

**MIDDLESEX TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 13, 2026**

START TIME: 7:00 p.m.

END TIME: 10:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wes Beard
Robynn Eppley
Jim Gehr
Tracy Gleim
Doug Graham
Tom Ryan
Larry Claycomb

STAFF PRESENT:

Mark Carpenter, Zoning Officer
Eileen Gault, Secretary/Treasurer
Bud Grove, Township Engineer
Zach Zook, Manager-Roadmaster

Tom Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. then lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dan Higgins, Elizabeth Way, expressed concern about developments over the past few years, almost feeling embarrassed to live in Middlesex and voiced hope that a better job will be done in the future.

Andrew Dymsky, Bernheisel Bridge Road, had questions related to the plan on the agenda and was asked to hold those questions until after the presentation of the plan.

Stan Shivel, Teaberry Drive, asked who is permitted to speak at meetings, because he has a friend in VA that is an expert on energy use in data centers and would he be able to address the board. Tom Ryan clarified that only community residents may speak, while non-residents may submit questions and comments in writing.

Discussion and Possible Action on minutes of February 23, 2026

The Board reviewed the February 23, 2026, meeting minutes, including brief discussion and clarification regarding landscape planning and tree size. Wes Beard moved to approve the minutes, Robynn Eppley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on minutes of March 9, 2026

Robynn Eppley questioned the accuracy of the March 9, 2026, minutes regarding Cumberland County Planning Commission comments under TPF 26-2 on page 2, noting the minutes stated the comments were available electronically but not printed. Mark Carpenter clarified that the comments had been posted on the County website but had not yet been acted upon. It was suggested that the minutes be revised to label them as “draft” county comments. Larry Claycomb moved to approve the minutes, Wes Beard seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

TPF 25-28 Discussion and Possible Action on Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for Ahold Delahaize Solar Development, on Shady Lane (BOS action deadline 06/03/2026)

Mark Carpenter reported that the applicant requested this item be tabled to allow additional time to respond to staff comments.

TPF 25-25 Preliminary Land Development Plan for Pennsylvania Digital (PAX-1) Phase 1B Data Center (BOS action deadline 05/06/2026)

Charlie Courtney (McNees) and Justin Ross presented Phase 1B, proposing six buildings as part of a preliminary plan, noting that a separate final plan process will follow. Some items are being addressed at the preliminary stage, with ongoing updates to studies to improve accuracy. Architectural drawings will be refined into renderings for the final plan. A project-wide noise study has been prepared as a projection and will be updated to reflect final features and equipment. A final landscape plan will also be provided.

Mr. Courtney noted that questions raised at the last Planning Commission meeting extended beyond typical engineering review and the plan this evening is to review those questions, but the revised plans and materials will be submitted for the April 27 meeting.

Mr. Ross reported reviewing Mike Hess’s comments, which were minor and primarily related to the sound study, which has since been submitted. He reported receiving documented comments from Mark Carpenter and Jim Gehr, primarily technical in nature and not all ordinance-related but raising valid questions. He noted that key topics include site layout, generators, noise and sound, stormwater, and construction impacts, many of which will be addressed during the meeting.

Mr. Ross reviewed the site plan, describing building locations in relation to the creek and outlining project phasing (subdivision plan), with Phase 1A identified as the PPL substation and Phase 1B as the first data center campus. Phase 1B proposes six buildings, two driveways, a secure entrance, generator yards, and associated structures, including a water treatment building and a security building. Buildings 5 and 6 will be fully screened with the site design aim to co-locate facilities and use buildings as buffers.

Mr. Ross explained that water service will be provided by Middlesex Township Municipal Authority (MTMA), with on-site storage for domestic use, cooling, and fire protection. Stormwater facilities are designed to manage release and improve water quality, consistent with DEP recommendations, and will not retain water long-term. Basin facilities will provide treatment prior

to discharge into larger detention areas. Mr. Ryan clarified that water will be supplied by MTMA, not the Conodoguinet Creek, and that no wells are proposed. Mr. Ross confirmed there will be no discharge to the creek, with wastewater directed to the MTMA sewer system.

