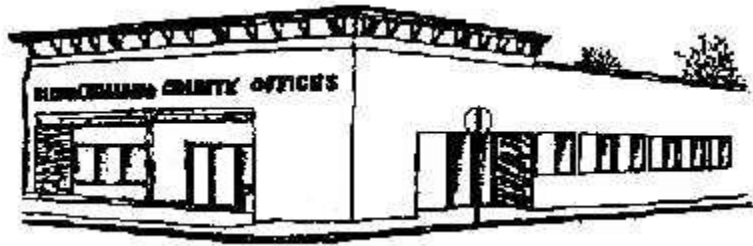


Susquehanna County Planning Commission



Annual Report 2010

County Office Building

81 Public Avenue

Montrose PA 18801

2010
Annual Report
of the
Susquehanna County
Planning Commission

County Office Building
81 Public Avenue
Montrose, Pennsylvania
18801

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OVERALL GOAL OF THE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Maintain and improve the general quality of life for county residents by developing and implementing plans to deal with problems from all facets of local life including the environment, land use and development, government services, the economy, transportation, and recreation.

ORGANIZATION

The Susquehanna County Planning Commission has been in existence since August 10, 1964, created by resolution of the Susquehanna County Board of Commissioners to direct all County planning programs.

On December 3, 1992 the Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance creating and establishing a Department of Planning and Development and a Planning Commission under the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 as amended by Act 170 of 1988. Under this ordinance overall direction is given by the County Commissioners with the Planning Commission acting in an advisory capacity to both the Department and the Commissioners. The Planning Commission is comprised of nine members appointed by the County Commissioners. The Department is headed by a Director of Planning and Development and is required to include sufficient staff to carry out the provisions of the ordinance which created the department. The ordinance outlines work areas in which both the Department and the Planning Commission shall function. It is intended that the scope of activity of both the Department and the Planning Commission be expanded to provide for the coordinated development of the County, to protect the general welfare and prosperity of its residents, and to uphold the goals and objectives of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission meets once each month, on the last Tuesday of the month. Occasionally the Commission will meet to accommodate special business of the County or to participate in training sessions. Also, separate committees of the Commission meet, as needed, to attend to their duties. Formal action can only be taken at the regularly scheduled meeting unless otherwise advertised.

The Department of Planning and Development, housed in the County Office Building at 81 Public Avenue, Montrose, was staffed during 2010 by the Director, Deputy Director and a secretary. Office hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. Those seeking information on any facet of planning and development may visit at anytime. No appointment is necessary.

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

2010

Commission Officers

Patrick Ahearn, Chairman
Frank Kwader, Vice Chairman
Nancy Harvatine, Secretary

Commission Members

John Butler
Richard Franks
Bernard Griffin
Ted Place
Katherine Shelly
Laurence Wilson

Department of Planning and Development Staff

Robert Templeton, Planning Director
Eleanor Kurosky, Deputy Director
LuAnn Myers, Secretary

PLANNING DISTRICTS 2010

Patrick Ahearn

267 Towner Hill Road
Susquehanna PA 18847
756-2245

PatrickAhearn@hotmail.com

Term Expires 2014

Harmony Township
Lanesboro Borough
Oakland Borough
Oakland Township
Susquehanna Borough

Bernie Griffin

2709 Stanley Lake Road
Friendsville PA 18818
553-9973

bmgriffin@epix.net

Term Expires 2011

Choconut Township
Franklin Township
Liberty Township
Silver Lake Township

Ted Place

410 Place Road
Meshoppen PA 18630
833-4024

Term Expires 2012

Auburn Township
Dimock Township
Lathrop Township
Springville Township
Hop Bottom Borough

John Butler

3254 Bowbridge Road
Little Meadows PA
18830

553-2199
surveyor@epix.net

Term Expires 2011

Apolacon Township
Forest Lake Township
Friendsville Borough
Little Meadows Borough
Middletown Township
Rush Township

