

**MIDDLESEX TOWNSHIP
WORKSHOP MEETING AGENDA
April 24, 2026
7:30 AM**

OFFICIALS PRESENT:	SUPERVISORS:	Chairman Donald S. Geistwhite, Jr. Vice-Chairman Phil Neiderer William H. Goodhart Keith O. Brenneman
	SOLICITOR:	
	PUBLIC SAFETY	
	DIRECTOR:	Chief Andrew Bassler
	ZONING OFFICER:	Mark D. Carpenter
	ASST. CODES ENFORCEMENT/ MS4 COORDINATOR:	Gerald Steigleman
	ENGINEER:	Gerald “Bud” Grove
	MANAGER/ ROADMASTER:	Zachary L. Zook
	SECRETARY/ TREASURER:	Eileen Gault

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Geistwhite called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m., at the Middlesex Township Municipal Building, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment:

Alanys Vasquez, Buckeye Lane, expressed that halting the PAC One project is a critical decision due to significant financial investment. She requested firm, evidence-based guarantees from the contractor, including protection of underground gas pipelines during blasting; prevention of landslides, particularly near Bernheisel Bridge Road; assurance that rock displacement will not alter the creek bed or increase flood risk; commitment to producing semi-annual environmental reports; and access to a structural engineer. Ms. Vasquez emphasized the importance of safeguarding homes from structural damage during blasting operations.

Jody Schivel, Teaberry Drive, spoke on behalf of Hilda Rosa Vasquez, Buckeye Lane, whose home has existing structural cracks and was previously featured in news coverage. Due to language barriers, Ms. Vasquez asked that her concerns be clearly communicated. Ms. Vasquez is concerned about the use of dynamite for blasting and its potential impacts, including structural damage to homes and risks to private water wells and underground systems. She noted that properties could lose their value and that blasting activity is creating a negative stigma for the neighborhood. Key questions raised included how the township will ensure homeowners do not bear economic losses due to declining property values, whether there is a plan to compensate residents for property value loss or structural damage, and whether such compensation would occur proactively or only after damage is demonstrated. Ms. Vasquez also expressed concern that data center representatives may be influencing or controlling media coverage and related websites, leading to uncertainty about who controls public messaging and how township officials interact with the media. Overall, she is seeking greater transparency, accountability, and both financial and structural protections related to the data center project and associated blasting activities.

Hilda Rosa Vasquez asked whether the township provides a webpage with informational resources to help orient residents about the data center. She emphasized that many individuals do not understand what the data center is, how it functions, or what to expect, particularly regarding blasting activity.

Vice Chairman Neiderer responded that the township is actively sharing information through its website and a Facebook page, both of which are regularly updated, though still in preliminary stages. He stated that the township does not control media coverage, noting that press outlets independently attend and report on meetings.

Ms. Vasquez clarified that her concern is not about promoting the data center, but ensuring residents receive unbiased information. She reiterated that many residents feel uninformed and unprepared.

Ms. Schivel supported these concerns, suggesting the township distribute a general informational letter to all residents outlining the project, what to expect, and where to find additional information. She noted that many residents do not attend meetings and may lack access to or familiarity with online resources. She also pointed out that the township's quarterly newsletter has not yet included information about the project.

Vice Chairman Neiderer acknowledged the suggestion but expressed concern that printed materials may quickly become outdated due to the evolving nature of the project. He indicated the township prefers digital updates for timeliness but agreed to consider including general information about the data center in a future newsletter.

Viola Byerly, Country Club Road, asked when the township will compile and publish a comprehensive FAQ addressing the numerous questions raised by residents over multiple meetings. She noted that while meeting minutes have improved and are helpful—especially for new attendees, there is still a need for clear, consolidated answers to avoid repeated questions and confusion. Ms. Byerly also raised concern about the lack of direct communication to residents affected by blasting. She stated that no formal township letter has been sent to inform residents within the blasting area about planned activities or schedules. While some households received contractor notices for home inspections, she emphasized that these did not serve as official notification of blasting. Overall, she requested clearer, more organized communication, including a centralized FAQ and direct outreach to impacted residents.

Vice Chairman Neiderer stated that blasting is a highly regulated activity governed by state agencies, including the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). He noted that a blasting fact sheet and DEP contact information are available on the township website and encouraged residents to reach out to the DEP for regulatory concerns. He also explained that, under state regulations, certain residents are not legally required to receive direct notification of blasting.

In response, Ms. Byerly expressed dissatisfaction, emphasizing that they expect the township to act as an intermediary and advocate for residents rather than deferring to contractors or state agencies. Concerns were raised that residents have not been adequately notified or protected and that communication has been insufficient.

Vice Chairman Neiderer responded that responsibility for direct notification lies with the developer, contractors, and blasting specialists. He emphasized that township officials are dedicating considerable time to oversight, including site visits, meetings, and coordination with

developers, and are not attempting to withhold information. He noted that the developer is preparing a public website to provide project information and accept community feedback.

