17. Historical Commission chair Judi Wilson participated in the discussion.

One member expressed concern that adaptive reuse could introduce additional commercial uses—such as offices, restaurants, lodging, studios, or shops—to historic properties along Route 926. Other members said adaptive reuse could help preserve historic buildings and reduce the risk of neglect or demolition. Members also noted that any proposed use would remain subject to applicable supplemental use standards, including requirements for parking, buffering, and lighting.

The Commission reviewed the proposed definition of “studio” and discussed whether it could be interpreted to allow retail sales. Members agreed to revise the definition by removing the phrase “to be a working place of an artist” and clarifying the artistic studies covered, including examples such as painting, sculpting, photography, dance, singing, acting, and yoga.

The Commission also discussed potential noise and fumes from historic resources used as workshops, including woodworking and antique repair. No further amendment of this provision was agreed upon during this meeting. Members noted that the antique shop/workshop provision was limited to arterial roads.

Members noted that the definition of “conservation use” was not used elsewhere in the ordinance. The Commission agreed to remove it.

The Commission discussed the phrase “visually by plan” in the historic district definition and agreed that the Planning Commission should be prepared to explain its meaning to the Board of Supervisors.

A motion was made by George Trammell and seconded by Dennis Smith to recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the amendments with two edits:

1. Revise the studio definition as discussed.
2. Remove the unused definition of “conservation use.”

The motion carried by a vote of 4–1, with Karen Meloney opposing.

Comprehensive Plan Update--Data Center Regulation

The Commission discussed whether the Township should develop a specific ordinance addressing data centers, given their potential water and power demands. Members referenced nearby municipalities considering or adopting similar regulations. Several members supported pursuing a Township ordinance.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Boyle
Recording Secretary