Haverford Township - Planning Commission

Meeting: Thursday, May 14, 2026

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room -1014 Darby Rd., Havertown PA, 19083

Regular Meeting Minutes

Members:

Angelo Capuzzi
Maggie Dobbs
Kim (Jusczak) DiTrolio
Adam Terranova - Absent
Stephen Welsh
Victor Cortese
Jennifer Onopa

Others in Attendance:

Jaime Jilozian, Director of Community Development

Agenda Items

1. Opening of Meeting- Ms. Dobbs called the meeting to order at 7:11 P.M.

Roll Call-Ms. Jilozian.

Pledge of Allegiance

2. Presentation of Reorganized Zoning Ordinance by Adam Tecza, IMEG (formerly FHI Studio).

Ms. Dobbs explained that the Reorganization Zoning Ordinance was also reviewed at the last Planning Commission Meeting of April 9, 2026, and again this month with public comment. The Planning Commission will be making recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on the next steps moving forward.

Mr. Tecza shared a brief review of the April 9, 2026, meeting presentation. Mr. Tecza began with questions and comments via email or the survey. Mr. Tecza acknowledged the first mailing that was sent out had missed addresses and apologized for the issue and said a second mailing was sent.

Mr. Tecza offered examples of definitions, for example “Family”, and its update to align with the legal definition. There are no substantive changes, however, the definitions are made clearer. Another example is to combine both professional office and other home occupations together with home offices. Mr. Tecza said that “Exclusionary Zoning and Fair Share Doctrine” states you must zone for all lawful land uses. An example of that would be short-term rentals that will come up and should be addressed in substantive updates.

Discussion with the Planning Commission included corrections and recommendations. For example: building height/stories, accessory building/accessory structure, large/small satellite dishes, enlargement as opposed to intensity of use and steep slope. R-7, R-8 and R-9 gross and net lot/site area will be defined. Mr. Tecza said in the previous meeting conversation about lot width and the building line on irregular shaped lots should be addressed. Standard building line, a line parallel to the front line that establishes the minimum required front yard setback and governs the placement of the principal structure along the front of the street. Mr. Tecza suggests adding a governing building line, a line parallel to the front line at the minimum depth at which the front line first achieves the minimum lot width. Illustrations were provided.

Mr. Cortese revisited the accessory buildings and accessory structure and noted “sheds” is in both definitions. It was clarified through the group that all buildings are structures, but not all structures are buildings.

Mr. Capuzzi noted that the Township is lawfully required to include in the zoning ordinance any use that is deemed legal. There are definitions of new uses for which zoning districts have not been designated. Mr. Capuzzi asked if that puts the Township at any risk. Mr. Tecza said it should not and if anything should help define what they are and what to do with them. Mr. Tecza added he would be happy to consult with the Township Solicitor.

Ms. Onopa asked for clarification on home occupation and no one who does not reside in the home may be employed. Ms. Onopa asked procedurally what stage the reorganization is in. Mr. Tecza explained that this is technical reorganization. Trying to get the ordinance to the point to be able to have an informed conversation about what is permitted in what zoning district. Mr. Tecza added that there were two sessions of the Zoning 101 presentation to give interested persons a chance to learn the basics of zoning. The Township is currently working on a survey to find out what people are interested in seeing as part of the substantive updates. Additionally, the Township is working on a schedule for the first public meeting to discuss the substantive ordinance revisions.

Ms. Dobbs added a recap of the presentation, there is no map change, none of the definitions that are changed or added, are being proposed as definitions added as a use, either permitted or prohibited in any zoning district anywhere in the Township. This is in preparation of the discussions in the substantive changes.

Public Comment:

David Chanin- Resident of approximately 30 years, feels the goals are worthy and it is a good start, a good job. The concern is what is to be approved. Feels any approvals should be preliminary, subject to change. Mr. Chanin added his insight to the existing nonconformities in Haverford Township and how the substantive changes may result in changes to the definitions.

Mike Sweeney- Resident, feels the board is diligent but feels the residents are being “snowballed” by rushing this ordinance reorganization as was the Comprehensive Plan. What is being presented to the residents is disingenuous and dishonest. Mr. Sweeney added, when the substantive changes are made in zoning, it will drive up the price of homes if they can be changed to multi-unit. How are these changes in the zoning ordinance going to affect schools, density, safety.

Peter Willis-854 Buck Lane, would like to reverse the traffic changes made on Buck Lane which is now one way with a bike lane.

Lisa Lerner Wagner-70 W. Hillcrest Ave, feels the presented reorganization is “slick” and appears to be backward. Never received any information and many people present only heard by word of mouth. She is very concerned with traffic.

Mike Lee- Resident, feels the problem is with the steering committee who were not elected and are not holding open meetings.

Ms. Jilozian responded by reading the Township Solicitors response. There is no majority of the Board of Commissioners or the Planning Commission or any other established committee, it is not an official agency that would be subject to the Sunshine Law.

Mr. Lee added that he feels more people need to be contacted to express their opinion on the update of the zoning ordinance. Mr. Lee stated, it’s the height of arrogance to think the board knows everything.

