

Land Use Plan Committee Meeting – February 17, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Chester Town Hall Meeting Room

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Mindy Denamen, Greg Mersol, Linda Nissen, David Patterson, Mike Wacker, Ashley Petersen, Jeff Sherwood, Matt Spetrino

Board of Trustee: Brandon Davis

Others Present: Chris Alusheff, Kathleen McCarthy

Ms. Denamen moved approval of October 21, 2025, minutes; Mr. Sherwood seconded. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Spetrino moved approval of January 20, 2026, minutes; Mr. Sherwood seconded. Unanimously approved.

Housing issues – General concerns/comments

An open discussion was held regarding various approaches to address two housing issues: (1) housing suitable for younger families that want to live here; and (2) exploring alternatives for older residents who can no longer keep up larger properties but wish to live in the community. The purpose of the session was to explore alternatives to present to the community as a whole. No decisions were made as to which, if any, should ultimately be adopted.

One view was expressed to permit residents to divide their lots into smaller lots with a minimum size of 2 acres. Subdivisions would be exempt by way of their charter. Not everyone agrees on this issue. Particular care has to be given to septic systems, an issue largely governed by the County but will affect our health and safety generally.

Part of the discussion concerned areas currently in the Commercial District where the property owner cannot use their entire property because of zoning setback rules, in particular limiting use to the first 500' of depth. The question was whether attractive communities could be placed behind these businesses in such a way that improves our semi-rural character? Similarly, would it be possible to rezone currently idle or underused industrial or commercial properties to help alleviate housing issues and improve the township's overall appearance?

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) – could help people aging in place but still have septic concerns/requirements. Note that while the survey results reflected strong support for

attached in-law suites, detached units would likely draw less support and greater opposition in part due to potential repurposing for rentals.

Grants are available for ADUs and models in other states are available that we may want to look into.

Duplexes were permitted till 1993. As the change was made more than 30 years ago, the reasons for prohibiting them at that time are presently unknown.

Zoning needs to be corrected – especially for legal non-conforming lots. (Currently nearly 40% of Chester housing is in this category.)

Population is declining – families not as big as they once were.

2026 is outpacing 2025 in welfare checks by police resulting in finding a person who has passed away in their home – alone. This reflects issues with an aging community. In 2025 a total of 18 people found and as of mid-February, there have been 8 people found. Next of kin are frequently unavailable. Home frequently goes into probate – usually ending up in property decline. How do we preserve community?

Regardless of the feelings of many in the community, there is not much land to be developed in Chester.

There have been approximately 12 homes built in Chesterland in the past 30 months. All of them are high-end homes.

Ideal to get drawings/illustrations for visualization of what could be done.

Larger lot size developed originally because of septic, but also the ground water. 6% of the township has sewer. 0% of the township has water, with the small exception of residents on County Line Road who were able to tie in when Gates Mills ran their water line.

There are limits as to what further new construction might accomplish. Even putting aside the overwhelming community desire to preserve our semi-rural atmosphere, if we put 1,000 housing units in the township, we would not hit our previous peak population due to the average household size. Chester does not have the land to do this, nor is there any community support for development on that scale.

Currently there is a 65-acre parcel of land for sale in Chester, which could not be developed because of the topography. Maybe it could accommodate one or two homes. There is a difference between buildable lots and vacant lots.

Photo was displayed on monitor of former Channel Products and the water tower. No one in attendance was able to identify the property in the picture even though the company operated in the township for decades. Property is at 7100 Wilson Mills Road and is currently zoned Industrial. Neighbor to east of Amelia Grace Home.

Need to look at Commercial and Industrial districts. Currently, businesses located in Industrial District are actually Commercial. Do we need an Industrial District?

Discussion on what a Planned Unit Development (PUD) is and how it might apply to Chester properties.

The purpose of the discussion was to explore alternatives to these two potentially related housing needs given the properties, needs, desires, and resources of our township. It was attended to explore concerns raised by some residents and committee members, not decide which, if any, approach was best. No decisions regarding potential solutions were made.

Chris wrote the first draft of the Executive Summary for the Survey and Greg has made some modifications. The summary provides minimal content and background to the Survey results. Summary will be sent to all LUP members requesting feedback by February 26, 2026.

Searching comments that were submitted in the nearly 1,000 surveys returned, these were most frequent words used:

# Comments	Comment
104	Elderly, senior, nursing home
564	Commercial
360	BuckStop
224	Abandoned
228	Eyesore
160	Ugly
144	Burger King
236	Vacant

As reflected in the survey, a primary concern among residents was the township's commercial areas and their appearance. Our land use plan should focus especially on these concerns.

Stations for Public Forum determined:

Housing

- Mindy Denamen, Kristin Jackson

Chester Vision

- Tim Rosenbaum, Chris Herzner

Property Maintenance

- Dave Patterson, Linda Nissen

Commercial District

- Ashley Petersen, Matt Spetrino

Who we are as People

- Jeff Sherwood, Greg Mersol

Welcome Table

- Mike Wacker

Questions – Unmanned and Comment Cards (Might be a JOT form)

Members were charged to think about what they want for their visuals. Tri-fold brochures ordered for all stations.

Might want to do one final Public Forum before final draft is forwarded to the Board of Trustees.

Public Comment - none

Next meeting: March 17 at 6:00 p.m. -- Dry run for March 31st Public Forum

Public Forum: March 31, 2026, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

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

Meeting closed at 8:00 p.m.

Approval Date March 17, 2026

Kathleen McCarthy, Admin. Assistant

Greg Mersol, Chairman