

Land Use Plan Committee Meeting – January 20, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Chester Town Hall Meeting Room

Mr. Mersol opened meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Kristin Jackson, Greg Mersol, Linda Nissen, David Patterson, Lynn Roman, Tim Rosenbaum, Jeff Sherwood, Matt Spetrino

Board of Trustee: Brandon Davis

Others Present: Chris Alusheff, Kathleen McCarthy

October 21, 2025 minutes tabled for approval till next meeting February 17, 2026.

Subcommittee Reports

- Dave Patterson – Property Maintenance (Dave Patterson, Linda Nissen and Lynn Roman)
 - Vast majority of survey responders felt properties in their area are well maintained.
 - People supported a Property Maintenance code, but by a slim margin.
 - If a Property Maintenance code was put in place – mixed bag of responses except strong support for education being first line of approach.
 - Existing sections of Zoning Resolution that address property maintenance issues are unenforceable by Zoning Inspector.
 - New code would be easier to enforce – consider International Property Maintenance Code.
 - Will need to gather more information from the public to see if a Property Maintenance Code should be put in place.
- Greg Mersol – Commercial and Industrial (Mindy Denamen and Ashley Petersen)
 - Communication is not strong; consider strengthening website.
 - Permitted Uses – The Zoning Resolution (ZR) comes from a position of Thou Shalt not do Anything unless we say thou may do it. As technology changes, new types of business are created and the ZR cannot keep up with all the changes in business types. Rather than change types of uses, consider giving more flexibility to the Zoning Inspector to make a determination. We need to earn the reputation of “Chester is Open for Business.” This is not currently our reputation.

- What do people want our township to look like? Was there really a time when our commercial district had a more pleasant appearance? Many buildings have been torn down over the years. We do not have a Town Center.
- Greg Mersol – Zoning (Greg Mersol, Tim Rosenbaum and Mike Wacker)
 - We’ve already started this. Greg Mersol and Tim Rosenbaum have recently been named members of the Zoning Commission.
 - With the help of Chris Alusheff, we have already started a systematic review of the current Zoning Resolution.
 - ie-Conditional Uses for Memorial Gardens. Does that really make sense?
 - Currently have homes on non-conforming lots that should their home burn down, would need Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approval to rebuild their home.
 - Accessory buildings – may prove to be controversial. Need to develop a formula for larger lots being permitted to have larger structures depending on lot size.
 - Strong community support for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) aka-Attached In-Law Suites.
- Matt Spetrino – Housing (Matt Spetrino, Kristin Jackson and Jeff Sherwood)
 - ADUs
 - 55+ housing – mixed reactions from survey and yet committee members have heard the opposite from members of the community strongly supporting this type of housing.
 - Perhaps better description of what 55+ Housing looks like.
 - Condo’s, small home on small lot, for instance, 40 homes with a community center – everything is taken care of.
 - Do we really want to put age restriction of 55+ on it?
 - Existing seniors could move out of their “larger home on a larger lot” and move into a housing style that better suits their needs. Thereby freeing up larger homes for future families to move into.
 - It is impossible to build anything new that is “affordable”.
 - Modular housing does not seem to fit what residents ask for.
 - Concern with reduced population and how it affects the schools.
 - Do we consider reduced minimum lot size to allow acreage splits? Road frontage will be a concern.
 - Determined that lot size cannot be less than 2+ acres based on septic requirements.

General Group Discussion Comments

- Burden to overcome Status Quo is very high.

- What are we looking at and what is the solution?
- Our population consists of nearly 10,000 people / approximately 40% are over the age of 65 (Aging population and highest median age in Geauga County).
- Need to consider changes to Zoning Resolution that would allow tearing down non-conforming homes and rebuild from the ground up.
- Family living styles have greatly changed over the past 50 – 75 years.
- Turnover of homes in Chesterland is very, very low.
- Just because something is permitted, doesn't mean existing landowners will take advantage of that new guideline.
- We need to be able to allow people to do change.

If we were able to offer Chester Township a “thing” – what would that be? Will be focus of our next meeting.

What can we do today that will cause that reality in the next 20 years?

Consider a mixed-use zone near the center of town. Make the center of town more hospitable. Look at area where Recycle Park is and property on the west of Chillicothe Rd across from the Township Park. Highest potential is from Shell Station to the Chesterland Baptist Church. Could we make this area mixed-use to allow for cafés and the type? Also consider area just north of Town Hall up to Drug Mart Plaza? This may be an ideal Town Center area for us.

Trustees cannot negotiate with a potential property buyer about what they would like to do with the property. They must go through the BZA first.

What can we do – through zoning – to motivate private investors to take an interest in these areas?

Our report at the end of this process all boils down to this: We recommend to the Board of Trustees that these changes be made to the current Zoning Resolution.

Conversation about our local Giant Eagle grocery store and what can we do to help them serve the community better?

Website for Chester Land Use Plan is less than desirable. Much of our information is not available. Noted that this website is a large improvement to our last website.

DESIGN AND SET-UP OF PUBLIC FORUM and LOCATION

PowerPoint running in the background as people arrive.

Set up stations for residents to visit (Commercial, Residential, Housing)

Short presentations from the sub-committees – What the committee is about, items identified and gather further information from public.

Opportunity to answer questions submitted on index cards or email response if desired.

Public Comment

Opportunity to educate people

Want to look at potential of “voting” on the initial SWOT analysis

Potential Location of Public Forum: Mayfield United Methodist Church; 7747 Mayfield Rd

Tentative Date: March 31, 2026 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

February 17th meeting will be to focus on Housing and March 31 presentation

March 17th meeting will be dry run for March 31st Public Forum

Reviewed “Me in a Minute” screen. Add question, When I joined the LUP, I didn’t know xxxx...

Add a section, “My first exposure to zoning in Chester – PHOTO?”

Public Comments:

- Define the problem that the LUP Committee is trying to solve
- Member of the public really excited this is happening in the community.

Meeting closed at 8:02 p.m.

Approval Date February 17, 2026

Kathleen McCarthy, Admin. Assistant

Greg Mersol, Chairman