

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
March 17, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, March 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
Debra Orner

ABSENT

Lonnie Batdorf
Rev. Sylvia King
Ron Rovansek

STAFF

Christopher Allison
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 Ms. Sosko and Mr. Imhoff that John DeBartola has submitted a Right-to-Know request relative to Johnstown and Vision 2025 information. The Chairman noted that the Commission will invoke a 30-day time extension to respond to the RTK request and the Commission's solicitor will be contacted to review and provide legal guidance on Mr. DeBartola's request. At this time, a brief discussion was held concerning the costs incurred with RTK requests and staff time involved with researching and providing the requested information.

Mr. Wolf provided an update on CCPC membership positions. He stated that Rev. Sylvia King submitted a letter of resignation to the County Commissioners on February 15, 2022, citing personal time constraints as her reason for resigning from the Commission. The Chair also noted that he and Danea Koss have been reappointed to the Commission board for four-year terms; however, Lonnie Batdorf was not reappointed to the Commission. Mr. Allison stated that earlier today Commissioner Chernisky informed him that Lisa Mays has been appointed to the Commission to fill the vacant Planning Region 3 position and Melissa Komar has been appointed to fill the unexpired term of Rev. King (Planning Region 1). Mr. Wolf stated that he will draft letters of appreciation to Rev. King and Mr. Batdorf for their dedicated participation on the CCPC Board of Directors.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Kiel, the minutes of the February 17, 2022 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The March 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 March Treasurer's Report, including expenses submitted for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS

Transportation Planning

Reporting on various work activities being undertaken through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Mr. Allison stated that he assisted CamTran in the preparation of the Public Transit Capacity Report, continued dialogue with municipalities to determine local bridge replacement/rehabilitation project priorities for the 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and coordinated with PennDOT staff in developing the FY 2022-2024 UPWP.

Mr. Allison stated that he reviewed Multimodal Transportation Fund applications submitted by three municipalities in Cambria County. He commented that all three projects, a sidewalk enhancement project in Lilly Borough, a road relocation project in Summerhill Township, and phase 5 of sidewalk improvements in Portage Borough, were viable projects and were recommended for funding consideration. Mr. Kiel noted that the previous sidewalk improvements in Portage Borough have greatly improved the borough's streetscape and, if funded, phase 5 of the project will continue sidewalk improvements from the railroad tunnel to Route 53.

Noting that he had attended a plans display meeting for the Walter Avenue rehabilitation project in Geistown Borough, Mr. Allison stated that the project is being funded through the Appalachian Regional Commission and will be completed in 2022.

The Transportation Planner provided the following update on the Red Mill Bridge: Existing structure has been disassembled and shipped to the State of Indiana for storage and possible reuse; CCPC staff continues coordination activities with the County and Keller Engineers on replacement of the structure.

Community Development

Ms. Sosko stated that in addition to review of subdivisions in Blacklick, Washington, and Upper Yoder Townships, she has provided additional advisory comments to the Stonycreek Township Supervisors and Solicitor regarding a non-residential development plan along Bedford Street. Ms. Sosko explained that the development plan involves the merging of four lots (2 residential and 2 commercial) for the construction of a new Dollar General store. She stated that upon the advisory comments of the Community Development Planner, the Township has initiated the process to rezone the two residential lots to commercial parcels.

Updating the members on the William Penn Avenue/Prospect Plan, Ms. Sosko stated that she contacted staff at CamTran and McIlwain Bus Company to discuss three bus accidents along the corridor. She noted that the discussions provided information regarding various transportation challenges along the corridor that will be considered as plan development continues.

Ms. Sosko reported that, in cooperation with the County GIS department, staff created a browser-based form that will be used to collect data for the Stackhouse Park trails and amenities mapping project. She stated that she has met with Stackhouse Park board members and individuals familiar with the park to explain how to enter data into the mobile app form. Ms. Sosko noted that the mobile app can also be used to assist with mapping of other recreational trails throughout the County.

Ms. Sosko reported that she coordinated a meeting with representatives of Portage Borough, Portage Township, and Cassandra Borough to discuss the Portage Area Regional Comprehensive Plan initiative. She noted that a representative from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development was also in attendance and provided a very informative presentation focusing on the benefits of regional planning, grant opportunities, and shared services/municipal manager. Noting that representatives from Cresson Township, Cresson Borough, Lilly Borough, and Washington Township had been invited but did not attend the meeting, Ms. Sosko indicated that these surrounding municipalities will again be contacted to encourage their participation in this regional planning initiative.

Senior Planning

Ms. Kinka reported that work is progressing on the Park/Penn Highlands Building pilot housing project in downtown Johnstown. She noted that she has scheduled a meeting with the developer and the County Redevelopment Authority to discuss funding opportunities to support construction activities of the project.

The Senior Planner apprised the members of a virtual seminar sponsored by the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies in which she participated. Ms. Kinka stated that the seminar, which included local economic and community development stakeholders and representatives from the Georgetown University Steers Advisory Group for the Center for Global Real Estate, discussed available student assistance that could benefit Johnstown and surrounding communities. She explained that discussion focused on how the area could benefit from a student-led consulting clinic for graduate and undergraduate students who are seeking experiential learning opportunities and the possibility of such a group becoming involved in the development of additional housing proformas for existing buildings in downtown Johnstown.

Ms. Kinka commented that a public meeting had been held for review of the draft County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Noting that 62 of the 63 municipalities in the County submitted the requested documentation for the plan, Ms. Kinka explained that participating municipalities can adopt the county plan as their own.

Noting that she participated in the Portage Area regional planning meeting, Ms. Kinka stated that she is looking forward to working with the Community Development Planner on this endeavor. She commented that the citizens/public officials who attended the meeting are enthusiastic and view planning and implementation of land use regulations as incentives in attracting development. Ms. Kinka touted the Alleghenies Ahead multi-county comprehensive plan as a model document which reflects collaboration among participating entities yet provides the flexibility for development/retainage of municipal goals and priorities.

OLD BUSINESS

At this time a brief discussion was held concerning a pedestrian bridge in Northern Cambria Borough. It was noted that the structure has been abandoned and in a very deteriorated condition. Staff indicated that, if requested by the borough, further dialogue regarding this structure can be entertained.

The members present agreed to table further discussion on a proposed amendment to the City of Johnstown zoning map (as previously discussed at the February 17th CCPC meeting).

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Wolf stated that the 2020-2021 CCPC Audit had been completed by BarnesSaly Company and was provided to Commission members prior to this meeting. He commented that there were no significant audit findings. On a motion by Mr. Kiel, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski, the 2020-2021 CCPC Audit was approved. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Mr. Wolf stated that an Executive Session would be held at this time to discuss personnel matters. He noted that no further business would be discussed and the regular meeting would be adjourned upon immediately after the Executive Session.