Nancy Harvatine

34 Harv Farm Road
Thompson PA 18465
679-2273

harvfarm@nep.net

Term Expires 2012

Forest City Borough
Gibson Township
Herrick Township
Uniondale Borough

Katherine Shelly

903 Ridge Road
Thompson PA 18465
756-2429

Term Expires 2011

Ararat Township
Jackson Township
Thompson Borough
Thompson Township

Richard Franks

PO Box 314
Great Bend PA 18821
879-4376

rick_franks@uhs.org

Term Expires 2014

Great Bend Borough
Great Bend Township
Hallstead Borough

New Milford Borough
New Milford Township

Frank Kwader

Box 113 Stearns Lake
Jackson PA 18825
756-3271

bkwad@nep.net

Term Expires 2014

Bridgewater Township
Brooklyn Township
Jessup Township
Montrose Borough

Laurence Wilson

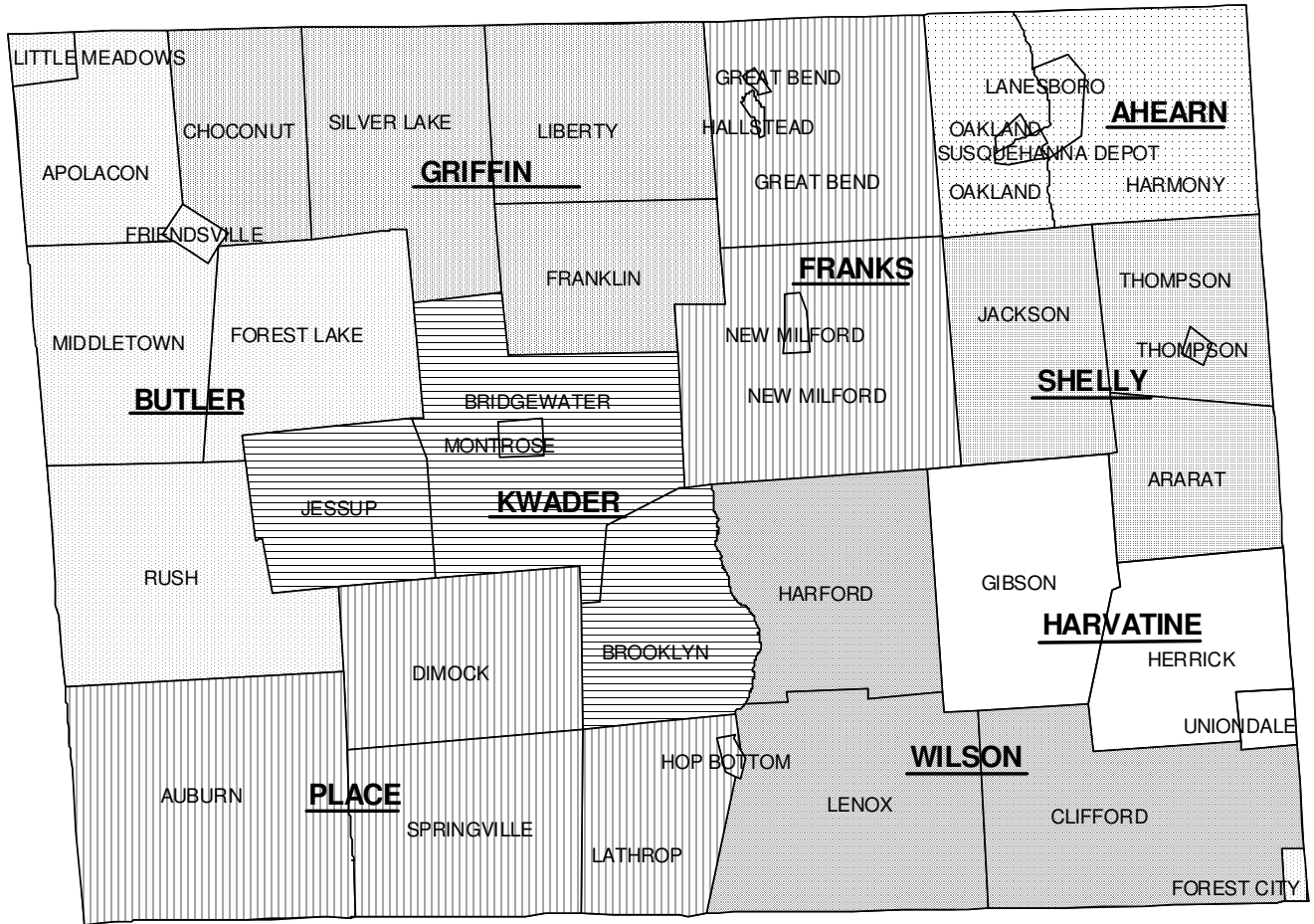
478 Round Hill Road
Clifford Twp. PA 18470
222-4637

lwilson@nep.net

Term Expires 2012

Clifford Township
Harford Township
Lenox Township

SCPC Representative Districts



MEETING ATTENDANCE 2010

The commission held twelve public meetings, preceded by workshop meetings also open to the public. Commission members continued to maintain their excellent record of participation with an average of 85% attendance at all meetings, amounting to 155.5 hours contributed to the County for this work. Not included in these hours is travel time to and from meetings and time spent at separate committee meetings and conferences.

Meeting Attendance 2010

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Patrick Ahearn	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
John Butler		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Richard Franks	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Bernie Griffin	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
Nancy Harvatine	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Frank Kwader	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ted Place		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Kathy Shelly	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Larry Wilson	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Length of Meeting	1.00	0.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.75	0.75	2.00	1.50	1.00	0.75	0.75
Public Attendance	2	3	8	14	20	8	2	10	6	2	5	2
Hours – Meeting and Workshop	10.50	7.00	12.50	13.50	14.00	18.00	10.00	20.00	18.00	12.00	10.00	10.00

Total Hours contributed by Planning Commission members, including Workshop Meeting = 155.5 hours

X = Attended Meeting

2010 - MEETING CHRONOLOGY - 2010
(including items of interest brought forth during the meetings)

January

- 2 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- Reorganization / Election of officers for 2010
- 1 Land Development plan was reviewed
- 4 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the Northern Tier Coalition reorganization meeting in Silver Lake Township
- The Commission discussed increased regulations for septic systems

February

- 3 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 1 Land Development plans was reviewed
- 3 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the Hazard Mitigation Plan committee meeting
- Staff reported on the 90% cut in Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance funding which affects the development of ordinances

