

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## Planning Commission Borough of Parkesburg, PA

Dear Members of Borough Council:

We are pleased to submit our 2025 Annual Report to you and the Parkesburg community. The narrative that follows is intended to comply with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), which requires local Planning Commissions to "...annually make a written report...of its activities to the governing body..."

Our report summarizes the Parkesburg Planning Commission's major accomplishments during 2025, highlighting results that hopefully enhance our fellow residents' overall quality of life, and to take a look ahead to 2026 and beyond.

### Our Purpose –

The Borough's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance ([SALDO](#)) authorizes the Planning Commission (PC) to:

- Review sketch, preliminary and final subdivision and land development plans submitted to the Borough;
- Engage in consultations with the applicant of such plans;
- Make recommendations to Borough Council (Council) regarding the approval, rejection, modification and conditions of approval of such plans, including waivers from the SALDO;
- Review and make recommendations to Council regarding proposed changes to the SALDO and the Borough's [Zoning Code](#) and [Zoning Map](#);
- Oversee, review and make recommendations to Council on periodic updates to the Borough's [Comprehensive \(land use\) Plan](#); and
- Advise and make recommendations to the Parkesburg Zoning Hearing Board on certain special exception applications (as authorized by Sec. 1909(9) of the Borough zoning code).

### Our Members –

The PC consists of 5 regular voting members who are appointed by Council to staggered 4-year terms, subject to renewal, plus 1 alternate member. Members of the PC as of December 31, 2025 (and their term expiration dates) are:

Dave Bashore, Chair (12/31/26)  
Todd Brade, Vice Chair (12/31/29)  
Matthew Marran (12/31/29)

Casey Wyatt (12/31/28)  
Joshua Eastep (12/31/28)  
Shelby Smith, Alternate (12/31/28)

In addition, John S. Carnes, Jr., Esq., serves as Borough Solicitor, providing legal advice. Ed Van Arsdale III, P.E., of ARRO Consulting serves as the Borough Engineer, providing technical engineering advice. The Chester County Planning Commission also provides guidance to the Borough and plan applicants through the Act 247 review process to ensure consistency with its [Landscapes3](#) land use plan.

## Our Major 2025 Activities –

In 2025, we reviewed and made recommendations to Borough Council and provided guidance to plan applicants on 2 subdivision/lot consolidation plans, 2 land development plans, and 2 sketch plans. Plus, we advised the Zoning Hearing Board on 2 special exception and/or variance requests, and we kept the community informed about related issues of interest, as follows:

### January –

- The PC reelected Dave Bashore as chair and Todd Brade as vice chair for the year.
- The PC recommended that Council approve a Reverse Subdivision/Lot Consolidation Plan of Impact Church regarding the consolidation of two lots into one at 101-103 East First Avenue in the R2-Residential Zoning District.
- The PC recommended that the Zoning Hearing Board grant the Special Exception Application of MJMJR Land I, LLC, of Newtown Square, PA, regarding their request to construct single-family, semi-detached dwellings at 217-219 Chapel Avenue conditioned on the removal of the existing bamboo.

### February –

- No public meeting.

### March –

- No public meeting.

### April –

- No public meeting.

## May –

- The PC recommended that Council approve, with conditions, the Land Development Plan of Impact Church regarding a proposed Building Addition on 3.54 Acres at 101-103 East First Avenue in the R2-Residential Zoning District.
- The Solicitor advised the PC that Oaks Ministry of Oxford, instead of proceeding with a revised Conditional Use application that would be reviewed by the Planning Commission and be subject to discretionary approval by Borough Council, had decided to ask the Borough's Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) for variances to use the Arms Hotel as a rooming house for women in need.
- The PC was advised of a letter sent to the ZHB by the PC chair, showing the potential loss of \$39,500 in property tax revenue to the Borough – and a combined total of \$144,500 to the Borough, School District and County – over a 10-year period if the Arms Hotel were to become tax-exempt, thus recommending that the ZHB require (a) an annual payment in lieu of taxes and (b) its residents to volunteer at the Parkesburg Library, the Point, and the Octorara School District as any condition of approval of requested variances.
- The PC recommended that Borough Council send a letter to the Zoning Hearing Board, requiring Oaks Ministry to specify what annual Payments in Lieu of Taxes it is willing to accept and pay as a condition of approval of its zoning appeal.
- The president of Brandywine Quarry at 151 N. Church Street advised the PC of concerns about the potential impact of their business conducting future blasting on the new Parke Mansion Estates townhouses to be built on adjacent land. The Solicitor advised her to contact the builder, D.R. Horton, to arrange communication and other protocols.