Mr. Sweeney asked why this is being done. Ms. Dobbs explained there are loopholes in the zoning ordinance. This is the phase where we take a “Frankenstein” document and turn it into something actually functional, readable, and more user-friendly. The second phase of revisions will focus on more substantive changes to further strengthen the ordinance.

Dorothy Doughty-Resident, expressed her displeasure with the process of the zoning ordinance reorganization to this point. Ms. Doughty gave specific examples from the reorganization documents. Ms. Doughty said the Planning Commission should not approve this draft in its current state.

Ms. Doughty added the process seems to be moving backward and is confusing.

Mario Gambescia-Linden Drive, said this is a herculean effort on the Planning Commission. He feels there is a need for more communication and transparency. Mr. Gambescia gave examples of definitions that were not clear or ambiguous.

A gentleman in the audience wanted to know if the ward map would remain the same. Ms. Dobbs confirmed it would. He asked if the zoning districts would remain the same and Ms. Dobbs confirmed they would. He asked if there would be mixed zoning within the ward boundaries. The ward map as it is, may have multiple zoning districts within each political boundary.

The gentleman asked if the residents would be notified of any changes zoning districts. Ms. Dobbs stated there are no plans to change the zoning map or zoning boundaries. If there were a change in the zoning boundaries, you would be notified under State Law, the MPC. If there are changes within a zoning district, there will not be notification to the change of zoning text. The gentleman asked why they would not be notified of that. Ms. Dobbs stated the law does not require notification of zoning text change but that is what these and the upcoming meetings are for. Ms. Dobbs reiterated the process of recommendation.

Chris Smith-Resident, thanked the Planning Commission for their efforts, stating that he received mailers and attended the Zoning 101 presentation. Mr. Smith is excited for mixed-use zoning to be included in the update, noting the existence of current mixed-use in the Township. Mr. Smith looks forward to making Haverford Township an even better place to live.

Albert Marciano- 8 Concord Ave., flagged contradictions in the current and proposed update to the zoning ordinance. Mr. Marciano will communicate with Mr. Tecza regarding his discoveries.

Mr. Marciano added he'd like to see a side by side presentation or the current and proposed documents so the changes can be clearly seen.

Lynne Elliot-Polo Rd., feels the process is being rushed and encourages everyone to slow it down. Ms. Elliot gave input on definitions; accessory dwelling units, co-working space, fitness studio should be split into 1, without amplification and 2, with amplification, for example. Ms. Elliot added, page 49, Office District use regulations showing such use by right as a catering establishment providing food, drink and entertainment. Ms. Elliot stated that this use is exactly what should not be permitted in an office district. Office district use should be the least intensive use.

Mr. Tecza explained the process again. The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners will have an advertised Public Hearing and then the consideration of adoption of the changes. Mr. Tecza said the group is taking well more than the statutory required time to get this through in order to get to as many comments as possible. Mr. Tecza stated as they move through the substantive updates, there are going to be public workshops. Mr. Tecza stated the group does not believe the changes here are not going to substantially change what uses are not permitted.

Hugh McKeever- Sunnybrook Lane, stated his concern with the definition of family and short-term rentals. Ms. Dobbs said it cannot be regulated until it is defined. The coming substantive changes will be addressing these issues.

Martha Wagner-2422 Rosewood Lane, asked where is the Official Map with planned future public land. Ms. Dobbs defined the "Official Map" Ms. Wagner was referencing and explained Haverford Township has Zoning Map, Ward Map and Land Use maps but has not adopted an "Official Map" which is a

defined map.

K Dugary- Resident, expressed her concern that zoning changes can change the character of the Township from the place that everyone chose to live, to something undesirable. Ms. Dugary asked the board to do the research needed to see how changes could negatively affect the Township. Ms. Dugary added she received no mailers and appreciates the people who walked around and communicated what was happening. Ms. Dugary said the response that the steering committee is not applicable to the Sunshine Law, is frustrating.

Elaina Kaine-Resident, asked for clarification of the proposed definition of the word “lot”. Mr. Tecza explained that the proposed is a more inclusive definition of what is a lot, it does not change how you would regulate building on a lot.

Kim Sweeney-asked for clarification on the recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.
Ms. Dobbs explained that this may be a recommendation of approval, approval with conditions, recommendation for denial or to table it.

Brendon Kneafsey-Business owner, stated he hopes the zoning language remains clear and fair so small business that relied on prior township approvals can continue operating without uncertainty.

The Planning Commission discussed and debated the recommendation.

Mr. Capuzzi motioned to table the vote on the recommendation of the Reorganized Zoning Ordinance until June 11, 2026 PC Meeting to allow Mr. Tecza the time to fully document the changes discussed.
Ms. Onopa seconded.
Vote by roll call:
Ms. Onopa -Yay
Mr. Welsh -Yay
Ms. Dobbs -Nay
Mr. Capuzzi -Yay
Ms. DiTriolio -Yay
Mr. Cortese -Nay
4-2 to table

3. Review of Minutes
Mr. Welsh motioned to approve the Planning Commission minutes of April 9, 2026, as submitted.
Mr. Capuzzi seconded.
All in favor.

Mr. Capuzzi motioned to adjourn.
Ms. DiTrolio seconded.
Adjournment-10:10