March

- 8 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 8 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 2 Act 170 Review and Comments reviewed
- 5 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- The Staff and Commission members presented the 2009 Annual Report to the County Commissioners
- Staff attended the League of Women Voters natural gas meeting
- The Commission discussed water treatment facilities for the natural gas industry

April

- 14 Citizens attended the Commissions meeting
- 1 Land development plan was reviewed
- 6 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the Railroad Authority meeting to hear a report on the feasibility of developing a rail siding in the county
- The Commission answered many questions from the public regarding a proposed mobile home park

May

- 20 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 3 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 2 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- The staff attended the annual Countryside Conservancy awards program at which several County residents received awards
- The Commission again answered many questions from the public regarding a proposed mobile home park

June

- 8 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 3 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 2 Act 170 Review and Comments reviewed
- 5 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the PennDOT Customer Advisory Board meeting
- Commission members and staff tour the Chief Oil and Gas drilling site at the Brendon Teel property in Springville Township
- The Commission discussed an update of the SALDO to include requirements for natural gas compressor stations and water treatment facilities

July

- 2 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 0 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 1 Act 170 Review and Comment reviewed
- 3 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the Northern Tier Coalition quarterly meeting
- Staff attended the Hazard Mitigation Plan / PEMA presentation regarding funding for municipal projects
- Staff attended the 2011 Planning Conference planning committee meeting
- The Commission discussed the proposed amendment to the SALDO regarding noise and lighting at compressor stations

August

- 10 Citizens attended the Commissions meeting
- 3 Subdivision/Land development plans were reviewed
- 1 Staff approved plan was reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the Penn State Extension Community Development Advisory Committee meeting
- Commission and staff attended the Economic Development Board Annual Meeting
- Staff worked at the County Booth at the Harford Fair
- The Commission continued its review of the proposed SALDO amendment

September

- 6 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 5 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 1 Act 170 Review and Comment reviewed
- 5 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff reported on a requirement of PennDOT for any commercial airport to enact an airport district zoning ordinance
- The Commission discussed the newly announced Bluestone Gathering System natural gas pipeline

October

- 2 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 3 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 2 Act 170 Review and Comment reviewed
- 2 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Commission members attend the annual Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association conference at Lancaster
- Staff attended the PennDOT Customer Advisory Board meeting
- Staff attended the Farm Bureau annual meeting
- Staff attended the Conservation District annual meeting
- Commission finalized the proposed SALDO amendment and sends it to the County Commissioners for consideration and scheduling of the public hearing

November

- 5 Citizens attended the Commissions regular meeting
- 3 Subdivision/Land Development plans were reviewed
- 5 Act 170 Review and Comment reviewed
- 1 Staff approved plan was reviewed/concurred by Commission
- Staff attended the NTRPDC Open Space / Greenways Implementation meeting
- Commission and staff attended a presentation on natural gas drilling by Chesapeake Oil and Gas that included a visit to a drilling site in Auburn Township

December

- 2 Citizen attended the Commissions meeting
- 2 Subdivision/Land development plans were reviewed
- 2 Act 170 Review and Comments reviewed
- 5 Staff approved plans were reviewed/concurred by Commission
- The Commission further reviewed the proposed SALDO amendment with regards to erosion and sedimentation control plan requirements
- Commission members John Butler, Bernie Griffin and Katherine Shelly, were reappointed to 4 year terms by the County Commissioners

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Susquehanna County Planning Commission is made up of nine volunteers from throughout the County, appointed by the County Commissioners. The members of the Planning Commission provide a voluntary service to the community and receive no compensation for their time and effort. They can be reimbursed for any necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

The Planning Commission meetings are advertised each year in January and are open to the public. The agenda for each meeting is on the County's web site (www.susqco.com) one week before each meeting. Initial action on certain minor subdivisions and addition subdivision plans may take place prior to a meeting. All industrial or commercial development plans, major subdivision plans, and any plan requesting a waiver of a requirement of the Ordinance are acted on at a public meeting. Every subdivision or land development plan is sent, as soon as it arrives in the Planning Department office, to the local municipality for their review and comments. No final action is taken on plans before hearing from the municipality.

An application for a subdivision or land development becomes public information upon receipt officially at a Planning Commission meeting. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance details the method of accepting subdivision plans, which is consistent with Pennsylvania State law (the Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968 as amended). By law, the Planning Commission has 90 days from the date of official receipt to take action on a plan. The Ordinance contains a specific format to follow to determine when a plan has been officially submitted.

The County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance is available on the County's web site or on CD. It is available in printed form for a small fee to cover the cost of reproduction.

The Susquehanna County Planning Commission is charged with protecting the rights of all citizens and landowners of Susquehanna County with regard to their enjoyment and use of their land as they see fit, as long as it is done legally. This includes a landowner's right to subdivide or develop their land.

The single land use regulation tool that the County Planning Commission has available at this time is the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, which is governed by Pennsylvania State law (the Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968 as amended).

A planning commission assists the governing body in and assumes primary responsibility for developing the ordinances necessary to guide future growth. A planning commission can merely act as an advisor to the governing body (County Commissioners) in defining how the community should grow. However, the governing body may, by ordinance, delegate approval authority to a planning commission for subdivision and land development applications. In practice most of a planning commission's time is devoted to administration of the subdivision and land development ordinance.