Mr. Beard asked whether the applicant would agree in writing not to drill wells for water consumption, because the absence of such a restriction could leave open the possibility of future wells. Mr. Ross responded that the site's shale geology would not support a high-production well, indicating that only small domestic-type wells might be feasible, but not viable for project consumption needs. Mr. Grove requested confirmation that a prior request had been made to include a restrictive covenant on the plans prohibiting wells. Mr. Ross did not recall the request, and Mr. Grove stated that such a restriction should be clearly noted on all plans.

Board members raised concerns about using water from the treatment plant. Mr. Ross explained that this option has been evaluated but is not feasible due to regulatory requirements requiring the Carlisle treatment plant to maintain a minimum discharge to the creek to support water levels. Mr. Claycomb asked about scenarios where water demand exceeds 400,000 gallons per day. Mr. Ross responded that this would be an operational issue requiring the facility to scale back processing, noting it reflects a long-term design consideration. Mr. McGrath added that such a situation would be an extreme condition; if the data center exceeds its allocated water supply from MTMA, it would need to adjust operations or shut down if necessary.

Justin Ross reviewed the proposed landscaping plan, noting the ordinance allows up to 70% impervious coverage while the project proposes only 18%. He highlighted a significant natural buffer along the creek, including wetlands, mature trees, and forested areas near the floodplain, with additional riparian buffers proposed. The plan aims to enhance the existing natural areas, and a final landscaping plan will be developed.

Project Architect Peter Bailo reviewed the data center overlay requirements, including building massing, color palette suited to the natural setting, façade patterning, and screening walls around mechanical equipment. He noted the buildings will use concrete panel construction and range from approximately 68 to 72 feet in height to the top of parapets. Each building will include an elevator roof access penthouse for first responders.

Mr. Ross discussed full-height screening walls designed to shield generators. He also addressed lighting and security, noting that lighting responsibility was reviewed and that the plan includes targeted, shielded fixtures with controlled systems that dim down at night and off-peak hours of limited activity, while maintaining necessary illumination for security purposes.

Mr. Claycomb questioned the multiple names associated with the project. Mr. Courtney clarified that "PAX-1" is the project name; Carlisle Development Partners is the landowner and developer; and PowerHouse is a related business entity. He explained that, as is typical in real estate projects, a specific entity is formed for the project—here, Carlisle Development Partners, which represents a joint venture between PowerHouse and PA Data Center Partners.

Charlie Courtney reviewed the construction traffic plan, outlining projected worker numbers and truck trips for all phases from 2026 to 2032. He noted that truck traffic will increase during

earthmoving activities and decrease as each phase is completed, continuing in this pattern throughout the project. He also acknowledged concerns about road damage from construction traffic, stating that a draft agreement has been prepared requiring a full reconstruction of Country Club Road from Harrisburg Pike to Bernheisel Bridge Road, along with an ongoing road repair agreement to address damage on Country Club Road during construction.

Mr. Courtney discussed construction coordination plans, including the reconstruction of Country Club Road, ongoing roadway repair agreements, and regular inspections during construction. He outlined additional measures such as creating a community website with project updates and a feedback portal, limiting early morning deliveries, implementing rideshare and shuttle options, adjusting phased work shifts, and establishing designated construction routes. These concepts are beginning to be implemented. Mr. Gehr commented that the site appears well organized and secure but emphasized the need for strict compliance—particularly regarding blasting communication—and diligence in enforcement. He noted concerns about speed limits and the long duration of the project. Mr. Courtney agreed on the importance of compliance and stated that efforts will continue to enforce requirements and minimize any non-compliance.

Mr. Ross presented images illustrating the height of the building, screening walls for generators. He explained that the generators are for backup, with full operation being rare. Monthly testing is required and conducted in rotating groups across the campus in accordance with EPA requirements. He noted that the generators meet Tier 4 standards, representing elevated levels of emissions control and quality. Mr. Graham noted that the generators are intended to virtually eliminate power outages, but because they may sit idle for lengthy periods, maintaining fuel quality can be challenging despite the environmental benefits of Tier 4 systems. Mr. McGrath added that monthly operational standards will require circulating and maintaining fuel. In response to questions about operating hours, Mr. Ross stated that testing is guided by end-user protocols and federal requirements and is generally expected during daytime hours. Mr. Gehr noted that the provided document references extended duration of testing every 36 months and requested clarification on the requirement. Mr. McGrath indicated he would obtain and provide the official details.