## June –

- The PC provided guidance to developer VistaBlock, Inc., regarding its sketch plan for Parkesburg Preserve (name tentative), showing the construction of 70 single-family residences and three 4-story multi-use buildings with 37,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 84 apartment units on 24.4-acres located at 70 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue under Traditional Neighborhood Development provisions in the R-2 Residential Zoning District (the parcel formerly known as the Christmas Tree Farm).
- The Solicitor advised the PC that the Zoning Hearing Board had approved Oaks Ministry's use of the Parkesburg Arms Hotel building at 415 W. First Avenue as an "institution" as defined by the Borough's zoning code, while denying several other requested variances.

One of the conditions of approval was for Oaks to make an annual payment in lieu of taxes to the Borough based on the updated assessed value of the property (after renovations) and the Borough's millage rate in a given year.

- The PC announced the growing funding crisis of SEPTA and its potential impact on residents of Parkesburg and the surrounding community, including a proposed 21% fare hike, the elimination of the R-5 Thorndale/Paoli line, and the end of consideration of extending regional rail service to Parkesburg and Atglen.

### July –

- The PC recommended that Council approve the Land Development Plan of Rise Up Towers, LLC, to construct a 170-foot-high-cellular communications tower on about 2,500 square feet of the Borough's Public Works facility located at 5 West Street in the C-1 Commercial Zoning District.
- The PC provided guidance to developer VistaBlock, Inc., on its revised sketch plan for Parkesburg Preserve regarding the construction of 80 single-family residences (56 detached and 24 semi-detached) and three 3-story multi-use buildings with 33,500 sq. ft. of ground-floor commercial space and 56 apartment units on the upper floors on 24.4-acres located at 70 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue under Traditional Neighborhood Development provisions in the R-2 Residential Zoning District.
- The Solicitor advised that Oaks Ministry had notified the Borough that they would not be moving forward with the purchase, renovation and occupancy of the Arms Hotel, because some of the ZHB's conditions of approval were too onerous for Oaks to comply with.
- The PC updated SEPTA's funding crisis and its regional impact.

### August –

- The PC welcomed former alternate Josh Eastep as a regular member, and the reassignment of Shelby Smith as an alternate, as authorized by Council.
- The PC recommended that Council approve with six conditions the Preliminary/Final Subdivision/Land Development Plan Application of MJMJR Land I, LLC, regarding a lot line adjustment for two single-family housing units in one semi-detached/twin structure to be built on 0.68 acres at 217-219 Chapel Avenue.
- The PC approved a set of operating procedures for itself.

### September –

- No PC meeting.

## October –

- No PC meeting.

## November –

- The PC authorized the establishment of an Implementation Committee to coordinate the prioritization of 31 action items in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan that were assigned to the PC. The PC expects to recommend a ranking of the priorities to Council in 2026. Matthew Marran and Casey Wyatt were appointed to the committee.

## December –

- The Solicitor and Engineer provided an update on the Meadowview and Parke Mansion Estates land development plans.
- PC members were advised to contact the Borough Manager if they were interested in attending planning-related training sessions provided by the County PC.
- 2026 meeting dates were approved and forwarded to the Borough Secretary for posting on the Borough's website.

## Our Outlook for 2026 and Beyond –

Once again, a new year is off and running and already bringing new challenges – and opportunities – for the Borough.

Meadowview and Parke Mansion Estates. Construction on the 323-unit Parke Mansion Estates townhouse development is now expected to start in the spring with the installation of a new traffic light at the intersection of Main Street & PA Route 10. We also anticipate the 130-unit Meadowview townhouse development to get underway this year, as soon as the builder gets a permit from the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection to relocate the existing pond.

The Borough will want to closely monitor both of these projects – as well as VistaBlock's proposed development of the former Christmas Tree Farm (see below) – to mitigate any traffic, pedestrian safety and related impacts that these construction activities will inevitably have. To that end, the PC expects to forward to Council during our review of the anticipated VistaBlock Conditional Use/Land Development Plan recommendations to PennDOT to consider various traffic calming measures along Route 10, including lowering the speed limit within Borough boundaries.