A County may enact a zoning ordinance. In Pennsylvania all but a few zoning ordinances are enacted at the municipal level which provides the greatest local control over land use. Certain townships and boroughs in Susquehanna County are moving toward adopting zoning ordinances.

The difference between subdividing and zoning is often misunderstood. Zoning regulates the specific types of uses allowed in a given area. A subdivision is the act of dividing land into 2 or more lots or parcels. Land Development regulations control how a particular use (such as a retail store or manufacturing plant) is physically placed on that particular parcel of land. Because the County has a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance only, the Planning Commission cannot, under its Ordinance, tell someone they cannot propose a specific type of development on a specific piece of land. The Planning Commission may only regulate how that specific piece of land might be developed with the proposed type of development, such as through setbacks and buffers, in order to mitigate the effect it would have on neighboring property.

The Planning Commission invites and encourages all citizens and landowners of the County to attend its meetings. Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month beginning at 7:30 P.M. in the Conference Room of the County Office Building, 81 Public Avenue, Montrose. For more information you can call the Susquehanna County Department of Planning at (570) 278-4600 Ext 290, daily from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

PURPOSE OF THE SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

103 Purpose*

This Ordinance has been adopted to protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Susquehanna County by establishing regulations to allow for the proper and controlled development of the County, to provide for environmental protection and to insure the proper provision of community facilities. Regulations for specific types of development for which additional standards have been deemed necessary are intended to protect the rights of the residents of the County to enjoy clean air, pure water, and the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic value of the environment, and in particular to preserve and conserve the rural and natural features of the County. The basic tenet of subdivision and land development in the County is basing design on land capability and encouraging flexibility of design via the *conservation subdivision design* process. This will provide larger areas of open space within subdivisions and result in interconnected open space areas throughout the County.

* Susquehanna County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, adopted August 27, 2008, Page I-3

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE ADMINISTRATION

The Susquehanna County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance governs all subdivision and land development activity in 32 of the 40 municipalities in the county. The Planning Director may approve minor subdivision plans and certain land development plans that do not include requests for waivers and are found to be in conformity with the ordinance. A report of those approvals is made each month to the Planning Commission for their concurrence. Major subdivisions, non-residential subdivisions and land developments, and any plan which includes a request for a waiver from one or more of the requirements of the ordinance are reviewed by the staff and presented for consideration to the Planning Commission at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

When a plan is submitted to the planning department a copy of the map and application is immediately sent to the municipality in which the development is taking place. The Commission believes that all municipalities should take an active part in the review of the plan. A "Municipal Report Form" is included in the package so that any comments on the plan can be easily submitted by the municipality to the planning department.

The remaining 8 municipalities, listed below, govern subdivisions and land developments through their own ordinance and a municipal planning commission.

Ararat Township	Thompson Township
Clifford Township	Forest City Borough
Liberty Township	Montrose Borough
Silver Lake Township	Susquehanna Depot Borough

Subdivisions and land developments that occur in those municipalities having their own ordinance are submitted by that municipality to the County Planning Commission for review and comment.

Certain municipalities have established their own planning commissions for a variety of reasons but do not govern their own subdivisions. Listed below are those municipalities having active planning commissions.

Choconut Township (Planning Advisory Board)	
Harford Township	Hop Bottom Borough
Herrick Township	New Milford Borough