Mr. Ross reported that a campus-wide preliminary sound modeling report based on the current design and end-user requirements to meet ordinance standards has been provided. He noted ambient study results showing 24-hour sound levels in the 41–51 dBA range, consistent with a rural setting, and well below the ordinance limit of 70 dBA at the property line. The sound expert reported that, based on building layout, equipment selection, and mitigation measures included in the model, typical operational noise levels at the property boundary are expected to remain approximately 45–50 dBA. This reflects mechanical equipment only and is comparable to pre-development ambient conditions. It was noted that noise does not increase in a direct one-to-one manner across the site and that emergency generators and enclosure design have been incorporated into the modeling to minimize impacts. Discussion also clarified that modeling reflects distributed site-wide equipment rather than a single source, and that ordinance compliance is based on dBA measurements at the property line. Mr. Ross added that coordination with the Township includes a commitment to conduct a post-construction study to validate and calibrate the pre-development model against actual operational conditions.

Mr. Ross reported on cooling water use, including water input, treatment, and discharge from the facility. He stated that water supplied by MTMA is treated to municipal standards suitable for residential use. Preliminary testing indicates hard water conditions, and water softeners will be used to address mineral buildup. He noted that chlorine levels are maintained and naturally diminish as water cycles through the system, with treatment managed through the MTMA facility. No additional chemicals will be introduced, and the system is designed with stainless steel components. Mr. Ross further stated that all water leaving the site will be treated by the treatment authority, with tracking throughout the system to ensure compliance. He added that if standards are not met, accountability measures will apply.

Mr. Beard asked whether Lot 1C could be left undeveloped and permanently preserved. Mr. Ross responded that the area is anticipated to be used as a construction laydown area and would be restored afterward, noting that long-term use could be discussed further. Mr. Beard also asked whether the project had considered offering adjacent property owners along Country Club Road the option to purchase at market value. Mr. Courtney responded that such considerations are not uncommon in development projects and indicated it could remain an open possibility.

Mr. Claycomb asked what actions would be taken if noise levels or water usage exceeded allowable limits. Mr. Courtney responded that the facility is planned for a maximum of 400,000 gallons of water use per day, and if water supply is insufficient, operations would be required to shut down, with potential consideration of revisiting sewer effluent options as part of planning. Regarding noise, he noted that unlike typical warehouse developments, this project includes a formal agreement for periodic sound monitoring and measurement. He stated that any issues are more likely to be identified through ongoing sound evaluations and addressed accordingly.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Phil Neiderer, Old Stonehouse Road, referenced prior discussion regarding water usage, clarifying that 400,000 gallons represents maximum water intake to the facility and is not the same volume as discharge. Mr. Ross responded that approximately 273,000 gallons of effluent is anticipated, and that in winter conditions there may be minimal or no water inflow or outflow, emphasizing that the system does not “lose” water. Mr. Neiderer also acknowledged the emotional nature of the topic and thanked attendees for maintaining respectful conduct. He requested continued quiet during proceedings to allow Planning Commission members and the Board of Supervisors to clearly hear all information without background noise.

Dan Higgins of Elizabeth Way asked about site lighting height and quantity. Mr. Ross responded that lighting will be approximately 20 feet in height, consistent with ordinance requirements, and that the total number of fixtures has not yet been determined. Mr. Higgins also asked whether the 400,000-gallon water allocation would affect flow to nearby homes. Mr. Courtney stated that the allocation was provided by MTMA and is intended to meet facility needs while still maintaining adequate supply for the community. Mr. Higgins asked how long the blasting would last. Mr. Ross responded that the bulk of the earthwork is being done this year, with an anticipated date not beyond this summer. Mr. Higgins asked what will happen to the data center as technology changes. Mr. McGrath responded that technology inside would change but has nothing to do with the footprint of the campuses.

