



Springfield Township Historical Commission

April 7, 2026

MINUTES OF MEETING OF REGULAR MEETING

HC-59

Meeting held in the Caucus Room at the Springfield Township Building, 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038

NOTICE: The Historical Commission of Springfield Township is an advisory board appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The actions of the Historical Commission on any agenda items does not reflect a final decision. The Board of Commissioners must render the final decision on any agenda items

MEETING ATTENDEES

Name:		Name:	
David Sands	Commission Chair	Matthew Harris	Commission Vice Chair
Susanna Ratsavong	Commissioner Liaison	Will Ruthrauff	Commission Member
Baird Standish	Commission Member	Joseph Devine	Commission Member
Al Comly	Commission Secretary	Mark Penecale	Staff Liaison

Excused:

Guest; None

- 1) **Call by Order by the Chairperson** **Called to order at 6:05 PM by Chair David Sands.. Roll was taken and absentees noted.**

- 2) **Approval of Minutes** **Meeting HC-58 minutes were discussed—noting that the discussion of funding had not been included in the minutes. It was agreed that the HC-58 minutes would be amended to include that discussion and reviewed at the May meeting.**

3) Update by Board of Commissioners' Liaison:

Commissioner Ratsavong was in attendance. The discussion focused on the previous meeting and discussions with Commissioner Morris as noted in item HC-59.1 below.

4) Review of Agenda

5) Discussion Items and Appropriate Action ("Previous Business" and "New Business" in earlier minutes).

HC-59.1 The discussion at the meeting focused on the points from the previous meeting in March, attended by Commissioner Morris. A brief summary of that discussion:

The Commission has been meeting now for over 5 years. Serious efforts have been made to adhere to the "Opt-in" mode of the Historical Ordinance—but to date there have been no serious requests from property owners to "Opt-in". It was also noted that the Black Horse Inn, owned by the township was not on the "Opt-in" list despite a request from the Commission that the Township set the example and do so.

The Commission members discussed the value of having this inventory to align with the current revisions included in the SALDO update. This inventory would also provide a clear statement of the Township regarding the structures thought to be important to the character and nature of the Township.

The discussion closed on the issue of "Action Items" to move forward within the existing ordinance. The Commission believes that the primary "Action Item" is the development of this inventory by a credentialed consultant to serve as the base line for future planning and discussion about historic structures was that "Action Item".

There was also unfinished discussion as to whether it was time to request updated direction as to the purpose and efforts of the Historical Commission.

HC 58.1 The discussion at the meeting focused on several points:

Discussion began with a brief summary of the activities & efforts of the Commission over the last five years of meeting—noting that the ordinance as past did not anticipate development of an overall inventory of structures important to the Township, and generally the ordinance failed to generate interest in having properties "Opt Into" the listing in the ordinance. This was not without considerable effort on the Commission's part, but to date no one had opted into the program.

Additionally, it was noted that the current ordinance while offering some benefits to "Opting In" for residential properties, it does not offer anything for

commercially zoned properties that is not already allowed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Morris asked if the Historical Commission had suggestions as to how the current historical ordinance might be adjusted or revised to generate more interest.

Guest Cindy Hamilton provided some perspective regarding other efforts in the Township—mainly on the part of the Springfield Township Historical Society—to develop an inventory or resource base of important structures in the Township. The often cited study (and the binders produced by the study), was undertaken through a grant from the County and the State. It was limited in its coverage by the time in the grant and the fact that information was not vetted for consistency and accuracy.

It was noted that the potential number of structures involved could be significant—over 1,600 structures at this point that were built before World War II. It was also noted that the current SALDO revision, which would add the submittal of some basic historical information to the SALDO requirements for Land Development, was using any building older than 50 years from the date of submittal as the threshold, would add to this number. Discussion at the meeting reached a consensus that a maximum number between 200 and 300 structures of importance would be more workable

The development of an inventory of important structures (one that was “vetted and reviewed” using PHMC criteria and other acceptable sources) would be of value to the Township as it reviews future plans. A prioritized listing or inventory (30 to 40 structures) might also be appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan. Overall it would be another “tool for the tool box” of development review.

The means of funding the development of the inventory was discussed—noting that originally there was intended to be an amount of money (estimated around \$25,000) to use toward the development of this inventory. During the discussion, it was noted that the expectation that this work could be done using volunteers was not going to produce the desired results. It was also noted that development of the inventory, even for a “distilled list” of 200 to 300 structures would cost more than the \$25,000 number. The discussion reached some consensus that retaining a consultant to prepare a “vetted inventory of 200 to 300 structures” would provide value to the Township in many areas surrounding the planning, development and use of property in the township.

HC 57.1 The discussion at the meeting focused on several points relating to the Request for Proposal and the Commission's presentation to the Board of Commissioners on January 12, 2026. These points were similar those discussed in item HC-56.1. Summary matter is the Board of Commissioners at still unconvinced regarding the need & purpose of the RFP

HC-56.1 The main focus of the meeting was to prepare for the meeting with the Commissioners on January 12 to discuss the RFP for consultant assistance. Mr Sands and Mr Comly will attend the meeting. Primary discussion points will be:

- Current studies have been limited in scope—not covering the entire township.
- Doing this type of research with volunteers presents issues with consistency of results
- This effort would create an inventory of important structures in the Township and would begin to prioritize those of highest importance.
- Importance of this inventory record to the Township—similar to Utility Records, FEMA maps and similar documents.
- Commissioners have raised questions about the 50 year threshold for the inventory.

HC-54.2 Status of Carson Valley School Nothing new regarding the status of this property

HC-45.1 SALDO incorporation is in process. Proposed revisions/ SALDO additions were presented to Planning Commission. Now in legal review **no Change**

6) Citizen Comments

- None

7) Assignment of Member Action Items

- None

8) Agenda for next meeting: Focus for the next meeting will be the review of meeting with the Commissioners. All new agenda items shall be forwarded to Mr. Penecale at least one week prior to scheduled meeting date

9) Adjournment Adjournment at 6:50 PM on Motion by Joseph Devine second by Al Comly. **Next meeting will be May 5, 2026**

Respectfully Submitted

Albert M. Comly, Jr., AIA
Secretary