

Chester Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

Combined meeting with the Board of Trustees

| Wednesday, August 20, 2025 7:00 PM |

Chester Town Hall

Audio Recording Available

Board of Trustees Meeting Called to Order by Mr. Radtke at 7:01 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Mazzurco, Mr. Radtke, Mr. Richter

Zoning Commission Meeting Called to Order by Mr. Lauro at 7:01 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Chess, Mr. Kats, Mr. Lauro, Mr. Minello

Members absent: Mr. Oswick

Also present: Mr. Alusheff Admin present: Ms. McCarthy

Pledge of Allegiance

Committees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Panel Discussion

Parks as a Zoning District

Mr. Lauro voiced a primary concern of the Zoning Commission of creating a Park District for the entire township for the sake of naming Parkside Park as a "Park Zoning District". Many other areas in the township that would quite possibly be labeled as a Park would also have restrictions. Frankly, what is the need to put these restrictions on these properties? Is this level of control really necessary?

Mr. Richter spoke about the section of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), ORC-1545, which allows for the creation of a separate Park Board that is part of a county or township and it is already there.

Mr. Minello asked who appoints the people on that Board. Mr. Radtke said, "a probate judge". Mr. Minello asked if we have to keep that Board. Mr. Richter said yes, the Board has been created and it remains. Mr. Radtke did not feel this was part of the issue.

Mr. Radtke felt that the Parkside Park parcel should be recognized in the Zoning Resolution as a "Park District."

Mr. Lauro did not see the benefit to the township in any regard by adding a "Park District." He suggested, rather than creating a new Park District and involving all the other properties in the township, that a "Parade Grounds" District be created for just Parkside Park. Parade Grounds is how the parcel is deeded and it would address the issue of the green square on the map with no Township Park district.

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Other Parks in the township (ie Sunnybrook, Metzenbaum Park, Orchard Hills) all show up as Residential right now. Also, Hancock Park and the 80 acres all show up as Residential as well.

Mr. Alusheff reminded the group that all potential park properties, with the exception of the two privately held cemeteries, are owned by political sub-divisions and are exempt from Zoning.

Adding a Park District will change nothing for enforcement for the Zoning Inspector.

Zoning Commission would like to know why the Board of Trustees want a Park District. Do not see the benefit to the township in creating a Park District.

Mr. Radtke asked, if we took no action at all, we still own those lands and we could enter into an agreement with a 1545. There is a benefit in adding a park on the map.

Mr. Richter agreed saying he believes Parks increase value of everyone's property.

Mr. Kats asked the BoT Board if their purpose in creating a Park District is merely to put something on a map and color it so people know there are Parks here? Instead of naming it a Park District, can't we just call it, "Township Owned Property" and color it green?

Mr. Richter believes there is about 900 acres of Park land in the Township. Mr. Alusheff said it is actually more like 457 acres. By identifying these parks in green on the zoning map, we will be able to show residents that these properties do not pay taxes.

Mr. Alusheff suggested that Mr. Richter's concern is better illustrated on a Land Use Map. Mr. Alusheff wholeheartedly supported this solution. A Land Use Map could be created to show the Parks in Chester Township. He also said a Land Use Map could be created for tax exempt parcels.

Mr. Lauro summarized the thoughts as presented by the ZC. The ZC does not have a problem solely with the "Township Park" being colored green. He would rather the green was removed and the color changed to what that property was originally zoned for. It's deed restricted. No one will do anything else with it. It's a park forever. There's nothing really to worry about.

Mr. Alusheff said, If someone wants a color on the map, all that needs to be done is go through the amendment process to justify the color. Otherwise, it should be colored the color it is meant to be by zoning district.

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Mr. Richter mentioned Hancock Park and how it was given to us. Not sure if there are any restrictions on that property.

Mr. Alusheff offered another way to address this in zoning and that would be to change the Zoning Resolution to make Parks a permitted use in all zoning districts. All parties determined they would like to think about this more.

Mr. Alusheff also mentioned that it is possible to take cemeteries out of the Conditional Uses.

Heights of Accessory Buildings and Heights

Not sure why we use Median height as it is confusing to many. Consider everyone can have a 23' peak. If it's supposed to be for health, safety and welfare, our fire trucks need to be able to reach 35'. What is the safety concern of the accessory building not being allowed to be at 35'? We could also say, 30' peak height and it accomplishes the same thing. Concern was in the past where people buried part of their wall to get around the peak height.

RV Parking on Residential Lots

Is there any health, safety or welfare reason not to have some type of car port structure permitted for RV's? Alternative is residents putting their RV in front of the house. This is becoming an issue as an RV with an AC unit requires a 14' wall for an accessory building enclosure. Consider that people with RV's may have to pay to store their RV.

Sliding Scale for Accessory Building Size

Concern about permitted size of Accessory Buildings being determined by lot size. May want to look at lot coverage. Those with large lots are being penalized. May want to re-consider amount of green space coverage as a means of measurement rather than lot size with a 2,500 sq. ft. size limit.

Board of Trustees meeting was closed at 8:02 p.m.

Andy Chess gave an overview of the Land Use Plan Committee.

Discussion/overview of Operation and Maintenance Program (OMP) for the Geauga County Board of Health. If residents have questions about this program, they can call Geauga Public Health at 440-279-1914 #1.

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Next Meeting

September 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Called to Close at: 8:26 p.m.

Approved by: Chester Township Zoning Commission September 17, 2025

Final Review by: _____
Jon Oswick, Chair