



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Josh Maxwell
Marian D. Moskowitz
Eric M. Roe

PLANNING COMMISSION
601 Westtown Road, Suite 270
West Chester, PA 19380
610-344-6285
www.chescoplanning.org

Matthew J. Edmond, AICP
Executive Director

Environmental and Energy Advisory Board
Government Services Center Room 351E/Zoom

January 28, 2026
Hybrid meeting

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Paul Spiegel, Chair; Carol De Wolf, Vice-Chair; Matthew Edmond, Secretary; Chinaza Akobi; Seung Ah Byun; Ann Colby-Cummings; Marcus Kohl; Rachel Roberts; Sarah Sharp; Dave Stauffer.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Jeff Byers; Mark Connolly; Christian Strohmaier; Kevin Warren.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Richard Drake; Lydia Franks; Rachael Griffith; Kate Hutelmyer; Carol Stauffer; Sally Warren.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Peter Dawson Buck; Carolyn Conwell; Jeanne Franklin; James Patrick Grant; G.L. Johnston; Ryan Mawhinney; Chris Nafe; Keith Parsons; Shawn Paul Reagan; Brandi Robinson; Karin de Vries; Cheryl Wanko.

CALL TO ORDER:

The Environmental and Energy Advisory Board meeting, held in the Government Services Center in Room 351 East and via Zoom video/audio on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, was called to order at 2:00 P.M. by Chair, Paul Spiegel. Mr. Spiegel welcomed the newest member of the board, Chinaza Akobi, representing citizens. Ms. Akobi replaces Madhu Gurthy, and Mr. Spiegel thanked Ms. Gurthy for her service to the board.

Appointment of 2026 Officers:

A MOTION BASED ON NOMINATING COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION TO RETAIN AND RE-APPOINT FOR A NEW ONE-YEAR TERM THE CURRENT CHAIR, PAUL SPEIGEL, VICE-CHAIR, CAROL DE WOLF, AND SECRETARY, MATTHEW EDMOND, WAS MADE BY MS. BYUN, SECONDED BY MS. SHARP, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of October 22, 2025, Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 22, 2025, MEETING WAS MADE BY MS. DEWOLF, SECONDED BY MS. SHARP, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of December 4, 2025, Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL MEETING ON DECEMBER 4, 2025 WAS MADE BY MR. EDMOND, SECONDED BY MS. BYUN, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Ms. Griffith shared that 2026 is the year to update the County's Climate Action Plan (2021) and this work should continue to be a key role of this board. Accordingly, it was proposed that the board meetings would occur more frequently in 2026 to complete the plan update by the end of the year. The proposal is for every-other month board meetings with a carve-out in the agenda to focus on the Climate Action Plan, beginning in February to allow the Penn State students that are working on the Climate Action Plan update to attend two more meetings before their semester ends. **The proposed meeting dates for the remainder of 2026 are: February 25; April 22; June 24; August 26; October 28; and December 16, 2026.** These new dates will need to be advertised to the public.

Approval of Revised 2026 Meeting Dates:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REVISED 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE WAS MADE BY MS. BYUN, SECONDED BY MS. DE WOLF, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

PRESENTATION

Graduate students in the Penn State Local Climate Action Program presented their "*Chester County 2024 Inventory of Countywide Greenhouse Gas Emissions*". Chester County conducted its first greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory in 2010, followed by an update in 2015 by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). Ms. Griffith noted that the GHG inventory forms the basis of the actions recommended in the Climate Action Plan.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental Subcommittee: Ms. Byun reported the committee met in November 2025 to discuss the County's Sustainable Landscape Management Plan. Ms. Griffith reported the draft plan is complete and it steers the goal of managing county facilities to more of a stewardship focus, rather than a purely maintenance focus.

Ms. Colby-Cummings gave an overview of work completed to support the 30 Environmental Advisory Councils (EACs) in the County, including: providing partner resources; creating a database and resource list that will be shared through a private website on the Chester County Planning Commission site; and collaborating on the WeConservePA EAC conference in Fall 2025. Ms. Colby-Cummings shared plans for several initiatives including: collaborating with a Northern Chester County EAC Group on agenda design for a March meeting; completing a Metal Recycling Toolkit; researching sustainable mowing options for municipalities; and developing 12 months of newsletter articles and social media posts for EACs to use.

Clean Energy Subcommittee:

Mr. Warren reported the committee identified 2026 goals with the Climate Action Plan update being a top priority, along with the Agrivoltaics webinar series, and Energy Strategy/Assurance Plan development.

Mr. Connolly reported that research into Agrivoltaics showed it was a topic best suited for a webinar series, not an in-person event, with the main audiences being: municipalities; landowners/developers; farmers.

Ms. Griffith spoke about the need to identify stakeholders for the Energy Strategy Plan. The goal is to plan two interviews with stakeholders identified, for the five main topics in the plan. Regarding farm-based energy strategies, Mr. Stauffer recommended adding Parks & Preservation's Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) to the list of stakeholders.

Discussion ensued on the process to review and approve this draft Energy Strategy Plan and to determine if this will be a stand-alone policy, or part of Landscapes4 or the Climate Action Plan.

UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

Planning Commission Director's Report - Mr. Edmond reviewed the Planning Commission's 2026 Work Program. Ms. Griffith elaborated on two work program items: 1) the Open Space Summit for 2026 will focus on a conversation of what open space preservation in Chester County can look like in the future; and 2) the Open Space Accelerator is a mini-grant program aimed at small-scale open space projects for municipalities that will launch later this year. Mr. Edmond mentioned a focus of work for the Planning Commission in 2026 is on data center planning. Ms. Stauffer pointed out that regional planning and zoning has an important role to play.

Sustainability Director's Report – Ms. Griffith shared that she has been working with CCATO (Chester County Association of Township Officials) and Montgomery County to present a hybrid educational event for municipal elected officials, local planning commission members, and municipal managers, called “Understanding Data Centers in Southeast PA” on March 10, 2026 at the CCIU Technical College High School, Pickering Campus.

Updates from the Board: Ms. De Wolf mentioned that CCATO is holding a, “Major Changes to PA Building Codes: What You Need to Know!” online webinar on February 18, 2026 at 2 pm. Register at <https://www.ccato.org>

Mr. Speigel mentioned the Smart Energy Initiative of Southeastern Pennsylvania is holding their 14th Annual Energy Briefing on February 5, 2026 at 8 am, see smartenergypa.com.

Public Comments: Mr. Keith Parsons asked what tax revenue can be expected from data centers for a municipality? Mr. Edmond answered that currently the only sources are yearly property taxes and one-time commitments worked out through the development process. This is different than in many other places, like Virginia, which has a more sophisticated revenue system from this land use.

The next meeting will be on February 25, 2026 at 2 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE AT 4:25 P.M. BY MS. COLBY-CUMMINGS, SECONDED BY MR. EDMOND, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew J. Edmond, Secretary

MJE/RG/saw