Chester Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

|Wednesday, October 7, 2026 7:00 pm |
Chester Town Hall – Audio Recording on File

CALL TO ORDER

*Mr. Lauro - acting chairman in the absence of Mr. Oswick
*Mr. Spetrino – voting member in absence of Mr. Oswick

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Lauro at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Mersol joined at 7:02 pm

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

Also Present:
Patrick Fleming - Zoning Inspector
Becky Geissinger - Secretary, Zoning and Zoning Appeals

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Lauro led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kats moved to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2026 meeting as submitted
Mr. Spetrino seconded
Mr. Kats/yes Mr. Lauro/yes Mr. Rosenbaum/yes Mr. Spetrino/yes
Motion passed

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

ZC Term Expiration in date order

12-31-2026 Mr. Kats
12-31-2027 Mr. Oswick
12-31-2027 Mr. Spetrino (alt.)
12-31-2028 Mr. Rosenbaum
12-31-2029 Mr. Lauro
12-31-2030 Mr. Mersol

Bot invitation to joint meeting on November 12, 2026 at 7:00 pm

For now, keep both regularly scheduled ZC meetings.
November 4th to prepare for the BoT joint meeting and
November 18th to discuss the outcome of the BoT joint meeting.

APPROVED

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The Chester Township Zoning Commission invites Zoning Inspector to this meeting to discuss 2027 focal points based on Mr. Flemings challenges and interactions with the community. The following topics were discussed:

1. **Pool Covers**
   Discussion regarding retractable pool covers vs. fence.
   Chester Township Zoning Resolution 501.13(E)(5)

   FENCING. All pools requiring a zoning certificate shall be completely enclosed by permanent fencing or a structure to prevent unauthorized access. Such fencing or structure shall be no farther away than one hundred (100) feet from the perimeter of the pool. The fencing shall extend not less than four (4) feet above the ground. (See Section 501.6G.) All gates shall be self-closing and self-latching.

   Previous Zoning Inspector interpreted the pool cover as a "structure" and therefore in the past has approved the pool cover in lieu of fencing around a swimming pool. Mr. Fleming, when considering the safety and welfare of Chester Twp. residents and children, is not comfortable with the risk of interpreting a pool cover to mean a structure. He respectfully asks the Zoning Commission if they wish to consider amending the Zoning Resolution to allow for safety rated covers in lieu of fencing. After discussing Chester Twp's history and ongoing question of pool covers in lieu of fencing, it is decided that at this time, the Zoning Commission is not interested in proposing an amendment to allow for pool covers in lieu of fencing, regardless of ratings and insurance waivers. Going forward into 2027, this will remain an item that may be presented to the BZA on a case-by-case basis. This topic will also be added as a talking point at the joint meeting with the Board of Trustees

2. **Violations and violation enforcement**
   Mr. Fleming finds the violation enforcement inconsistent and challenging

Other topics discussed with Zoning Inspector and to be added to the agenda when meeting with the BoT.

1. **Outbuildings**
   To be discussed with Board of Trustees

2. **Blur the Lines**
   To be discussed with Board of Trustees

3. **Signage**
   To remain as Old Business

4. **EV Charging Stations**
   To remain as Old Business

5. **Data Centers**
   To remain as Old Business

APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

Data Centers – Tabled for future meetings.
Mr. Mersol stated that we don't want to do a moratorium at this point because once we do, the Township MUST take action. We cannot ban them, but Chester Township is not a high-risk target of data centers due to our current Resolution, and Industrial Zones. Mr. Mersol reminds us that all other restrictions and setbacks would have to be met, mitigating Chester Twp.'s risk at being a target for data centers. Mr. Mersol: *"Let's not worry about a moratorium right now, let's solve the problem."*

EV Charging Stations –Tabled for future meetings.
Mike Santilli, Director of Fire Investigation Unit of Geauga County sent potential Zoning Resolution language for EV Charging Stations. Copies were distributed to all. - Tabled

Signage – Tabled for future meetings

Save the Date:
Geauga County Community Zoning Group (Township Specific) meeting
Thursday, October 28th @ 6:30 pm at
Claridon Administration Building 13932 Mayfield Road, Chardon

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:13 pm

Final Review by: _____ October 21, 2026
Michael Lauro, Acting-Chairman Date

Attested by: _____ October 21, 2026
Becky Geissinger, Secretary Date

APPROVED