

CMP POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

This meeting was conducted both remotely and in-person
The public could view/comment through Pinelands Commission YouTube link:

www.youtube.com/c/PinelandsCommission

Richard J. Sullivan Center
15C Springfield Rd
New Lisbon, New Jersey 08064
June 26, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Members in Attendance: Alan Avery, Jerome H. Irick, Chair Laura E. Matos, Jessica Rittler Sanchez, Mark S. Lohbauer

Members in Attendance Virtually: Deborah Buzby-Cope

Members Absent: Douglas Wallner, Theresa Lettman, Gaetano Matro

Staff Present: Gina Berg, John Bunnell, Ken Carter, Commissioner Executive Director (ED) Susan R. Grogan, Brad Lanute, Amber Mallm

1. Call to Order

Chair Matos called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

2. Adoption of minutes from the May 29, 2026 CMP Policy & Implementation Committee Meeting

Commissioner Irick moved the adoption of the May 29, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Lohbauer seconded the motion. All Ayes. The motion passed.

3. Pemberton Lake Accessible Trail Project Summary Presentation

Attachment A to these minutes and posted on the Commission's website at the following address:

https://nj.gov/pinelands/home/presentations/Pemberton%20Lake_Accessible%20Trail%20Project_Presentation%206_26_2026.pdf

Stephen Elliott, Director of Watershed Programs for the Pinelands Alliance, provided an update on the Pemberton Lake Accessible Trail Project. Mr. Elliott said the Pinelands Alliance completed the project to provide access to outdoor recreation for the disabled segment of the population. The project was funded in part through the NJ Division of Disability Services Inclusive Health Communities grant program and through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Mr. Elliott said other partners included NJ Fish and Wildlife and Pemberton Township, which completed most of labor.

Mr. Elliott said the project improved the existing trail by creating a stable surface using landscape fabric and clean stone aggregate. They also installed two four-foot wide boardwalks to traverse wet areas and established two accessible parking spaces. As the project included grading and filling in wetlands and wetlands buffers, it required a deviation Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the

Commission. He discussed completion of the offsets required by the MOA, including construction of a rain garden and tree planting to restore an area damaged by motorized vehicle traffic. He noted that the rain garden was funded through a Lakes Grant awarded to the Pinelands Alliance by NJDEP for green stormwater infrastructure projects in the Pinelands and Highlands.

Carleton Montgomery, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Pinelands Alliance, reported challenges with the Pinelands MOA process and his disagreement that the project required an MOA. He said the time and costs associated with the MOA process will cause harm if accessible trails projects aren't seen as feasible by other groups and organizations. He noted that grant funding deadlines are a real issue. He advocated for quicker progress on the development and adoption of new rules.

Chair Matos commended the completed project. She acknowledged that the MOA process is lengthy and can be difficult. She noted that all development must follow the rules, even those viewed as good, well-intentioned projects. She said the Commission is working on a CMP amendment to allow accessible trails but must be careful not to create unintended loopholes when doing so.

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez asked if the Pinelands Alliance is completing outreach to inform the disabled population of this resource and if they are tracking the number of patrons using the facility. Mr. Montgomery said they do not have the resources to formally monitor attendance at the park. Mr. Elliott said the Pinelands Alliance has held three accessible birding events at the park.

Commissioner Irick asked if they found the 4 foot width of trail to be wide enough for users. Mr. Montgomery said yes, in single file.

Commissioner Avery asked about the rain garden installation cost. Mr. Elliott said the project cost approximately \$13,000 to \$14,000 due to the use of a contractor and added other rain gardens typically cost \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Commissioner Lohbauer noted that this is one of the first accessible trail projects and the outcome is fantastic. Commissioner Lohbauer said he appreciated Mr. Montgomery's feedback on the MOA process.

Executive Director (ED) Grogan said the drafted CMP amendment would allow accessible trails in wetlands transition areas, however a project in wetlands such as the Pemberton Lake trail would still require an MOA.

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez asked how the trail substrate is maintained. Mr. Montgomery said they will perform frequent spot checks and improve as necessary. Mr. Montgomery added full stone refurbishment should occur every five years. Commissioner Irick asked if trash cans were added, and Mr. Montgomery said there are two existing trash cans. He noted that Pemberton Township and DEP, as the property owners, are responsible for trash collection and removal.

4. Executive Director's Report: Manchester Township's 2026 Housing Element and Fairshare Plan and Ordinances 26-23, 26-24, and 26-31

Pinelands Commission Chief Planner Brad Lanute summarized the Executive Director's Report regarding Manchester Township's 2026 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (2026 HEFSP) and Ordinances 26-23, 26-24, and 26-31.

Mr. Lanute explained that the Township's original Fourth Round HEFSP was challenged in court and that the 2026 HEFSP incorporates amendments resulting from settlement agreements. The amended plan identifies three new mixed-use inclusionary housing projects within the Regional Growth Area. Two projects are located in the Pinelands Town management area: the Craftway site in the Pinelands Business (PB) Zone, which is consistent with existing certified zoning, and a site along Hangar Road in the PR-40 Zone, which will require a future zoning amendment subject to Pinelands Commission review and approval. The third affordable housing area consists of two properties along Ridgeway Boulevard that are expected to provide approximately 530 residential units, including approximately 107 affordable units, and are addressed by Ordinance 26-23.

Mr. Lanute also summarized the Heritage Minerals inclusionary housing project, which is located outside the Pinelands Area but within the Pinelands National Reserve. He explained that the project remains governed by the 2004 settlement agreement among the Commission, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and Hovsons, Inc., and that the 2026 HEFSP proposes no changes to the development authorized under that agreement. Staff will continue to monitor any future zoning amendments affecting the site.

