Pennsbury Township Planning Commission Minutes

October 14, 2026

Present: Kay Ellsworth, Joe Short, 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 September 9, 2026, were presented. Dennis Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Joe Short seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Pennsbury Land Trust Update: Open Space Preservation

Representatives of the Pennsbury Land Trust, Holly Manzone, Kathy Howley, Karen Travers, Frank Schweitzer, and Alice Bagwell, joined the Commission to discuss open space preservation priorities and potential ways the Township could support the Land Trust's preservation efforts.

Discussion included:

- Taking a proactive, relationship-based approach to contacting landowners before they decide to sell or develop their properties.
- The Land Trust's current emphasis on education and outreach. It could help connect landowners with larger conservation organizations for easements, but would need outside technical expertise to accept new easements.
- Sharing information about conservation options, including the potential effects of development constraints on land value.
- Reconstituting the Township's Open Space Commission or Committee. Members noted that a resolution establishing an open-space review board may still be in place and suggested reviewing Township records.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

Demographics and Growth

The Commission reviewed findings from a Brandywine Conservancy presentation, including that Pennsbury has relatively low population density and higher median income than Chester County, while some households remain below the poverty line. The report showed 129 fewer housing units in 2019 than in 2010. Members discussed how that trend relates to future infrastructure and growth planning.

Survey results available at the time showed strong interest in preserving scenic beauty and rural character, and concern about overdevelopment. The Commission also discussed potential zoning flexibility to support housing affordability and multigenerational living.

Historic Preservation and Scenic Resources

Members discussed preserving scenic views and landscapes, including possible setbacks and ordinance provisions. The Commission reviewed proposed comprehensive-plan goals related to historic resources, community education, adaptive reuse, and deconstruction of historic structures as an alternative to demolition. Members also discussed facade easements and the need to clarify what protections existing easements provide.

Resiliency Preparedness

The Commission reviewed background material concerning flood, fire, storm, and winter-weather risks. Members discussed potential goals that included improving municipal energy efficiency and considering solar panels when the municipal building roof is replaced; protecting wetlands, forests, tree canopy, and open space in flood-prone areas; educating residents about energy programs and stormwater management; and considering inspections of stormwater basins to identify maintenance problems that could contribute to localized flooding.

Septic Systems and Transportation

Members discussed updating the sewage facilities plan and the Township's septic-tank pumping requirements. The Township described its existing three-year pumping requirement and enforcement process. Members suggested comparing it with neighboring municipalities.

The Commission reviewed transportation discussions from a comprehensive-plan meeting. The Commission identified the Route 926 and Lenape Road intersection as a high-priority improvement area; proposed improvements included turning lanes. Members also discussed public transportation and the safety challenges of bicycling on narrow, winding roads, including the possible use of shared-roadway signage.

Upcoming Comprehensive Plan Meetings

The following upcoming meetings were noted:

- November 19: Review of the implementation matrix.
- January 28: Draft comprehensive plan review.
- February 25: Final draft comprehensive plan review.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Boyle
Recording Secretary