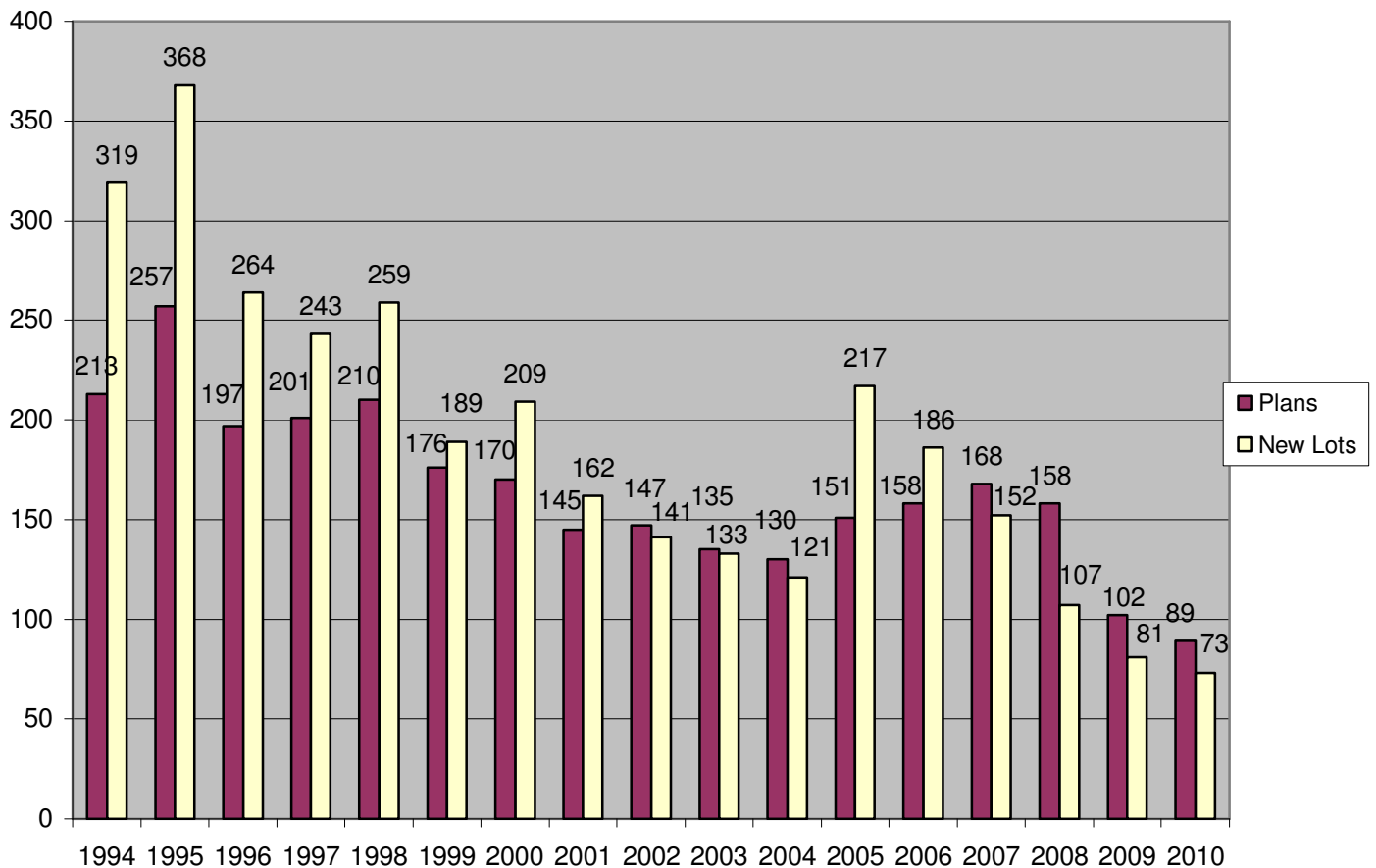
When reviewing a subdivision or land development plan local regulations must be taken into consideration, including zoning ordinances and building code regulations. Six municipalities have established zoning ordinances in order to further regulate development:

Forest City Borough
Hop Bottom Borough
Herrick Township

Montrose Borough
New Milford Borough
Susquehanna Depot Borough

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

During 2010, the Commission processed 89 subdivision and land development plans. These plans created 116 new lots/parcels of land given final approval. This represents the fewest plans and new lots created in at least the last 16 years. The most new residential lots created in any single subdivision were 4, the same as in 2008 and 2009.



SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY BY MUNICIPALITY 2010

TWP. / BOR.	LAND DEV.	MAJOR SUB	M H PARK	MINOR SUB	ADD- ONS	NEW LOTS	R & C ACT 170
Apolacon Twp.				2	1	3	
Ararat Twp.							
Auburn Twp.	2	2		1	2	6	
Bridgewater Twp.	3		1	5		10	
Brooklyn Twp.		1		1		2	
Choconut Twp.	1						
Clifford Twp.				5	3	11	8
Dimock Twp.	3			2	1	2	
Forest City Bor.					2		2
Forest Lake Twp.		1			1	1	
Franklin Twp.	1			1	2	1	
Friendsville Bor.							
Gibson Twp.				2		4	
Great Bend Bor.							
Great Bend Twp.	1			2	1	3	
Hallstead Bor.	1						
Harford Twp.				1	1	2	
Harmony Twp.							
Herrick Twp.							
Hop Bottom Bor.							
Jackson Twp.				1	1	1	
Jessup Twp.				1		1	
Lanesboro Bor.							
Lathrop Twp.	1			1		1	
Lenox Twp.				5	1	6	
Liberty Twp.				1	3	2	4
Little Meadows Bor.							
Middletown Twp.							
Montrose Bor.							
New Milford Bor.				1		4	
New Milford Twp.	4			1	2	1	
Oakland Bor.							
Oakland Twp.							
Rush Twp.	1			2		2	
Silver Lake Twp.				3		6	3
Springville Twp.	1			2	1	2	
Susquehanna Bor.					1		1
Thompson Bor.							
Thompson Twp.				2		2	2
Uniondale Bor.							
TOTALS	19	4	1	42	23	73	20

Land Development includes Commercial and Industrial
Add-ons (Additions) include Lot-Line Adjustments

Minor Subdivision includes Minor Non-Residential

Total Subdivision Plans Reviewed = 89

TYPES OF SUBDIVISIONS / DEVELOPMENTS

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Addition Subdivisions	52	47	56	50	45	53	48	57	54	36	23
Land Developments (includes Commercial & Industrial)	17	16	15	13	15	12	33	32	27	16	19
Major Subdivisions	6	5	8	8	7	14	16	8	4	8	4
Minor Subdivisions	92	77	68	64	63	72	60	71	73	42	42
Mobile Home Parks	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

Subdivisions of land have dropped in the past few years, possibly due to landowners holding onto their land hoping to capitalize on natural gas drilling. In the past two years we have had no subdivisions of large tracts of land that created multiple lots. Land development plans were a mix of natural gas related developments and commercial and service-type developments. Five of the seven gas related land developments were compressor stations. The other two were companies that serve the natural gas industry.