The township offered to facilitate direct contact between residents and the blasting contractor and advised residents to follow up if outreach does not occur. It was also noted that while some inspections have been conducted, they are not legally required but are being offered by contractors.

Vice Chairman Neiderer clarified that the township's role is to ensure the developer complies with applicable zoning ordinances. He stated that the project is permitted "by right" and cannot be stopped if it meets zoning requirements. He also noted that newer zoning regulations are more stringent and that a future comprehensive plan may further refine ordinances.

Ms. Byerly suggested the use of blasting mats to cover the area and reduce debris dispersion. Vice Chairman Neiderer responded that blasting mats are designed to prevent fly rock, debris from blasting, but are not effective in significantly reducing dust, as they are not impervious. He noted that dust control requires other mitigation methods.

Discussion and possible motion on request to maintenance release security for Jack Williams Land Development in the amount of \$27,483.21: Bud Grove referenced an April 21 memorandum included in the board packet recommending that maintenance security for Jack Williams, Mavis, land development site not be released. He cited documented deficiencies, supported by photographs, and recommended allowing up to 60 days for the required maintenance work to be completed, with a corresponding extension of the letter of credit. On the motion of Vice Chairman Neiderer, seconded by Chairman Geistwhite, it was unanimously agreed to deny release of the maintenance security in the amount of \$27,482.21. It was noted that the maintenance letter of credit is set to expire on May 10. Discussion included notifying the property owner that failure to extend the letter of credit may result in the township drawing on it. Bud Grove confirmed he would send appropriate notice.

Vice Chairman Neiderer emphasized that this situation demonstrates the township's role in protecting residents through oversight, inspections, and enforcement of maintenance requirements to ensure developments are properly maintained.

Discussion and possible motion on request for extension of review time of preliminary final land development plan for SOLAmerica Energy LLC and Cumberland County PAS5 at 320 S. Middlesex Rd. until July 31, 2026: Township Manager Mr. Zook reported that the request is for a time extension until July 31st because of the litigation that is currently going on. On the motion of Chairman Geistwhite, seconded by Supervisor Goodhart, it was unanimously agreed to accept the time extension request until July 31, 2026.

Discussion and possible motion on short list of potential consultants for Township Comprehensive Plan and to set up interviews: Mr. Zook reported that four proposals were received for the comprehensive plan, with one deemed incomplete, leaving three qualified submissions. He noted this is a manageable number for review and recommended proceeding with interviews for all three consultants. Proposals have been distributed to the Board of Supervisors, staff, and the Planning Commission for review, with initial feedback already provided.

The next step discussed was forming a small interview committee, likely to consist of a supervisor and Planning Commission members, to evaluate candidates and determine the best fit.

Vice Chairman Neiderer noted significant cost differences among the proposals and asked whether resident involvement should begin at this stage. Zook advised that while the Board will make the final consultant selection, resident engagement would be more appropriate after a consultant is chosen, during the development phase of the comprehensive plan.

Vice Chairman Neiderer noted that only one of the three comprehensive plan proposals included references. He stated that he has begun reaching out to contacts associated with the proposals to gather feedback on their experience with the consultants and requested that staff obtain references and contact information from the remaining firms.

Mr. Zook confirmed that he has already contacted some municipalities, to gather feedback on consultants who recently completed comprehensive plans. He noted that responses are still pending.

Discussion and possible motion to approve purchase of Rigidply Rafter pavilion kits from George Ely Associates: Mr. Zook requested to purchase two small pavilion kits for township parks to install one pavilion near the splash pad to cover existing picnic tables and another near the new pickleball courts to provide shade and shelter from rain.

Vice Chairman Neiderer inquired about the use of fee-in-lieu funds, noting that additional funds for Phase 1A are expected upon issuance of the NPDES permit. Mr. Zook clarified that the pavilion purchase will not use those future funds, as sufficient funds already exist in the fee-in-lieu account.

Vice-Chairman Neiderer also noted that the developer will contribute significant fee-in-lieu payments—estimated between \$400,000 and \$500,000 total—based on disturbed acreage, to support township recreation improvements. Initial payments are expected in the coming months, with additional funds provided as project phases progress.

On the motion of Vice-Chairman Neiderer, seconded by Chairman Geistwhite, it was unanimously agreed to approve the purchase of the Rigidply Rafter pavilion kits from George Ely Associates.

Discussion and possible motion to award bid for 2026-2029 Fuels Contract: Mr. Zook reported that the township solicited bids for a three-year fuel contract covering diesel, gasoline, and propane. The current provider, Aero Energy, submitted a complete bid. One additional bidder submitted a lower price for propane but was disqualified for failing to include the required bid bond. On the motion of Vice-Chairman Neiderer, seconded by Chairman Geistwhite, it was unanimously agreed to award the bid for 2026-2029 fuels contract to Aero Energy.

