

Lower Milford Township Planning Commission
7607 Chestnut Hill Church Rd Coopersburg, PA 18036
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Monday, September 14, 2026 – 6:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: John Harbove, Chair; John Bannon; Ellen Koplin; Kara Stever; Allison Schaffer; Mark Somers; Mark Cappuccio, Solicitor; Andrea Silvestri, Planning Commission Secretary; and one member of the public.

The meeting was called to order by John Harbove, Chair, at 6:31.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

JBannon made a motion to accept the minutes of August 3rd , which was seconded by KStever and the motion was unanimously passed. ASchaffer recommended project headers being helpful going forward.

Timber Harvest Regulations

A discussion arose regarding the Lehigh County Planning Commission (LVPC) amendment recommendation for timber harvests to not occur in Riparian Buffer Zone 1 and for homeowners to consult arborists during harvesting in those areas, noting that arborists are not necessarily silviculture experts and such a requirement would be too expensive for residents.

The commission decided against allowing harvesting in Riparian Buffer Zone 1, the motion was made by EKoplin and seconded by JBannon.

Regarding heritage trees, members discussed comments from Upper Milford Township concerning tree diameters.

The commission decided to thank Upper Milford for their input but will not make changes regarding heritage tree definitions at this time, the intention was to adhere to the Penn State model for Timber Harvesting to avoid future challenges.

Roof-Mounted Solar Regulations

The group reviewed amendment feedback from the Lehigh County Planning Commission (LVPC) concerning roof-mounted solar energy systems in various zoning districts.

There was confusion over whether solar should be permitted "by right" in the Resource Conservation (RC) district versus being a special exception. ASchaffer

made a motion, seconded by KStever to seek clarification from LVPC because their comment was unclear as the existing draft already included RC as a permitted use by right.

Lower Macungie Zoning Changes

The commission reviewed proposed modifications by Lower Macungie Township, including changes to permitted land uses like coordinated commercial and industrial development.

Members expressed concern that eliminating these uses locally could result in those developments being pushed into neighboring townships like ours due to regional planning implications.

A decision was made to request more information before formally commenting, as current information lacked context on how these changes affect adjacent properties or overall regional planning targets.

Data Center Planning Concerns

Discussion turned toward potential data center developments and how changes in neighboring zoning might increase vulnerability for Lower Milford Townships own agricultural lands.

MCappuccio warned that without a strong local ordinance, developers can exploit gaps left by shifting regional plans through legal challenges related to "reasonable distance."

The commission agreed on a two-prong approach: sending a formal letter via Solicitor expressing disagreement with certain removals and having Andrea reach out informally to other regional members for insight.

Live Streaming Meeting Proposals

JHarbove introduced a proposal from Supervisors to live stream meetings via YouTube for increased transparency and digital inclusion, which they have asked for opinions by next week. A discussion was of a timely matter that could not wait until next month.

Mark Somers made a motion to add the item to the agenda, this was seconded by JBannon, and all were in favor. There was not public comment.

Commission members raised significant concerns regarding legal exposure, ADA compliance requirements (expected by 2028), and privacy/professionalism issues involving recorded side chatter or waivers.

The committee reached a consensus that they would like more information; they will request that a Supervisor attend an upcoming meeting to explain the intent behind this move before any implementation occurs.

Workshop Meeting Planning

The group agreed to hold a dedicated workshop meeting for the next Monday to address complex items like data centers, commercial solar, and overlay districts with proper documentation and maps showing preserved land, developed areas, and open space. It may be helpful to bring laptops/devices for research.

A motion was made by KStever and seconded by MSomers to adjourn the meeting at 8:38, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Silvestri".

Andrea Silvestri

Planning Commission Secretary of Lower Milford Township