Mr. Lanute then summarized the ordinances under review. Ordinance 26-23 establishes the new Pinelands Affordable Housing-2 (PAF-2) Zone by rezoning approximately 83 acres along Ridgeway Boulevard from the Pinelands Office, Research, and Light Industrial (POR-LI) Zone. The PAF-2 Zone permits mixed-use inclusionary development at a maximum gross density of 8.65 dwelling units per acre, requires a 20 percent affordable housing set-aside, and requires the redemption of Pinelands Development Credits (PDCs) for 30 percent of market-rate units. The ordinance also rezones approximately 93 acres from the existing PAF-1 Zone to the adjacent PR-40 Zone, eliminating the PAF-1 Zone. Mr. Lanute noted that this property was permanently preserved as open space in 2024 and that the rezoning therefore has no practical effect on development potential.

Mr. Lanute explained that Ordinance 26-24 limits townhouse and garden apartment developments to conditional uses in the Pinelands Business District, where such uses are already permitted, and eliminates these residential development opportunities from several other zoning districts, including the remaining POR-LI Zone. Ordinance 26-31 updates the Township's PDC regulations to reference the new PAF-2 Zone and removes obsolete zoning references.

Mr. Lanute summarized staff's analysis of the ordinances' effects on residential development capacity and PDC redemption opportunities within the Regional Growth Area. Although Ordinance 26-24 removes residential development from the remaining POR-LI Zone, the residential capacity provided by the new PAF-2 Zone substantially offsets that reduction. Staff determined that overall residential development potential and opportunities for future PDC redemption are substantially maintained.

Mr. Lanute reported that no comments were received during the public hearing or written comment period. Staff concluded that the 2026 HEFSP and Ordinances 26-23, 26-24, and 26-31 are consistent with the Comprehensive Management Plan and recommended certification.

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez asked about permitted uses in the PR-40 Zone. Mr. Lanute responded that it is a residential district, and Executive Director Grogan added that it is a low-density single-family residential district.

The Commissioners and staff discussed Executive Director's Report Exhibit 1, depicting the areas proposed for rezoning under Ordinance 26-23. Commissioner Rittler Sanchez also asked whether public water and sewer service would be available to the proposed developments, and Mr. Lanute responded that they would.

Commissioner Lohbauer asked about the maximum permitted building height at the proposed project sites. Mr. Lanute stated that the maximum building height is 40 feet. Commissioner Avery noted that portions of the area may also be subject to height limitations if located within an Air Installations Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) because of the proximity to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. The Commissioners then discussed the location of Ridgeway Boulevard as shown on Exhibit 1.

Commissioner Lohbauer moved to recommend certification of Manchester Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and ordinances to the full Commission. Commissioner Rittler Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Pinelands Infrastructure Master Plan Amendment for Project Criteria and Funding Structure

Attachment B to these minutes and posted on the Commission's website at the following address

https://nj.gov/pinelands/home/presentations/PITF_Ranking_funding_PI_June2026.pdf

Gina Berg, the Commission's Director of Land Use Programs, presented recommendations for an amendment to the Pinelands Infrastructure Master Plan. First, Ms. Berg reviewed the history of the Pinelands Infrastructure Trust Fund (PITF) and progress of priority projects that were awarded funding in 2019. She said that the PITF has approximately \$10 million available for future projects.

Ms. Berg discussed the process for amending the Infrastructure Master Plan to amend evaluation criteria, set eligible categories of infrastructure and revise the interest rate applied to the loan portion of any funding awarded from the PITF. She said that staff completed a needs assessment. Based on the needs assessment, staff recommended revising the eligible types of infrastructure projects to only include water supply and wastewater infrastructure projects.

She continued reviewing evaluation criteria used to evaluate infrastructure projects proposed by local government units for funding. The recommended criteria include mandatory requirements that would be essentially the same as the mandatory criteria used in 2019. She added that for an upcoming funding round, staff recommend establishing additional criteria, including project readiness, economic factors, and water supply alternatives to the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer.

Ms. Berg then summarized funding details. She said that the structure of the funding award would remain unchanged from the 2019 structure and would allow for 50% loan, 40% grant, and a 10% local match. She said that the Infrastructure Master Plan currently calls for 1% interest rate on loans and that staff recommend increasing the interest rate to 2% to be comparable to the current I-Bank average rate. She said that federal funding must be deducted from total project costs.

Ms. Grogan concluded that staff are seeking Commissioner input on the criteria and interest rate.

Commissioner Avery asked if the applicant must be a local government. Ms. Berg said yes because the applicant must have jurisdiction over the infrastructure. Mr. Berg added that while a private water agency may not be the project sponsor, they may be a partner or provide a financial match.

Commissioner Avery acknowledged that projects would be required to service new development but asked if proposals could also improve service for existing development, particularly pre-existing development on septic systems that do not meet CMP groundwater quality standards. Ms. Berg and ED Grogan said that the evaluation criteria could be revised to add points for projects that propose to also extend water or wastewater service to existing development.

Committee members indicated support for the staff recommendations in addition to the suggested amendment to provide extra points to projects that improve existing development.

Ms. Berg said a public hearing will be in July to solicit feedback on the proposed Infrastructure Master Plan amendments. She said the matter will be on the full Commission's agenda for action in either August or September, depending on comments received at the hearing.

6. Public Comments

Stephen Elliott of the Pinelands Alliance asked if the Commission has ever received PITF proposals to remove dams. Ms. Berg said no and noted such projects would not be eligible for the PITF due to the need to support new residential development and PDC use in a Regional Growth Area.

6. Adjournment

There being no other business, Commissioner Lohbauer moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Irick seconded the motion. All Ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Certified as true and correct:



Amber Mallm
Planning Specialist

Date: 7/20/2026