

**PENNINGTON BOROUGH  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES  
May 19, 2026**

The meeting of the Pennington Borough Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was held on May 19, 2026 at 7:30 pm via Zoom.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Eric Holtermann, Chair; Robert Chandler, Vice-Chair; Mary Baum; Jack Davis; Katrina Homel; Natalie Shivers; George Ford, Alt I; Craig Wallace, Alt II

Member Absent: David Coats

Staff Present: Amy Kassler-Taub, Council Liaison; Robin Tillou, HPC Secretary

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT**

Chair Holtermann announced the statement of adequate notice as such: Notice of this meeting has been given to the Hopewell Valley News, Trenton Times and was posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall at 30 North Main Street and on the Borough website according to the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Holtermann opened the meeting to the public. With no public comment Chair Holtermann closed the public forum.

**MINUTES**

**April 21, 2026**

Upon a motion from Ms. Baum and Ms. Homel offering a second, the minutes were unanimously approved with amendments by those eligible to vote.

**APPLICATIONS**

**Discussion Only**

**236 S. Main Street, Block 703, Lot 24 – Siding**

Chair Holtermann and Vice-Chair Chandler did meet with the owner of 236 S. Main Street, John Sowienksi, and discussed the options for the siding. Mr. Sowienksi obtained a revised contractor quote that he is satisfied with. The quote includes Hardie Plank on the front façade (\$2,430.00) and vinyl siding (\$4,626.00) for the rest of the home. Mr. Sowienksi had asked if HPC could approve those materials in an emergency basis.

After discussion, the HPC was not comfortable approving vinyl siding and will continue exploring historically appropriate alternatives with the owner. Vice-Chair Chandler indicated he will speak with the contractor that he deals with for his home in the historic district to provide better options for Mr. Sowienksi.

### **12 N. Main Street - Block 205, Lot 22 Frontage**

Bruce Vinci, Owner of 12 N. Main Street, was present and stated that he is willing to comply with the recommendations of the HPC.

Chair Holtermann stated Mr. Chandler, Ms. Shivers and himself formed a design committee to help streamline the Certificate of Approval process. The design committee developed concepts based on historic photographs, including the possible addition of an awning, as per the historic photo that Mr. Davis provided from the 1950s. A sketch was done by Chair Holtermann for what was recommended and Mr. Vinci's designer will put his input into the proposal. A formal application will be submitted to the HPC after design revisions.

### **SIGNAGE INITIATIVE**

Mr. Ford advised that Mr. Davis, Ms. Homel and Mr. Ford serve on the signage subcommittee. They are proposing a Phase I direction. No approval is being asked for the signage proposed at this time. The purpose of the presentation was to review the general direction of the project, consider a preliminary list of sites and agree on a practical framework for selecting and phasing future signs. The preliminary site list for signage are as follows: Crossroads Historic District, the Revolutionary War / December 1776, the African American community history, the Pennington School, the Railroad freight and commercial history / Cheroot Barn and the Peter Benchley Jaws writing site. Selection criteria include historical significance, visibility, public engagement, and feasibility. Future phase of secondary sites discussed as follows: the Reed's Feed Mill on North Main Street, the Nursery founded by William Howe, Svetlana Alliluyeva residence in Pennington, subject to verification, Colonel John Kunkel and the Cointreau distillery from the mid-twentieth century. The signage initiative is not the same as nominating properties to the New Jersey Register or National Register of Historic Places, and proposed signs would not themselves designate properties as historic sites. The subcommittee feels storytelling signage would be the best approach.

Ms. Shivers suggested not having too many words in the story telling signage.

Ms. Homel asked of the process for the signage initiative.

Chair Holtermann stated Richard Hunter is a good source to contact for this signage initiative. He was involved with the signage at Rosedale Park and in Trenton. EDC is considering a signage program as well. The council has to approve the signage in the budget and/or grants from the State or County can be incorporated. HPC can speak with Borough Council regarding the initiative to get their feedback.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **HPC Annual Report to Council**

Chair Holtermann will prepare and submit the HPC annual report to Borough Council.

#### **Master Plan Update – Land Use Plan Update**

HPC recommendations submitted by the HPC were incorporated into the updated Land Use Plan and conditionally adopted by the Planning Board at their April 8, 2026 meeting. The final Master Plan was adopted at the May 13, 2026 Planning Board meeting.

### **Certified Local Government**

The Commission reviewed comments from the State Historic Preservation Office regarding ordinance review. <https://mccmeetings.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/pningtnnj-pubu/MEET-Packet-35c4d3e492b94a3cb0c3d52e79d4c0e5.pdf>.

### **Street Trees in the Historic District**

Ms. Shivers stated that she coordinated with Mr. Holtermann last week. They spoke about the value and importance of developing a program of the street trees. They need to get a proposal for the work that needs to be done by a landscape architect.

### **Hopewell Valley Historical Society History Awards for Historic Preservation**

Mr. Davis stated the awards will be held at the Hopewell Valley Historical Society's September 2026 meeting.

Possible nominations for the Hopewell Valley Historical Society Historic Preservation Awards include: the women involved with the African Cemetery project and the restored First Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Davis will look into when the deadline is to submit nominations for Pennington Borough.

### **Designation of Additional Properties**

The Commission discussed adding local historic designation for the Toll Gate School, the School Administration Building and the Railroad Station. The station is already listed on state and national registers but not currently designated locally. Chair Holtermann went over the ordinance § 119-4 Designation of historic sites and districts for procedures to designate properties. The two school buildings will be added as a non-contiguous and the railroad station will be listed as a separate landmark. Chair Holtermann will follow through with the HPO with those properties.

### **NJ History and Historic Preservation Conference - June 17 & 18, 2026**

Ms. Shivers and Chair Holtermann will be attending the conference in Morristown. Chair Holtermann encourages all other members to attend.

### **ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

There being no further business, Ms. Homel made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Ms. Shivers offering a second. By unanimous vote, the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

### **CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY**

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the duly selected secretary of the Pennington Borough Historic Preservation Commission, and that this document, consisting of four (4) pages, constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 19, 2026.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this day of June 17, 2026.

Robin Tillou, Historic Preservation Commission Secretary