

Chester County's Wonderful Landscape Due to Talented Professionals from Private, Public Sectors



Image via the Chester County Planning Commission.
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By Judy DiFilippo

Luck had no role in the preservation of Chester County's wonderful landscape during the past decades.

Many talented professionals in the private and public sectors worked together to devise the county's award-winning Landscapes plans and to execute the smart growth concept that has helped Chester County evolve into one of the best counties in the nation to live, work and raise a family.

Chester County 2020 is a non-profit organization helping to create livable communities by bringing people together to find common ground and then working to transform dialogue into action. Each year the organization selects individuals worthy of its Citizen Planner awards. This year Chester County 2020 is honoring two such winners, one from the public sector and one from the private sector.

In the private sector, Sarah Peck, principal of Progressive New Homes, is a recognized expert on infill housing development and the concept's growing acceptance in suburban communities. She is a former CEO of Rouse/Chamberlin Homes of Exton and co-founder of the Housing Partnership of Chester County.

Peck was named "National Builder of the Year" by *Professional Builder Magazine* and has served as adjunct professor of West Chester University. Progressive New Homes builds progressive, affordably-priced homes in Chester and Montgomery counties.

Besides having a plan to preserve our valuable land, Chester County needs builders and contractors willing to provide quality housing and Sarah and her company has done so.

In the public sector, David Ward, former assistant director of the Chester County Planning Commission, has been involved in planning for more than 40 years. Last year David retired from the Chester County Planning Commission after a distinguished career.

David played a key role in developing the county's award-winning Landscapes program and managed the first revision of the plan, Landscapes 2. He is deserving of Chester County 2020's Lifetime Achievement award.

He worked tirelessly with county municipalities during his tenure with Chester County and will continue to serve as an instructor and board member of the Pennsylvania Municipal Education Institute.

The awards are being given at Chester County 2020's annual reception on April 25 at Chester Valley Golf Club. For those interested in attending, [click here](#). The event is always informative, and this year, the master of ceremonies will be Ken Knickerbocker, publisher of American Community Journals, a network that includes VISTA Today.

Since 1996, Chester County 2020 has been a change agent working to connect and educate the county's resident and business and political leaders. We engage stakeholders in cooperative efforts to address common issues; dispel misguided rumors that develop in any community discussion; and produce measurable action on issues that affect the county's quality of life.

Direct involvement with natural resource protection and farmland preservation continues as Chester County 2020 responds to issues involving the dynamics of an increasing population. While Chester County should be proud of its achievements, the county must be vigilant in maintaining our landscapes. The county is hard at work on implementing Landscapes 3. We'll continue to need professionals as dedicated as Sarah Peck and David Ward.

Judy DiFilippo is a Chester County 2020 board member and a former chair of the Chester County Planning Commission.