Penn Township, Butler County

MEETING

MINUTES

Penn Township Planning Commission October 20, 2026

The monthly meeting of the Penn Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 6:00pm. Members in attendance were: Chair Nanette Rau, Vice Chair Will Burns, Bob Yenick, Tim O'Brien, Secretary Art Black, and Land Use Administrator Phil Mangis. HRG spokesperson Johnna Zona, Township Manager Mary Hess and Township Solicitor Anthony Cosgrove and HRG rep Johnna Zona sat in with the Commission, and Alternate Deke Forbes was present. Also in attendance were Matt Bagaley, Alan Kolonsky, Tyler Beck, David Ferraro, Chris Hamm, Joe Galbraith, Grant Allison, Dawn Foster, Mark Mahler, John Schirra, Katie Gemperkin, Kurt Pipes, Rich Ejzak, Denni Walters, Donna Walters, Eric Vandenhengel, Jordan Kennedy, Tom Lasky, Theodosia Regal, Bill Geibel, Phil Coachman, Jeff Kennedy, Brian Rau, Kayla Rau, Linda Dawson, Walt Dawson, Tina Cafasso, Aaron Cafasso, Brad Chapman, Barb Chapman, Stacie Broskey, Denise Ejzak, Caroline Ejzak, Abby Gillman, Dennis Baglier, Kathy Graff, John Graff, Brandon Rau, Jim Gemperkin, Katie Gemperkin, and Township Supervisor Doug Roth.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the August 18, 2026 meeting were approved, after a motion by Bob Yenick and a second by Tim O'Brien.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Administrator Mangis introduced a minor subdivision application on behalf of Dennis Baglier on Oak Trace Road. He stated that no zoning issues were involved, and that although part of the property lies in Butler Township, it is taxed wholly in Penn. The subdivision was approved by the Commission after a motion by Will Burns and a second by Nanette Rau.

Tim O'Brien submitted drawings detailing site plan parking area changes drawings to his commercial property at 295 Pittsburgh Road. Dirt removal and a new ADA parking spot were included, and Administrator Mangis had no objection to the work described. The plan was approved after a motion by Bob Yenick and a second by Nanette Rau.

Chris Hamm of KDH Engineering spoke on behalf of Freedom Farms regarding their efforts to expand their commercial parking area at 795 Pittsburgh Road, offering to submit a lighting plan

for the new area. The project was tabled as a result, after a motion by Art Black and a second by Will Burns.

The final agenda item was a review of a proposed conditional use application for a natural gas compressor station, from Mark West, on a parcel (270-3F53-18A-0000) in an R1 single family residential zoning district.

Applicant representatives presented the site plan, landscaping, lighting, sound mitigation, stormwater and operations. The township solicitor, the township engineer and members of the public then commented. The commission voted to table the application to its November 17 meeting.

Solicitor Cosgrove introduced the conditional use and land development application by Mark West on the Kennedy Farm on Royal Oak Drive. He advised local residents with objections to the project to seek legal advice in presenting their cases to the Supervisors. Mark Bagaley described the project on behalf of Gateway Engineering, and mentioned an existing compressor station near Brownsdale Road in Forward Township for comparison. He described the expected technical and structural means of reducing the intrusion of the plant. His colleague, Alan Colonsky added more information and promised that an acoustic engineer would file a report with the Township to verify appropriate decibel levels, and that storm water runoff plans would meet Township and Federal (DEP) standards. Johnna Zona suggested fencing be provided around the retention ponds. She reminded residents that the development meets legal requirements, so long as the conditions set by the Township are met.