Parquesburg Preserve (the former Christmas Tree Farm). After having provided substantial feedback on two sketch plans in 2025 – and other sketch plans in 2023 and 2024 – we expect VistaBlock, Inc., the developer of the 24.4-acre parcel located at 70 E. Second Avenue, to submit a revised Conditional Use/Land Development Plan application in the first half of 2026 (their initial application submitted in late 2025 was incomplete and returned for further action and compliance with Borough regulations).

That process will provide a unique opportunity for the PC, Council, East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue neighbors and the entire Parkesburg community to work together and collaborate with VistaBlock to make sure this last bastion of open space in the Borough is developed in a suitable way – in accordance with the provisions of the Borough’s new Traditional Neighborhood Development zoning and SALDO provisions – that will be beneficial to and a source of pride for neighbors and the community as a whole.

2020 Comprehensive Plan. As we indicated in our 2024 annual report, the PC believes that it's important to stay focused on our Comprehensive Plan, adopted by Council in 2020, particularly Chapter 9 of the plan, which discusses implementation strategies. As such, the PC is identified in no less than 31 action items that call for our collaborative participation or leadership in:

Community Amenities and Resources (Ch. 4):	4 action items
Circulation, Connectivity and Safety (Ch. 5):	7
Economic Development and Revitalization (Ch. 6):	9
Borough Services and Infrastructure (Ch. 7):	5
Land Use and Community Character (Ch. 8):	6

Our initial review of those strategies shows that 18 of the 31 action items for which the PC is a responsible party are considered a High Priority (to be accomplished in 1-3 years); 7 are Medium Priority (3-5 years), and 6 are Low Priority (5-10 years) or Ongoing.

The **Implementation Committee** we established in November, comprising PC members Matthew Marran and Casey Wyatt, is in the process of ranking each action item within their designated priority level. When the entire PC has weighed in on the rankings, we will recommend to Council specific implementation rankings, with appropriate time ranges and estimated costs (where possible) – in time for your discussions on the Borough’s 2027 budget.

County Master Trails Plan. We also note that the Chester County Board of Commissioners has adopted a Master Trails Plan. As part of that countywide plan, the extension of the Chester Valley (multi-use) Trail from Downingtown to Atglen (passing through Parkesburg) remains in the “Seeking Funding” and “Right-of-Way Negotiation” phase, with an anticipated construction timeline “To be Determined” (the trail’s extension from Exton to Downingtown is slated for construction in the 2028-2034 period).

Amtrak Station. The Parkesburg Amtrak station, slated for ADA accessibility, station access and parking improvements (at an estimated cost of \$50 million), is still in the design phase with anticipated construction “To be Determined.” The long-awaited extension of SEPTA regional rail service to Coatesville and Parkesburg is listed for 2028.

Route 30 Bypass. Although not located within the Borough, PennDoT’s planned expansion of and other improvements to the 30 Bypass from Rte. 10 on the western end to Quarry Road on the eastern end will have significant implications for Parkesburg residents, especially those who commute to work by vehicle.

The status of the County’s Priority Transportation Projects as of December 31, 2025, shows anticipated construction at the Airport Road interchange occurring in 2026-27, the Rte. 82 interchange in 2028-29, Rte. 30 improvements from Reeceville Road in Coatesville to Quarry Road in East Caln in 2029-30 and, notably, the Rte. 10 interchange area just north of Parkesburg in 2029-30.

Parkesburg Arms Hotel. Last but not least, we note that the historic Arms Hotel remains vacant, since Oaks Ministry of Oxford decided to abandon plans to purchase and renovate it to house women in need for reasons explained above.

Although we’re not aware of any new plans to redevelop this early-1900s building in the Borough’s C-1 Commercial Zoning District, we do believe it represents an intriguing opportunity for adaptive reuse for, say, apartments or condos on the upper floors with commercial and/or retail uses on the ground floor (available as a Conditional Use under the Borough zoning code). In any event, we do hope that we’ll have another opportunity to help guide a future developer’s plan for this important site in the heart of the Borough.

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We’d like to thank the Chester County Planning Commission for their excellent technical assistance throughout the year. We’re also grateful for Borough Council’s ongoing support and the invaluable guidance from Solicitor John Carnes and Engineer Ed Van Arsdale.

It was a pleasure advising Borough Council and the Zoning Hearing Board and serving the Parkesburg community throughout 2025. We look forward to reviewing and providing guidance on new planning projects that come before us in 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Parkesburg Planning Commission