Commercial and Industrial Development Plans Reviewed

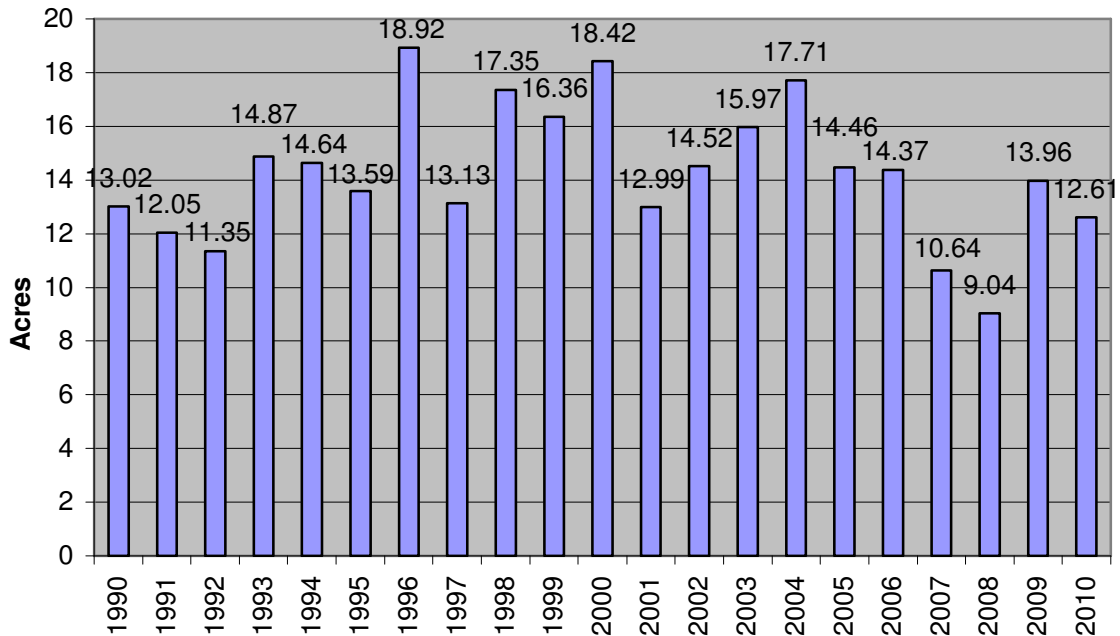
Appalachian Midstream / Chesapeake Energy	Auburn Twp
Chief Oil and Gas / Teel	Springville Twp
Chief Oil and Gas / Korban	Lathrop Twp
Choconut Creek Apartments	Choconut Twp
Dollar General	Great Bend Twp
Elk Lake School District	Dimock Twp
Endless Mountains Health System	Bridgewater Twp
GasSearch Drilling Services	Bridgewater Twp
Holiday Inn Express	New Milford Twp
Lackawanna College	New Milford Twp
Somerset Regional Water Resources	Dimock Twp
Southtown Veterinary Hospital	Bridgewater Twp.
Stone Energy Corporation	Rush Twp
Susquehanna County Housing Authority	Hallstead Bor
Turn Key Operations	New Milford Twp
UGI Energy Services	Auburn Twp
Verizon Wireless	New Milford Twp

LOT SIZES

There were fewer new lots created and fewer subdivision plans submitted during 2010 than in the previous sixteen years. The size of new lots created remained generally consistent with previous years, averaging over 10 acres each. We believe this is influenced by the Clean and Green taxation program.

In the updated Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance adopted in 2005 and amended in 2006 and 2008, the minimum lot size for new lots served by on-lot sewage and on-lot water was set at 1.00 acre, having been previously set at 2.00 acres in 1990. Since 1999 we have been tracking the percentage of 2 acre lots and since 2006 the percentage of 1 acre lots. The number of 2 acre lots was the same as in 2009 (24) while the number of 1 acre lots dropped from 15 in 2009 to 12 in 2010. Still, the percentages of 1 and 2 acre lots (generally 30% and 15% respectively) have remained similar and indicate that the change in minimum lot size allowed in the updated Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance has not had a significant effect on actual lot sizes created

Average Size of New Lots Created 1990 - 2010



TYPES OF PARCELS (AS ASSESSED)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Agricultural	5,784	5,849	5,943	6,089	6,197	6,292	6,333	6,394	6,445	6,515	6,560	6,576
Commercial	988	989	999	1,015	1,008	1,034	1,053	1,072	1,083	1,082	1,088	1,098
Industrial	26	27	28	28	27	26	26	25	25	25	26	25
Lots (<10 ac)	3154	3,146	3,077	3,064	3,004	2,974	2,953	2,938	2,917	2,880	2,877	2,854
Mining	24	23	21	21	18	17	15	15	14	12	9	9
Residential	12,842	12,895	12,978	12,976	13,026	13,051	13,127	13,163	13,197	13,233	13,232	13,240
Trailers	1,025	1,017	985	979	955	918	900	842	835	807	798	796
Vacant (>10ac)	3,358	3,394	3,402	3,372	3,346	3,330	3,306	3,296	3,317	3,294	3,278	3,270
Totals	27,201	27,340	27,433	27,544	27,581	27,642	27,713	27,745	27,833	27,848	27,868	27,868