Site, Access and Construction

- The property is zoned R1 and a compressor station is a conditional use in that district. Access will be from Rope Drive using the existing driveway, which would be paved at 24 feet wide under an existing easement. The pad would be about 9.5 acres with four compressors and about 100,000 cubic yards of balanced earthwork. Setbacks far exceed the minimums: the front yard is 65 feet required versus about 1,200 feet proposed, the side yard is 10 feet required versus 600 plus 600 feet, and the rear yard is 30 feet required versus 250 feet, with a minimum lot width of 150 feet. Construction is expected to take about a year and a half, with about six months of earthwork. The haul route is Route 8 to Brownsdale Road to Three Degree Road to Royal Oak Drive, all state roads. Roughly four trucks a month would deliver triethylene glycol, along with lubricant and methanol.

Landscaping, Fencing and Lighting

- The applicant proposes keeping existing trees as a buffer of at least 50 feet, against a required 15 feet, and in places 100 to 200 feet of wood line, plus about 300 new trees on fill slope areas. In response to the township engineer's comment requiring six shrubs per 100 feet of frontage, about 25 shrubs on roughly 415 feet, the applicant proposed 25 more evergreens instead and asked the board to accept that. The township engineer said mature trees are better than shrubs and will review the new submission. The solicitor asked the applicant to consider a solid or slatted fence in place of the six foot chain link fence, and screening or fencing around the detention ponds. The lighting plan shows zero foot candles at the pad edges, with fixtures directed downward and inward. The site is unmanned, with one visit per 12 hour shift of about an hour, and lights are on only during visits or maintenance. Rich Ejzak noted the plan shows three strands of barbed wire on the fence and that new trees will take years to grow.

Noise and Vibration

- The ordinance limit is 55 decibels ambient plus 5, or 60 decibels. Alan Kolonsky from Mark West described a fully enclosed acoustic building, sound attenuating insulation,

silencers on wall and roof fans, hospital grade exhaust silencers with resonators, intake air silencers and low noise MAG cooler fans. The cooler fans are outside on the north side of the building. The applicant has hired a sound consultant and agreed to provide an acoustical analysis showing expected levels at the property lines before the next meeting and a post-construction report confirming compliance with the 60 decibel limit. Alan said some of the newer technologies still need to be modeled. Rich Ejzak measured under 30 decibels currently at his home, about 1,050 feet from the site, and over 65 decibels at 430 feet from another compressor station. Grant asked for a vibration study. The solicitor noted the zoning ordinance prohibits vibration detectable without instruments on adjoining property. A resident requested walls around the cooling fans.

Stormwater, Utilities and Operations

- Stormwater is managed with two basins and a larger pond that release to the stream below at less than existing rates, and an infiltration basin handles the access road. A DEP permit and an air permit will be required, and the ESCGP permit typically takes a few months. The site needs no water or sewer, only electric service from three phase power supplied by Penelec, run up the driveway from Royal Oak. It is monitored remotely 24/7 from Mark West's Bluestone plant. Materials on site include lube oils and coolant. Tyler Beck of Mark West said an emergency shutdown now vents through a silencer, there is fire and gas detection, and annual training with local fire and emergency services is planned. Maintenance work generally occurs Monday through Thursday, 6am to 4pm. If power is lost the compressors shut off without a blowdown, and mobile generators are being considered. The location was chosen because it is tucked into the tree line, balances cut and fill, and allows gravity drainage to the stream.

Public Concerns

- Rich Ejzak, who has retained Houston Harbaugh and is retaining experts, raised noise, proximity of homes within about 430 feet, and the application's assumed ambient level. Melissa Wirtz raised runoff toward her backyard, the pad elevation, visual impact and setback distance. Other residents raised air emissions and third party air monitoring, blast radius, proximity to multiple homes, wildlife including a possible bald eagle nest, road and culvert capacity, school bus traffic, property values, fire department capability and stormwater overflow near a neighboring pond. John Schirra noted both the benefits of natural gas infrastructure and his concern about truck traffic and mitigation. The solicitor said air quality is regulated by the EPA and DEP, and that the application is reviewed under the ordinance in effect when it was filed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 on a motion by Will Burns and a second by Nanette Rau.

Respectfully submitted,

Art Black

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