

Chester Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

|Wednesday, April 15, 2026 7:00 PM |

Chester Town Hall – Audio Recording on File

Meeting Called to Order by Mr. Oswick at 7:08 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Kats, Mr. Lauro, Mr. Mersol, Mr. Oswick, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Spetrino

Members absent: Mr. Sherwood

Zoning Inspector: Chris Alusheff

Admin present: Kathleen McCarthy

BoT member present: None

Mr. Oswick led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lauro moved to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2026 meeting as presented; Mr. Oswick seconded.

Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Kats/abstain; Mr. Mersol/abstain; Mr. Oswick/yes; Mr. Rosenbaum/yes; Mr. Spetrino/yes

Motion passes

Public Hearing for ZC-2026-1

Mr. Oswick gave an overview of the amendment.

ZC-2026-1 was initiated March 18, 2026. The amendment was properly noticed and transmitted to the Geauga County Planning Commission.

As required by ORC, the recommendation of denial by the Geauga County Planning Commission was read into the record by Ms. McCarthy. (Recommendation was displayed on the monitor.)

Public Comments

There were no members of the public in the audience.

Public Comments closed.

After discussion, the Zoning Commission made the following motion:

Moved by Mr. Mersol and seconded by Mr. Lauro

While the Chester Township Zoning Commission has strictly followed the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code, and while it has adhered to the practices it has successfully used in the past and that other Geauga County townships have successfully used in the past, it has now received a letter “recommending” denial of proposed Chester Township zoning amendment, ZC-2026-1. The Geauga County Planning Commission has not issued an explanation regarding what, if any, provision of the Ohio Revised Code has not been met, nor has it produced an explanation as to why it has departed from past practice.

A recommended denial under these circumstances serves neither the citizens of Chester Township, nor those of Geauga County.

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Out of respect and acknowledgement to the working relationship with the Geauga County Planning Commission, and to ease the passage of this resolution, we have reluctantly concluded that strictly to permit the new procedure to be completed we will deny the amendment at this time. This recommendation is not based on the merits of the proposed amendment. It is, and continues to be, in the best interests of Chester Township and will promote the health, safety, and welfare of Chester's citizens. Therefore, we move for the adoption of this motion:

Mr. Kats/yes, Mr. Lauro/yes, Mr. Mersol/yes, Mr. Oswick/yes, Mr. Rosenbaum/yes, Mr. Spetrino/yes

Forms 31 and 32 were signed

Initiate ZC-2026-2

Mr. Lauro moved; Mr. Mersol seconded the following motion – Form 22:

That an amendment to the Chester Township Zoning Resolution, identified as number ZC-2026-2, consisting of three pages marked Exhibit "A", 153 pages marked Exhibit "B" and 164 pages marked Exhibit "C" and attached hereto and incorporated herein as though fully rewritten, be hereby initiated by the Chester Township Zoning Commission this 15th day of April, 2026.

Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Mersol/yes; Mr. Oswick/yes; Mr. Rosenbaum/yes; Mr. Spetrino/yes
Motion passed

Mr. Lauro moved; Mr. Oswick seconded the following motion - Form 27:

That the Chester Township Zoning Commission conduct a public hearing on the proposed amendment, identified as number ZC-2026-2, to the Cheser Township Zoning Resolution as attached hereto on the 20th day of May, 2026 at 7:00 o'clock p.m. at the Chester Town Hall.

Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Mersol/yes; Mr. Oswick/yes; Mr. Rosenbaum/yes; Mr. Spetrino/yes
Motion passed

Forms 22, 27 and 30 were signed.

Initiate ZC-2026-3

Mr. Lauro moved; Mr. Kats seconded the following motion – Form 22:

That an amendment to the Chester Township Zoning Resolution, identified as number ZC-2026-3, consisting of five pages marked Exhibit "A", and attached hereto and incorporated herein as though fully rewritten, be hereby initiated by the Chester Township Zoning Commission this 15th day of April, 2026.

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Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Mersol/yes; Mr. Oswick/yes; Mr. Rosenbaum/yes; Mr. Spetrino/yes
Motion passed

Mr. Lauro moved; Mr. Kats seconded the following motion - Form 27:

That the Chester Township Zoning Commission conduct a public hearing on the proposed amendment, identified as number ZC-2026-3, to the Chester Township Zoning Resolution as attached hereto on the 20th day of May, 2026 at 7:00 o'clock p.m. at the Chester Town Hall.

Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Mersol/yes; Mr. Oswick/yes; Mr. Rosenbaum/yes; Mr. Spetrino/yes
Motion passed

Forms 22, 27 and 30 were signed.

Accessory Buildings

Board discussion on size of Accessory Buildings discussed ranging from 7,500 sf to 9,600 sf. Potential water runoff was also discussed. Consideration given to % of lot coverage as an alternate means of determining size of building.

General discussion on height of accessory buildings was also discussed. 35' is highest a structure may be because of availability of firefighting equipment. Need to determine if current method of determining height is the best means of measurement. 32' may help most homeowners and remainder will need to go to BZA. Large lot owners seem to have the highest need and largest request for a variance.

Reviewed Informal Review and email received April 15, 2026, from Planning Commission for future potential amendment – ZC – 2026 – 4 for accessory building size and height distributed to members for future discussion.

Following questions to be sent to Planning Commission:

**In terms of increasing the maximum accessory building area from 2,500 square feet to 9,600 square feet, see the following questions that should be investigated (if it hasn't been done already):

- Why does this question matter?

**What percentage of the requests are being approved or denied? (Yes, each is based upon its own merits, but statistics help.) If most are being approved, that is yet another reason to review the regulation.

- Isn't there an undue hardship involved? Why does this answer matter?
- Secondly, it is impossible to quantitatively identify number of cases that did not come forward as it was pre-determined to be futile.

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Concern about “undue hardship” language. Is the zoning itself presenting an “unnecessary hardship”? Is it consistent with the rest of our zoning resolution? We may consider for future discussion: Is the Duncan Factors a catch all at the end and essentially being lost? Would compliance with our code be a worse result than non-compliance? For example, we recently had a situation where someone attached a building to their house because they can’t get what would be a reasonable building.

Examples identified by GCPC were challenged. Ie- 900 sf as a 3-car garage. Group contends that size would not be large enough to walk in.

Consensus of group is people have more “stuff” now and a larger accessory building is needed.

- Would 1,000 sf per acre make more sense?
- Why was statement made in review, “171 instances of accessory structures being larger than 2,500 square feet. Many of which are barns.” What about the properties that have one accessory building and cannot build a second building in another suitable spot?
 - A better query might be, “what properties are 5+ acres”?

Items for future consideration

- Continue to review Zoning Resolution by Section/Article
- Continue to review accessory building sizes and heights
- Update definition section of Zoning Resolution
- How height of structures is determined
- ADUs

Next Meeting

May 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Called to Close at: 8:32 p.m.

Approved by: Chester Township Zoning Commission May 6, 2026

Final Review by: _____
Jon Oswick, Chair