CLEAN AND GREEN PARCELS (AS ASSESSED)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Agricultural	4,442	4,562	4,735	4,932	5,098	5,254	5,333	5,425	5,503	5,572	5,618	5,653
Commercial	38	37	35	35	38	38	43	42	44	43	47	48
Industrial	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
Lots (<10 ac)												
Mining												
Residential											1	
Trailers												
Vacant (>10 ac)	2,343	2,435	2,478	2,512	2,540	2,570	2,588	2,609	2,655	2,636	2,630	2,633
Totals	6,824	7,035	7,249	7,480	7,677	7,863	7,965	8,076	8,202	8,251	8,296	8,334

AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS

Among the several strategies to protect and retain valuable farmland resources in Pennsylvania is the "Agricultural District" concept. The enactment of Act 43 in 1981 and amended in 1988 provides the basis to help in farmland retention. This is a voluntary program in that landowners must initiate enrollment and secure a minimum of 500 acres for each Agricultural Security Area prior to requesting its approval by the local government and recording in the County Courthouse. A municipality can record a second Agricultural Security Area with less than 500 acres. The term of an Agricultural Security Area is 7 years and may be renewed or amended after each 7 year period.

36% of the county's land is currently enrolled in this program.

During 2010 there were no renewals of existing Agricultural Security Areas.

The following list shows agricultural security areas that have been established in Susquehanna County.

AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS

As of December 31, 2010

	ACRES ENROLLED IN	TOTAL ACRES	
MUNICIPALITY	AG SECURITY	IN MUNICIPALITY	PERCENTAGE
Apolacon Township	3,738	16,640	22%
Ararat Township	3,572	13,440	27%
Auburn Township	8,592	30,720	28%
Bridgewater Township	13,029	23,680	55%
Brooklyn Township	9,451	14,720	64%
Choconut Township	4,304	12,800	34%
Clifford Township	2,953	26,880	11%
Dimock Township	7,172	17,920	40%
Forest Lake Township	6,941	19,200	36%
Franklin Township	4,096	14,720	28%
Gibson Township	7,753	26,880	29%
Great Bend Township	2,598	24,320	11%
Harford Township	8,259	20,480	41%
Harmony Township	626	21,120	3%
Herrick Township	6,128	16,640	37%
Jackson Township	3,441	16,000	22%
Jessup Township	9,165	12,160	75%
Lanesboro Borough	583	1,920	30%
Lathrop Township	8,358	14,080	59%
Lenox Township	12,804	25,600	50%
Liberty Township	10,618	19,200	55%
Middletown Township	9,275	19,840	47%
New Milford Township	7,750	29,440	22%
Oakland Township	1,458	10,240	13%
Rush Township	16,761	23,680	53%
Silver Lake Township	1,695	20,480	8%
Springville Township	12,783	23,040	55%
Thompson Township	4,695	14,720	32%
TOTALS	188,598	530,560	36%

NORTHERN TIER REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

During 2010, the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission continued to provide technical assistance to our Commission, Staff and County in general. NTRPDC operates through several citizen advisory committees, including executive and commission membership. Susquehanna County residents who served in this capacity during 2010 are as follows.

(please note: the following information was provided by NTRPDC)

Full Commission

Leon Allen	County Commissioner
Michael Giangrieco	County Commissioner
MaryAnn Warren	County Commissioner
David Darrow	Franklin Township Supervisor
Dennis Phelps	Trehab
Katherine Shelly	Planning Commission

Personnel Committee

Leon Allen	County Commissioner
Michael Giangrieco	County Commissioner

Nominating Committee

MaryAnn Warren	County Commissioner
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Economic Development Advisory Committee

William Dovin	Choconut Township Supervisor
Robert Neira	Retired (Banking)
Jack Taylor	Broadline Construction, Inc.

Local Loan Review Committee

Joe Ferretti	People's National Bank
James Pietrowski	Community Bank
Rick Soden	Pennstar Bank

Rural Area Transportation Advisory Committee

Rudy Mattes	Choconut Township Supervisor
Joseph Plonski	Retired (PennDOT)
Leonard Wheatley	

Workforce Investment Board

Sam Anderson	Pump and Pantry
Tom Kurosky	Department of Public Welfare
Loren Stone	Endless Mountains Health Systems

INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

During 2010 Planning Commission members and the Planning Department staff continued their involvement with various agencies and organizations in order to further the scope of planning activities throughout the County. The Commission members and staff held positions with and/or attended the regular meetings of the following organizations:

- Agricultural Preservation Board
- E.L. Rose Conservancy
- Eastern Susquehanna County Partnership
- Northern Tier Coalition
- Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
- Susquehanna County Council of Governments
- Susquehanna County Farm Bureau
- Susquehanna County Natural Gas Task Force
- Susquehanna County Soil Conservation District
- Susquehanna County Township Supervisors Association

Ag Easement Program

In 1988 the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Farmland Preservation developed the Agricultural Easement Program to help slow the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses. Participating county programs receive state funds for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements. County funds (\$40,000 in 2010) are made available by the County Board of Commissioners, including a portion which comes from Clean and Green rollback money.