Discussion and possible motion to award bid for 2026 Oil and Chip Seal Contract: Mr. Zook reported that Russell Standard was the lowest bidder for the road oil and chip project at \$1.61 per square yard. He noted that the bidding process was restructured this year. Instead of separating costs for equipment, oil, and materials, the project was bid as a complete package on a per-square-yard basis, with the contractor responsible for all materials and work. On the motion of Vice-Chairman Neiderer, seconded by Chairman Geistwhite, it was unanimously agreed to award the bid for 2026 oil and chip seal contract to Russell Standard.

Discussion and possible motion to award bid for 2026 Equipment Rental Contract: Mr. Zook reported that Schlusser's Paving was the sole bidder for the paving equipment rental contract, noting this is a specialized service with limited providers. He also explained that asphalt materials will be purchased through the CoStars program. On the motion of Chairman Geistwhite seconded by Vice-Chairman Neiderer, it was unanimously agreed to award the bid for 2026 equipment rental contract to Schlusser's Paving.

Township Board / Staff Comments: Mr. Zook reported that, based on a recent meeting with the data center developer, the current phase of blasting is expected to be completed by the first week of May, weather permitting. He also noted that the Cumberland County Planning Commission will host a virtual forum on data centers on April 29. Residents may RSVP or access the forum via an online link.

Vice Chairman Neiderer encouraged residents to seek additional information from Penn State Extension, describing it as a neutral, research-based resource offering webinars and educational materials on data centers. He also acknowledged and encouraged continued resident engagement and participation in township meetings.

Mr. Grove provided an update on planned roadwork related to the data center project. Paving and significant repairs on Country Club Road—from the top of the hill down to the site—are scheduled to begin Monday. Work will involve milling approximately fourteen inches of the roadway. Construction will be conducted one lane at a time, with an expected duration of 7 to 10 days. Inspection will be performed primarily by HRG, with additional oversight by township staff.

Mr. Zook noted that the 2026 budget includes \$12,000 to produce and distribute four quarterly newsletters, typically four pages each with occasional inserts. The newsletters are intended to provide residents with a variety of township information. It was stated that the summer newsletter is currently in development and will include additional content, with plans to expand coverage of local developments, including but not limited to the data center project.

Residents Q/A:

Ms. Byerly, Country Club Road, asked for clarification regarding the blasting timeline and whether additional phases are planned. Mr. Zook confirmed that the current blasting represents Phase 1A and that Phase 1B, located further north of the current site, is expected to involve additional blasting. This next phase is tentatively anticipated to begin around June, pending final plan approvals and is estimated to last approximately one to two months. Vice Chairman Neiderer added that a high-level construction schedule is available on the township website, though it is subject to change.

Ms. Vasquez, Buckeye Lane, asked who is responsible for covering damages to homes resulting from blasting activities. It was clarified that the blasting company would be responsible for any damage caused. Ms. Vasquez emphasized the importance of ensuring all affected residents are aware of this information, noting that multiple households may be impacted.

Arlene Darlington, Wertzville Road, reported observing two incoming trucks at the quarry, one covered and one uncovered, despite prior reminders for all loads to be covered. She noted reduced truck speeds and overall traffic but expressed concern that not all drivers may be following procedures.

Mr. Grove stated that truck traffic has been reduced from a potential five hundred trips per day to 250, which should lessen activity in the area. He also reported conducting periodic on-site observations and indicated that, in his experience, all trucks he saw were properly covered. Township representatives continue to actively address residents' concerns during regular Wednesday meetings, emphasizing oversight and efforts to protect nearby property owners.

Ms. Byerly emphasized that while legal requirements may be met, there is also a moral and ethical responsibility to communicate more effectively with residents impacted by the project. She encouraged proactive outreach and stronger direct communication, noting the significant impact on residents. She expressed that improved communication would help reduce hardship for those affected. Mr. Zook suggested that the developer could potentially fund and distribute an FAQ mailing to all Middlesex residents to improve information sharing.

Ms. Darlington referenced a prior meeting presentation of a preliminary plan and asked whether approval of the preliminary development plan for Phase 1B would be on the upcoming agenda. Mr. Carpenter stated that three data center plans are expected to be presented at the Planning Commission meeting on Monday, with subsequent consideration by the Board of Supervisors on May 6.

Andrew Dymsky, Bernheisel Bridge Road, followed up on a Planning Commission discussion regarding a well constraint mentioned in the project plans and asked for clarification on whether it is confirmed. Mr. Grove responded that the plans would include a restrictive covenant related to wells. He explained that this requirement had been previously discussed and stated by the developer during earlier meetings. He further noted that, although there was some dispute over prior statements at the Planning Commission meeting, the developer ultimately confirmed that the restrictive covenant will be included on the final plans. Mr. Dymsky acknowledged the clarification and thanked him.

Executive Session: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to Executive Session by Chairman Geistwhite at 8:35 a.m. for an update on litigation, with no action to be taken as a result.