



**JENKINTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, October 21, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.**  
**Virtual ZOOM Meeting**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Meeting attendees present from JBPC:** Jon McCandlish, Eric Horowitz, Allison Shertzer, Phil Zimmerman, Lucinda Bartley, Peter Van Do, Rob Ghormoz

Others present on Zoom: Joanne Bruno, Deborra Pancoe, Claire Warner (MCPS) George Locke (Borough Manager and Zoning Officer), Steve Spindler, Maureen Lucak

Above names may be referenced by initials below.

### **Call to Order**

The October 2025 meeting of the Jenkintown Borough Planning Commission was called to order at 6:35 and it was livestreamed on Facebook JM (EH)

### **Public Comment**

There was a request for public comment, of which there was none.

### **Reports/Actions**

P.C. Meeting Minutes Approval - P.C. Secretary, Eric Horowitz

The Commission then turned to approval of the September meeting minutes. Peter recalled discussion on the inclusion of documenting the development of a resource folder for new JBPC members. Because not everyone had reviewed the draft minutes, the Commission agreed to table approval until the November meeting, with Eric circulating an updated version once Peter's addition is added.

### **New Business / Business for Discussion**

No new business was submitted for the month.

### **Sub Committee and Initiative Updates**

Historic Jenkintown / PHMC Marker

Peter shared progress on the PHMC historical marker initiative. The application for a marker honoring architect Horace Trumbauer has been officially approved, part of a larger statewide rollout of 45 new markers following the program's recent revamp. Installation and dedication events are expected in 2026-27, aligning with celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Next steps include completing the required responsibility agreement and coordinating with the building owner for necessary approvals. John proposed a small working meeting among himself, Peter, George, and the property owner to clarify logistics—such as installation responsibilities, potential bidding requirements, funding sources, and the role of Public Works. It was agreed this would help establish a clear workflow.

Peter also outlined potential future historical initiatives, including research into Mary Frances Lovell and early Lenape pathways connected to Old York Road. He suggested beginning outreach to relevant organizations to build documentation and relationships before pursuing additional marker applications.

In furthering the historic resources inventory initiative discussion from a prior PC meeting Peter asked Claire about potential tools similar to DCNR's Street Trees platform that would allow community members to photograph and upload information about neighborhood properties. Claire noted that while the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) provides resources, she was unsure whether they offer an interactive mapping tool. She also cautioned that PHMC's standards for historic resource surveys—especially for residential areas—are typically more rigorous than informal community-driven methods. The PC acknowledged that expanding the borough's historic inventory would require further research, potential cost considerations, and clarity on PHMC's preferred process.

Peter expressed interest in a simple, volunteer-friendly approach using low-cost tools like SurveyMonkey, adding that such an effort could help document architectural diversity and inform future planning. John recalled prior documentation—such as the borough's architectural styles survey—and suggested linking existing historic materials on the borough website rather than creating redundant archives. George confirmed these documents are already posted and shared the link, prompting agreement that additional items (such as a consolidated document on Horace Trumbauer's work in the borough) could be added later.

The group will continue researching feasible approaches, with Claire checking PHMC resources and Peter reviewing other models. Claire will also follow up on educational materials about historic districts. The Commission left open the possibility of announcing any future historic survey effort at the Trumbauer marker dedication.

#### Bike and Pedestrian Safety

Eric reported that the group is now inviting community members and will initially meet twice monthly for concise 45-minute sessions. The subcommittee has begun brainstorming ideas related to street safety, connectivity, and implementation of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan's transportation goals. Eric asked about deadlines, and John clarified that the subcommittee is free to establish its own timelines.

Eric also mentioned a potential tool, WikiMapping.com, developed by community member Steve Spindler, which could support mapping needs for both bike planning and historic inventories. George shared an update from a recent Abington meeting about proposed bike share lanes. While Abington is advancing several projects, one proposal involving Jenkintown raised concerns about resident resistance—particularly regarding loss of parking and installation of protective infrastructure such as curb extensions. He noted that any changes would require Borough Council approval and a careful review of safety data, resident feedback, and traffic patterns.

Eric added that bike lanes can provide traffic calming benefits by narrowing travel lanes. The JBPC acknowledged the need for continued discussion as ideas develop.

