

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**BOROUGH OF PARKESBURG, PA**  
**JUNE 26, 2025**

***MEMBERS PRESENT –***

Todd Brade  
Josh Eastep  
Matthew Marran  
Casey Wyatt  
Dave Bashore

***OTHERS –***

Rochelle Gresh, MPA, Borough Manager  
John Carnes, Jr., Esq., Borough Solicitor  
Ed Van Arsdale, III, P.E., ARRO Consulting, Borough Engineer  
Brandon Conrad, CEO, VistaBlock, Inc., Developer  
(No members of the public were present.)

**Call to Order.** Mr. Bashore called the meeting to order in the conference room at Borough Hall at 7:00 p.m.

**Quorum.** A quorum of members was present.

**Announcements.** None.

**Sketch Plan of VistaBlock, Inc. re:** *Construction of 70 single-family residences and 3 4-story multi-use buildings with 37,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 84 apartment units on 24.4-acres located at 50 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in the R-2 Residential Zoning District (the parcel formerly known as the Christmas Tree Farm).*

\* The PC welcomed back Brandon Conrad, CEO of VistaBlock, Inc. and thanked him for his patience, noting that it's been almost exactly two years since he presented the company's first sketch plan.

\* Mr. Bashore pointed out that under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, a sketch plan review by a municipal Planning Commission is considered informal, meaning among other things that no official recommendations will be made to Borough Council this evening. The purpose of the PC's informal review of VistaBlock's sketch plan is to provide guidance to the developer, taking into account the borough's zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances, the borough's comprehensive land use plan, comments from the borough engineer and solicitor, and input from the Chester County Planning Commission, neighbors and the public in general.

\* Mr. Conrad explained that the sketch plan envisions the construction of 70 single-family houses (36 30-foot wide singles selling in the \$400,000-\$500,000 range and 34 24-foot wide singles selling in the high \$300,000s) and three 4-story mixed-use buildings comprising 37,000 square feet of first floor commercial

space and a total of 84 apartments on three floors above. Mr. Bashore reminded Mr. Conrad of the ordinance's attainable housing provisions that would require special (lower) pricing for a minimum of 10% of housing units (i.e., 7 singles and 8 apartment units).

\* Proposed uses of the three mixed-use buildings include: ground floor commercial space for amenities and personal services primarily for the development's residents but also open to the public (such as coffee shop, lunch café, hair stylist, doctor's/dentist's office, etc.); a fitness center primarily for the use of the development's and possibly East 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave residents (commercial uses would be offered at an approximate rate of \$15/sq.ft.); no national branded tenants are being considered.

\* The upper three stories in each building would consist of 28 1 and 2-bedroom rental apartment units, with monthly rents starting at \$1,600, being marketed to "voluntary renters" (i.e., those who can afford to buy a house but choose to rent instead).

\* Other features shown on the sketch plan or anticipated: a pedestrian trail around the perimeter of the property; an outdoor exercise area on the strip of property extending to East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, with ingress/egress there limited to emergency responders; three stormwater management areas; and passive open space around the perimeter. Mr. Conrad said the perimeter would be landscaped at a minimum in accordance with Borough regulations and would consider planting trees and shrubs along a raised berm but wasn't interested in installing a perimeter fence.

Planning Commission comments:

\* Mr. Bashore suggested that the Borough's new TND zoning amendments present an excellent opportunity for a developer to build something unique that could be embraced by the neighborhood and community and serve as a model for exurban development in PA. To that end, he said the proposed design/rendering of the mixed-use buildings along Route 10 is impressive and would serve as an inviting entrance into the development; however, we were expecting to see housing examples with more upscale designs and much larger and welcoming front and/or side porches with an assortment of front- and side-loaded – and rear-loaded/detached garages with some alleyways, as previously suggested by the Chester County Planning Commission (all to help promote a stronger sense of community). Mr. Conrad responded that side- and rear-entry/detached garages tended to be cost-prohibitive but he would consider adding them.

\* Mr. Brade added that the Borough was looking for a better mix of smaller, mid-sized and larger, higher-end housing designs than the cookie-cutter style portrayed in the builder's renderings attached to the sketch plan.

\* Ms. Wyatt suggested a mix of housing styles; e.g., clusters of semi-detached carriage homes next to clusters of detached single-family homes of different sizes and designs.

\* Mr. Eastep noted concern that an on-site fitness center for the benefit of the development's residents would compete with the privately-owned Planet Fitness, located just a quarter of a mile away. Mr. Conrad

responded that on-site amenities like a fitness center produced a good return on the investment. Mr. Eastep then suggested the possibility of installing a solar overhang on the mixed-use buildings (similar to Lincoln Financial Field's) and suggested that one or more electric car charging stations be installed.

\* Mr. Marran expressed concern that stormwater, especially during and after heavy rains, often flows from VistaBlock's property onto his property and expressed his desire that the eventual land development plan's stormwater management would adequately address the runoff.

\* Mr. Van Arsdale observed that eliminating the third mixed-use building adjacent to East Second Avenue properties would in theory improve the developer's chances of meeting the Borough's open space and impervious surface requirements and reduce the development's parking requirements.

\* Ms. Wyatt pointed out that in the development as shown walkability would be unattainable without sidewalks along Route 10 to East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

\* Mr. Carnes suggested that VistaBlock revisit the Borough's amended zoning ordinance and submit a revised sketch plan that's in conformance with the TND provisions. He also said he would review the recorded plan of the adjacent Parkesburg Mennonite Church to check if there is a requirement for the church to install a sidewalk along Route 10 and under what circumstances.

\* Mr. Conrad concluded his presentation by suggesting that he would likely submit a revised sketch plan, taking into account comments received tonight and those to be submitted by the Chester County Planning Commission, before spending upwards of \$500,000+ on engineering studies and submitting a formal Conditional Use/land development plan application.

**Approval of Minutes.** Mr. Marran moved to approve the Minutes of the Commission's May 29, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brade and passed 5-0.

**Old Business.** *Zoning Hearing Board decision re: Oaks Ministry appeal for variances to use Parkesburg Arms Hotel at 415 W. First Avenue as a rooming house for adult women in need.*

\* Mr. Carnes advised that the Zoning Hearing Board unanimously approved Oaks' use of the Arms Hotel building as an "institution" as defined by the Borough's zoning code, while denying several other requested variances. He reported that one of the conditions attached to the approval is for Oaks to make an annual payment in lieu of taxes to the Borough based on the updated assessed value of the property (i.e., after renovations) and the Borough's millage rate in a given year. He believes it could be another six months until the potential sale of the property takes place.

\* Ms. Wyatt and Mr. Brade wondered if the ZHB's classification of Oaks' use of the property as institutional would subject it or its employees to state licensing requirements.

**New Business.** *SEPTA funding crisis and its potential impact on the Parkesburg community.*

\* Mr. Bashore reported on the funding crisis facing SEPTA and other public transit agencies across PA and noted potential implications for Parkesburg area residents, including a fare increase of over 21%, the elimination of the R-5 Thorndale/Paoli and other regional rail lines and the end of SEPTA consideration of extending rail service to Parkesburg and Atglen. He encouraged PC members and the public to contact state representative Dan Williams and state senator Katie Muth to encourage their support for adequate public transit funding in the Commonwealth's budget.

**Adjourn.** Mr. Brade moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eastep and passed by unanimous consent. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Dave Bashore, Chair

**(NOTE:** *These minutes were approved \_ \_ by the Planning Commission on 7/31/2025.)*