Andrew Dymsky, Bernheisel Bridge Road, expressed concern regarding low-frequency sound impacts in the sound modeling. Tadd responded that, due to ordinance requirements based on dBA, the model includes a DVC (Day-Night Sound Level) section, though it is not fully reflected in prior reporting. In response to questions about the post-construction L90 baseline, Tadd explained that L90 is a statistical noise metric used for monitoring, and that incorporating pre-construction L90 data into the model would result in an estimated change of approximately 2–3 dBA on average. Mr. Dymsky then asked when SRBC review occurs. Justin Ross responded that SRBC regulates MTMA's second well independently that was prior to the data center project. Mr. Dymsky also inquired about building count and water allocation, asking whether the design preceded the 400,000-gallon allocation and whether usage constraints affected the layout. Mr. Ross stated the current plan is for 16 buildings (reduced from an original 18) and that the layout was engineered to accommodate the allocated water supply. Finally, Mr. Dymsky asked whether noise monitoring data would be publicly available. Charlie Courtney responded that an evaluation will be conducted and provided to the Township, making it part of the public record.

David Wenner, Fieldstone Drive, requested clarification on how sound levels are measured, including existing ambient conditions and projected noise from the development. He asked whether the 70 dBA limit at the property line is an absolute standard. Mr. Courtney responded that the 70 dBA limit is established by ordinance. Mr. Wenner further asked whether project noise could result in reaching that limit on the property line. Mr. Hess stated that any development in the area must comply with the ordinance standards. Mr. Courtney added that current sound modeling is ongoing, with evaluations to be completed and submitted to the Township.

Arlene Darlington, Wertzville Road, requested clarification of the landscaping plan. Mr. Ross discussed the types of trees and where the screening will be. Ms. Darlington asked for clarification regarding generator testing duration and whether it would occur across the site over extended periods. Justin Ross responded that generator testing will be conducted on a scheduled, dedicated monthly basis across the site and will operate in accordance with DEP air quality permit requirements. There was clarification that there would be rooftop exhaust fans on 2 buildings in Phase 1B only.

Jody Shivel, Teaberry Drive, had concerns about the blasting and feeling it at her home and if her home should be checked. Mr. Zook suggested Ms. Shivel contact the Township, and her information will be provided to the contractor. Ms. Shivel asked if there was adequate water if there was a fire.

Pam Wenner thanked the Township for installing speed limit signs on Country Club Road. She also inquired about rooftop fans, specifically confirming that rooftop fans will be used for heat exhaust and expressing support for using cooling systems as efficiently as possible.

Earl Beam, Country Club Road, expressed concerns based on daily observations of construction activity, stating that trucks have been operating on the road and raised concerns about compliance, including loads being uncovered. He noted property damage, including a broken windowpane, and expressed concern about potential impacts to private wells. He also requested clarification on who would be responsible for addressing well-related issues if problems occur. Additionally, he raised

concerns regarding blasting activities, including who is responsible for monitoring and whether blasting mats are being used.

Viola Byerly, Country Club Road, thanked the Township for the installation of speed limit signs, noting some improvement, but expressed concern that road conditions are expected to worsen due to construction activity. Ms. Byerly raised concerns regarding building height, with Charlie Courtney clarifying that buildings will be approximately 68–72 feet tall (about two times the height of a typical home). Questions were also raised about generator noise and operation; it was explained that generators are housed within enclosures with mufflers designed to contain and direct noise, preventing upward sound dispersion. Ms. Byerly raised concerns about blasting activities occurring after 5 p.m., stating that prior expectations were not met and requesting improved communication, including advance notice by letter or email regarding blasting schedules. She also requested a live presentation and a 3D scale model of the project at the next meeting due to outstanding questions and concerns.

Township Staff Informational Comments with no discussion

Mr. Ryan asked if there were any Township Staff information comments in which Mr. Carpenter responded that there were none. There were no information comments.

Adjourn Meeting: Tracy Gleim moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m., seconded by Tom Ryan. Motion carried.