

Eldred Township, Monroe County, PA.

Village Mixed Use Overlay District

Preserving Our Small Town Character

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Introduction

Beginning as a Village in 1762, Eldred Township has long been a primarily agricultural community. As time went by, related businesses began to operate near the intersection of what is now Chestnut Ridge Rd. and Kunkletown Rd. and after many evolutions, this area is still the center of the **Village of Kunkletown**. Our signs proclaim it, and our residents know this to be true.

While the downtown has largely become a residential area, several businesses still operate successfully , The Kunkletown General Store, Greenzweig's Garage and the Kunkletown Inn to name a few.

Many of the residents of Kunkletown have deep roots here, their families having been here since the very beginning and those people have strong feelings about the current atmosphere and the future of our little Village. While things can never remain forever unchanged, we have the ability to choose what Kunkletown will look like in the future, preserving the best of Village life and planning for growth.

The Village - Yesterday and Today

We are not a village that sprang up fully formed overnight!

The homes in the village represent the times in which they were built, from the stone farmhouses of the earliest years to the Cape Cods of the post war years and the more modern designs of today. The village has always also included small businesses; today there are places to eat, have your car repaired and pick up groceries. Supporting them, today and in the past, has contributed to the feeling of community that defines us.

And this is the way a village should work, providing both business and residential opportunities for residents of all ages and interests.

Small Businesses

Small businesses are the heart of village life. They enhance the quality of life of the local families. The Kunkletown General Store, for example, is the place where people congregate to eat ice cream, share local news and greet friends and family.

Although this mutually beneficial mixture of homes and small businesses has lasted since the first grist mill began operations in Kunkletown, we found out with Nestle how quickly everything can change. To preserve the appearance, function and spirit of the Village, planning is needed.

The tool available to the Supervisors to shape and protect the future of the Village is zoning.

Creating a Village Mixed Use Overlay District will ensure that small businesses can thrive and grow in Kunkletown.

This overlay district would create new criteria for businesses coming into the Village to help preserve the atmosphere we all hold dear.

Residences

Traveling through the Village , one cannot fail to notice the many homes that are simply residences of our neighbors. Small town life is comfortable. You know your neighbors, decorating for the holidays is a community affair, joys and sorrows are shared and the support of the community is unparalleled.

This is the sense of Community that this proposed district is attempting to preserve, and why would we not wish to do so. Once gone, it would be gone forever, lost in the race for profit and attention, signs glaring, trees pulled out by the root and green grass covered with tarmac.

Examples can be seen everywhere, and this is not a Village.

Planning/ Zoning

2004 brought a new layer to life in Eldred, Zoning.

Our Zoning Ordinance has provided guidance to planners and developers in how and where to provide for all uses in the Township that would permit property owners the greatest latitude in use of their property while protecting the quality of life of the community as a whole.

At that time, several commercial zones in the Township were identified, including the Village area of Kunkletown.

Our commercial zone permits not only the small businesses that have played an important role in our village, but also would allow large box stores (think Walmart) and nightclubs, etc. and does so while making it more difficult to build a home.

Commercial development is a necessary and vital part of any community and Eldred is no exception. The jobs created, buildings erected, and services provided are a benefit to all our residents. However, we all know that a nightclub or a large box store would not fit into the Village of Kunkletown.

Where and what development happens is an essential consideration.

Shaping the Village Future Through Zoning

The Township can adopt new zoning for the Village that will preserve its mixture of small businesses and homes and its community feeling.

This new Zoning :

- can regulate the types and sizes of buildings and businesses in an area (Zone)
- To some extent, regulate the appearance of facades and signs

However, no changes would be required to existing buildings, uses and businesses. They are grandfathered.

- The effect of this new Zoning, an Overlay District, would apply to new uses and/or construction.

Consideratons

This overlay would create some special compliance requirements for new businesses coming into the area. Signage would be a little more regulated. There would be some additional design elements. The size of the lots and buildings could be more closely regulated, and the parking , entrances and access ways would be detailed to help preserve the overall appearance and function of the village.

Since most of the area inside this Overlay District is already developed, and developed in a manner that is pleasing and consistent with a Village, no changes would be required of any existing structures. However, encouraging new small business into the village and excluding large commercial structures that would increase traffic and noise, will benefit everyone.

Possible Zoning Changes

These are some changes to the current Zoning Ordinance that the Board might wish to consider after input from the public and would be limited to the Mixed Use Village Overlay District :

- Homes would be a Principal Permitted Use- No Special Exception or Conditional Use Hearing would be required.
- Mixed Use Buildings with residences over business spaces would be permitted.
- Permitted business uses: Retail Establishments, Personal Services, Restaurants, Micro-Breweries, Financial and Insurance institutions, Bed and Breakfasts, Day Care Centers, Churches, Municipal Offices, Community Centers and Post Offices (this list can of course be expanded).
- Business buildings might be permitted but would be limited in size (to be determined, but not greater than 7000 sq. ft.).

- To maintain the appearance of a “Village” new commercial buildings should have interesting front facades with windows
- Each new building shall have green space in front
- Parking shall be on the side or rear of the buildings for better traffic control, appearance and to make the village “walkable”. No drive thru entrances shall be permitted
- Buildings shall have height and setback limits
- Signs shall be of materials and design that compliment the buildings and shall have limits in the content and amount of writing on them
- Roofs shall be pitched and have traditional types of sidings
- Lot sizes (achieved by lot joiners) shall be limited

Today, in 2021, we are uniquely positioned to preserve what we love of our past, select the way our little Village will look in the future, and give the gift of Village life to our children and grandchildren, so that they may enjoy the same quality of life that we have become accustomed to, that we hold dear and that we find value in each day that we are privileged to live in the Village of Kunkletown.