



Perkasie Residents:

This May, Perkasio Borough will celebrate its 140th birthday; rising from a small railroad stop to a thriving community. There is little doubt that the Borough's past plays a large part in its bright future.

While private groups, such as the Perkasio Historical Society, do a wonderful job telling the story of Perkasio and connecting residents – young and old – to its history, Borough Council believes that local government must also play an active role in historic preservation efforts.

With that in mind, in January 2018, Borough Council appointed its first-ever Historical Committee to start work on long-term plans to protect Perkasio's historic character while offering incentives for businesses and homeowners to preserve the buildings and structures that define our town. In identifying this priority, Perkasio joins 26 of Bucks County's 54 municipalities focusing on such efforts. For the past year, the Historical Committee has been working on plans that will make this vision happen.

We, the undersigned, are members of this committee and would like to provide an update on our efforts and highlight their importance at this time of change. Our priorities include:

- **Establishing a National Historic District for Perkasio's Town Center:** Early this year, Borough Council approved beginning the process of establishing the Town Center as a National Historic District when it authorized a Historic Resource Survey for the Town Center overlay district. The Town Center district is bounded by Walnut Street (west), Fifth Street (south), Arch/Race Street (east) and Seventh Street (north). This Resource Survey reviews the unique history, architecture and properties to make a recommendation on its historic status.

We estimate about 87-percent of the buildings in this area, residential and commercial, would be contributing structures to a National Historic District. As such, under certain conditions property owners could be eligible for state and federal tax credits and easements. Through maintaining the historic charm of our downtown, this opportunity would encourage new business investment in the community and increase property values both in and surrounding the overlay.

While establishing and enforcing aesthetic standards will be crucial to the success of this program, neither the committee nor Council intend to use a HARB (Historic Architecture Review Board) or Historical Commission to place any conditions on property owners. We are exploring using Bucks County's recommended design

guidelines as a voluntary resource for residents, businesses and developers who want to keep their properties looking authentic.

- **Investigating an Adaptive Use Overlay:** For historic commercial properties outside of the defined Town Center area, we are exploring an Adaptive Use Overlay. This designation would allow larger, historic buildings to potentially benefit from similar tax credits if their owners seek to get them on the National Register and follow historic preservation guidelines.
- **Implementing a Public-Private Partnership Façade Grant Program:** For the benefit of all historic residential properties in Perkasio, we are exploring a façade grant program in cooperation with local businesses, business groups, and state grant organizations.
- **Protecting the Covered Bridge:** We are actively working with the Perkasio Historical Society on a large project to rehabilitate the South Perkasio Covered Bridge located in Lenape Park. This restoration project would be paid for using state grants and contributions from the public, not with Borough tax dollars.
- **Reviewing National Register status for Lenape Park:** The state determined Lenape Park was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places several years ago while authorizing other projects in the area. This would allow us to pursue grant money for the rehabilitation and preservation of the Roebling (Twin) Bridges as well as other projects.

Our committee's goal is to find the best way to use our historic structures while protecting them and keeping them active. We are grateful for the support of Council as a whole who understands and appreciates this issue and has unanimously passed all efforts related to historic preservation over the past two years. As the elected body representing taxpayers, we are fully committed to honoring and preserving Perkasio's heritage.

Sincerely,

Perkasio Borough Council Historical Committee

Scott Bomboy
Chair, Ward 3

Jim Purcell
Councilman, Ward 2

Aaron Clark
Councilman, Ward 2

Randy Faulkner
Councilman, Ward 3