Counties participating in the program have appointed agricultural land preservation boards. Board member (and Planning Commission member) Ted Place served as the Chairman during 2010. Eleanor Kurosky continued to serve on the County Board during 2010. The state board is responsible for distribution of state funds, final approval and monitoring of county programs and all easement purchases.

Farm owners applying to the county program are evaluated by the County Board according to soil quality, stewardship and development pressure. The County Board ranks the applicants, approves the top ranked farm and forwards all necessary paperwork to the State Board for final approval.

In 2010 the Ag Preservation Board gained approval for the Jonathan and Charlene Bunnell farm in Auburn Township, consisting of 148.45 acres. This brings the total of farmland enrolled in Susquehanna County's Agricultural Easement Program to 27 farms consisting of 5,711 acres.

Northern Tier Coalition

The Northern Tier Coalition chose not to adopt the zoning ordinance that had been prepared in previous years. However, the proposed zoning ordinance is complete and available for any NTC member municipality who wishes to enact it in the future. At the NTC meetings during 2010, held quarterly, the members discussed other programs that could be accomplished by this multi-municipal group including regional police protection and road ordinances. All of the member municipalities chose to continue their participation in the Northern Tier Coalition since they see value in working together on municipal issues.

Eastern Susquehanna County Partnership

Throughout 2010 the Eastern Susquehanna County Partnership continued to review their proposed zoning ordinance. It was decided to change some uses from special exception to conditional use so as to allow the individual municipalities to have greater control over review of those uses. Once the review is complete the proposed ordinance will be offered for public review. That is expected to happen during 2011. At that time the proposed ordinance will be also be placed on the County's web site.

CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

Northern Tier Greenways Master Plan

The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC) completed their Greenways and Open Space Plan for Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties during 2010. Norris Design, the consultant hired to develop the plan, held an implementation meeting in November 2010. It was decided at that time that the first project would be signage for Salt Springs State Park. Additional projects will depend on available funds.

Another project that was discussed was the existing “Endless Mountains Trail” that travels between Montrose and Alford. A feasibility study is currently underway by The Rail-Trail Council of NEPA and we expect to see more activity during 2011.

SALDO Amendment

Beginning in 2009 and continuing in 2010 the Planning Commission received plans for a new type of industrial development: the natural gas compressor station. The nature of this type of development had not been seen in our county before and presented some challenges to reviewing the plans under Article VII, Commercial and Industrial Development, of the existing Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

The Commission, with the backing of the County Commissioners, began reviewing ordinances from other counties and municipalities that address natural gas compressor stations. We found that the majority of ordinances addressing this type of development are zoning ordinances. The Commission proposed adding a new section to the Commercial and Industrial Development Article of the Ordinance to address Natural Gas Compressor Stations. The proposed section includes a limit on the decibel level allowed at the nearest occupied building not on the subject property, an increase in the building setback distance, and a requirement that the compressor station development meets any other federal, state or local law. All of the proposed requirements are intended to protect the health, safety and welfare of neighboring property owners. The Commission also proposed adding a new section to the same Article for Hydraulic Fracturing Wastewater Treatment Facilities since it is believed that this type of development may be proposed in the County in the near future.

In addition to the new section for natural gas related developments the Commission reviewed the “tickler file” of changes needed to the Ordinance to address inconsistencies with state laws, to provide greater detail for certain requirements, and to be consistent with other parts of the Ordinance. The Commission sent the recommended changes to the County Commissioners for their consideration. A public hearing on the proposed amendments will be held in early 2011.

Natural Gas Extraction

During 2010 the County saw a significant increase in natural gas extraction activity. More land was leased by landowners; more wells were drilled; and rights-of-way were secured for the collection and gathering pipelines that will be needed to convey the natural gas to market.

The Planning Commission continues to monitor the activities of the natural gas industry in order to gauge where and what types of development might occur. The Commission had anticipated an increase in the number of subdivisions, residential and commercial land developments and mobile home parks as more gas related workers came to the area and required housing. However, during 2010 we did not see an increase in this type of activity. There were a few new industrial developments proposed that serve the gas industry, but not as many as had been anticipated. This is not to say that we will not see this type of development in the future as natural gas production increases and workers are needed in areas other than drilling sites. A few inquiries have been made to the staff about multi-family housing developments, travel trailer parks and mobile home parks, but so far only one plan has been submitted which has not yet been approved.

As mentioned earlier in this report the number of subdivisions of land has decreased in the past few years. We believe that this may be a result of landowners holding onto their land in hopes of realizing profits from royalties from natural gas.

Comprehensive Plan

The County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003. It is recommended that a comprehensive plan be reviewed every ten years. With the anticipated release of demographic data by the Census Bureau following the 2010 census it will be feasible to begin reviewing the Comprehensive Plan very soon.

As was done when the current Comprehensive Plan was developed, an update would begin with a survey of the public to determine the community goals and objectives. It will be interesting to see if there is a difference in the desires of the public since natural gas drilling has arrived in the County.

Environmental concerns are on everyone's minds. However, most of the regulation of environmental matters rests in the hands of others, not with the County Government or the County Planning Commission.

The Commission members and staff continue to gather information from many sources related to the land use effects of natural gas drilling and related matters in anticipation of updating the Comprehensive Plan.