### Street Tree Assessment

Peter reported that he had begun exploring the DCNR inventory platform Claire previously mentioned and asked about account setup. Claire explained that DCNR must create accounts upon request and offered to share slide instructions. Peter plans to test the platform's usability before recommending its adoption, noting that it aligns with countywide practices but may involve costs.

Peter proposed forming a small working group—including Maureen, Lucinda, and potentially members of the Shade Tree Commission—to begin planning. Lucinda and Maureen agreed to participate. George noted that the Shade Tree Commission exists but may not be fully active; Louisa, its chair, may be stepping down. The group agreed to reach out to her and other listed members to determine involvement.

Peter suggested setting goals and developing a timeline, ideally preparing a volunteer-driven tree inventory effort by Arbor Day 2026, using the DCNR tool and incorporating broader canopy-cover considerations. Lucinda emphasized establishing clear objectives first to ensure the effort is purposeful. Peter agreed and will coordinate next steps via email.

### Approved Plant List

The Commission then briefly addressed the native plant list, with Lucinda suggesting it be discussed alongside the tree assessment in a sidebar meeting.

### Zoning Review

Allison noted she will spend the coming months gathering input from stakeholders—including George—on two or three high-impact zoning considerations, potentially related to parking or other recurring issues. She aims to prepare a memo later in the spring outlining options.

Eric then raised a final zoning-related issue: the long-standing billboard-company lawsuit that had paused local sign ordinance updates may now be resolved. If the case is indeed closed, he suggested the Commission should revisit and potentially revise billboard and signage provisions based on the MCPC model sign code to ensure readiness for any future applications.

George recommended reviewing the design standards currently embedded in the zoning code, with some belonging in the subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) instead. Their placement in zoning forces applicants to seek zoning relief for matters that should be handled through land development waivers, adding unnecessary complexity. He noted that the zoning code, adopted in 2010, remains fundamentally strong but contains several provisions that could be improved. He also shared that SALDO had recently been rewritten for the first time in 15 years, and that zoning review should follow to ensure alignment.

Members expressed appreciation for George's expertise. George confirmed that the billboard lawsuit had indeed been dismissed the previous day, which the Commission regarded as a positive development.

### **Ongoing Business**

#### Jenkintown 2035 Comprehensive Plan Implementation

No update reported.

On and off-street parking inventory being conducted by Borough Engineer (precursor to parking study) AND Town Center Street Parking and Traffic Study - West Avenue (update)

George reported that the Borough's on- and off-street parking inventory is nearly complete. The engineer is finalizing data after internal review, and the county has been engaged to conduct the full parking study using this new inventory.

#### Other ongoing business

On upcoming land development activity, George noted movement at 610 Old York Road, where the receivership is seeking information to advance the previously approved coffee shop and dessert uses. A developer has also expressed interest in 440 Old York Road, though work will be constrained by the church's prohibition on building over its parking lot. Allison asked to be included in communications given her long-standing interest in that site. George also confirmed he would verify the expiration timeline for prior approvals at 610 York Road. Regarding the Cedar Street garage, he had no formal updates but heard informally that the fire company may be exploring grants to acquire the property.

Peter and Eric then revisited concerns about the bright digital sign at the Pavilion Building in Abington which illuminate adjacent borough residences. Members agreed the glare is significant—visible far up Cedar Street and especially disruptive at night—and discussed options such as reducing brightness, limiting operating hours, or repositioning the sign. They planned to document the issue with photos and possibly light-meter readings before determining how to present to Abington as next steps.

#### **Adjournment**

With no further matters raised, the Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m. LM (LB)

#### **Appendix "A"**

The following are links which were posted in the Zoom chat dialogue during the meeting:

Allison Shertzer:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/10/20/cities-where-home-prices-have-changed-most-least-over-past-130-years/>

George Locke:

<https://jenkintownboro.com/revitalization-master-plan/>

Claire Warner (MCPC)

July 26, 2023 - Planning Smarter: Historic Preservation Opportunities - Event Webinar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNEYxAvEaDI>

Deborra Pancoe: Link to the 2035 Comp. Plan - <https://jenkintownboro.com/jenkintown2035-final-jenkintown2035-plan/>