

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
February 17, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, February 17, 2022, 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Wolf called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf
Russ Kiel
James White
Diane Waksmunski
Danea Koss
Ron Rovanseck
Debra Orner

ABSENT

Lonnie Batdorf
Rev. Sylvia King

STAFF

Colleen A. Bukowski
Katie Kinka
Shanna Sosko

PUBLIC COMMENT

No guests were present at the meeting and no public comment was offered. Mr. Wolf stated that he had been informed by Mr. Imhoff that information requested by John DeBartolo and Crispin Havener, WJAC-TV reporter, in their respective Right-to-Know submissions will be provided within the thirty-day response period.

REORGANIZATION

Mr. Wolf stated that election of officers should take place at this meeting. Mr. Rovanseck made a motion that the current slate of officers be retained for 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kiel and passed unanimously. The 2022 slate of officers for the Cambria County Planning Commission is as follows:

Chair - Eric Wolf
Vice-Chair - James White
Secretary - Diane Waksmunski
Treasurer - Lonnie Batdorf

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Orner, the minutes of the January 20, 2022 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The February Financial Statement was read by Ms. Bukowski and reviewed by those present. There being no questions or comments on the report, Ms. Waksmunski made a motion that the February Treasurer's Report,

including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kiel and passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

In the absence of the Interim Director, Mr. Wolf provided a brief synopsis of activities in which Mr. Imhoff was engaged during the month of January. These activities included review of the upcoming Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program; coordination with RAISE grant stakeholders to further the implementation process; and review of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and its effect on transportation projects in Cambria County. Mr. Wolf also noted that although Mr. Imhoff initiated conversations with an independent insurance agent regarding retiree health insurance coverage, this initiative is not a pressing issue and will be revisited at a later date.

Transportation Planning

In the absence of the Transportation Planner, Ms. Sosko briefly highlighted transportation initiatives presented in Mr. Allison's monthly report. These activities included continued coordination and development of the William Penn Avenue Corridor Plan; development of the 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update, including contacting municipalities to assess their interest in moving forward with potential candidate bridge rehabilitation/replacement projects; and preparation for and attendance at a recent MPO Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting. Ms. Sosko stated that she also attended the MPO meeting as a temporary alternate for Mr. Imhoff.

Community Development

Noting that residential and non-residential land development plans continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis, Ms. Sosko further explained two non-residential plans that have been submitted. The first was for a new maintenance building at the Hiram G. Andrews Center in Upper Yoder Township and the other was submitted by the Jackson Township Supervisors for development of the Laurel Ridge Business Park located along Chickaree Hill Road and US 22.

Ms. Sosko reported that the Stackhouse Park trails and amenities mapping project continues to move forward, with park board member agreeing to hike the numerous trails throughout the park and enter pertinent information using a mobile app. Ms. Sosko explained that she will meet with park members to explain how best to use the mobile app and what type of information can be entered into the database. She stated that once all data collection is completed, she will utilize the County's GIS to prepare a digital map of Stackhouse Park, depicting the trails and recreation amenities available to the public.

Ms. Sosko informed the members of an upcoming public meeting sponsored by the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Convention and Visitors Bureau. She explained that the CVB has partnered with a community branding expert to provide guidance on how to develop a unique and unified brand to market and promote tourism in the County. Ms. Sosko noted that she will be

serving on the brand development team and will keep the members apprised of this initiative.

With regard to the William Penn Avenue Corridor Plan, Ms. Sosko stated that she has begun collecting, analyzing, and mapping crash data from 2015-2020. She explained that initial review has indicated that three of the crashes involved transit or school buses. Ms. Sosko noted that further investigation of the crash data may help to formulate safety improvement recommendations along the corridor.

Updating the members on the Portage Area Regional Comprehensive Plan initiative, Ms. Sosko stated that representatives of Portage Borough, Portage Township, and Cassandra Borough have expressed sincere interest in the project. She stated that in addition to these three municipalities, representatives from Cresson Borough, Cresson Township, Lilly Borough, Washington Township, and Munster Township have been invited to attend an informational meeting on March 10, 2022 at the Portage Fire Hall. Ms. Sosko explained that representatives from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development will also be attending the meeting to explain the planning process and tout the benefits of a regional comprehensive plan.

Senior Planning

Ms. Kinka provided an update on the progress of the pilot downtown Johnstown housing project. She reported that the developer has requested CFA funds to initiate demolition of the third floor of the Park Building (formerly the Penn Highlands Building) to facilitate the renovation of the structure into 10-12 market-rate housing units. Ms. Kinka stated that the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, the funding agency for this project, agreed to scope-of-work modifications which would allow funding for demolition activities under the current grant. An informative discussion was held among those present regarding the project, the need for additional parking in the downtown area, and the use of existing parking facilities during weekend and evening hours for residential parking.

With regard to the William Penn Avenue Corridor Study, Ms. Kinka stated that staff continues to meet on a regular basis to discuss the plan and develop a timeline for final plan completion. She noted that she has begun investigating the availability of decennial census demographic data and its relevance to the plan.

Ms. Kinka stated that CCPC staff met with members of the Northern Cambria Borough planning commission to discuss how the development process flows within the County and the technical and advisory responsibilities of municipal and county organizations/authorities. She stated that meeting with the municipal planning commission members has spurred CCPC staff to consider developing a flow chart of the planning/regulatory process currently in effect in Cambria County and posting the schematic to the Commission's website.

Providing an update on the County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Ms. Kinka stated that municipal participation in development of the plan update has been very good, with only three municipalities not submitting the requested information to the local planning team. She noted that a public meeting to review the draft of the plan was held in early February.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A brief Executive Session was held to discuss the Executive Director vacancy and steps being undertaken to fill the position. In response to a question by Ms. Waksmunski, Ms. Bukowski stated that an employment ad had been placed in the Johnstown Tribune Democrat, the Altoona Mirror, and the American Planning Association (national and PA Chapter). Mr. Wolf stated that the following CPCC members expressed interest in serving on the employment selection committee: Eric Wolf; Deb Orner; Lonnie Batdorf; Russ Kiel; Diane Waksmunski; and Ron Rovanseck. Ms. Sosko and Ms. Kinka requested clarification on what is expected of staff during Mr. Imhoff's interim status and expressed a need for updated job descriptions and for cross-training among current staff members. Mr. Wolf commended the staff for their efforts in continuing seamless operations during this time of transition. Noting that cross-training with a small staff is often difficult, Mr. Wolf indicated that these initiatives can be considered once the Executive Director position is filled.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wolf stated that there was no "No Business" to discuss at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Kinka stated that the Commission received notification from Jacob Zerby, City of Johnstown Economic Development Specialist, of a proposed zoning amendment to the City's Zoning Map. Noting that the Commission's 45-day review/comment period has expired, Ms. Kinka stated that she felt the Commission members should be made aware of the City's intent to rezone a vacant lot along Franklin Street in the City's 8th Ward from R-1 (One-family Residential) to C-2 (Community Business District). A brief discussion was held regarding the proposed rezoning amendment and "spot zoning" implications. Noting that the CCPC's role is to provide advisory comments and recommendations regarding municipal zoning amendments, Mr. White stated that, as a member of the City Planning Commission, he will investigate the status of this proposed zoning amendment. There was a general consensus among those present that, at the present time, no comments be submitted to the City regarding the proposed zoning amendment.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Wolf. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rovanseck and passed unanimously.