

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
February 20, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 10 a.m., at the Young People's Community Center, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Vice-Chair, Dr. Koren, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Charles Koren
Paul Kundrod
Debra Orner
Diane Waksmunski
Shawn Veneskey
Ron Rovansek (via telephone)

ABSENT

Melissa Komar
Scott Eberhart
Danea Koss

STAFF

Mark Lazzari
Colleen Bukowski
Shanna Sosko
Jacob Zerby

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered at this meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Kundrod, seconded by Mr. Veneskey, the January 16, 2025 meeting minutes were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The February Treasurer's Report was read by the Executive Director and reviewed by those present. Mr. Lazzari reported the February 1, 2025 balances for the Commission's regular checking account as \$155,018.42 and the Money Market Account as \$25,513.10. He also noted that an invoice submitted by Quantum Catalyst, LLC regarding the CFA-funded Downtown Market Rate Housing Project was listed as an expense to be approved for payment. There being no questions or comments on the report, Mr. Veneskey made a motion that the February Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kundrod and passed unanimously.

BarnesSaly Proposal for Auditing Services

Mr. Lazzari stated that the proposal submitted by BarnesSaly for continued audit services to the CCPC for the years ending June 30, 2024; June 30, 2025, and June 30, 2026 had been provided to each member and discussed at

the January CCPC meeting. He further indicated that a clarification on a particular statement in the proposal had been received from the accounting firm and provided via e-mail to all Commission members. There being no additional discussion on this issue, approval of the BarnesSaly, LLC three-year auditing proposal was unanimously approved after a motion by Ms. Orner, seconded by Dr. Koren.

STATUS REPORTS AND PROJECT UPDATES

Commenting on increased collaboration and partnerships with various agencies, Mr. Lazzari informed the members that he has recently agreed to participate on the following committees: County's Solid Waste Management Authority Advisory Committee whose efforts are focusing on the 10-year update of the County's Solid Waste Management Plan and the Central Allegheny Highlands ATV Study steering committee, a regional effort focused on increasing recreational opportunities in the four-county region. Mr. Lazzari noted that the Community Development Planner continues to participate on the Southmont Active Transportation Plan committee and Ms. Sosko further explained that in an effort to assist the committee's current effort to develop a Shade Tree Inventory, Commission staff is assisting in developing a GIS map which will identify the location of existing street trees and can be updated as aging trees are replaced along borough streets.

Mr. Lazzari stated that the Commission has been requested to become a member of the Cambria County Health and Welfare Council. In response to several questions from Commission members, Mr. Lazzari explained that the organization focuses on adult and youth social and behavioral health services across the County. He stated that Commission staff can partner with the Council in strengthening general community well-being and access to services throughout the County. Dr. Koren requested additional information on the mission and services provided by the Council.

The Executive Director provided a brief update on the following: Choice Neighborhoods Project - subsequent to the recent field tour with HUD representatives, Commission staff will participate in public engagement activities in March; Downtown Market Rate Housing Project - consultant has submitted invoices for the preparation of an energy audit, drafting, and design services associated with the redevelopment of the Penn Highlands Building.

Apprising those present of the status of the 2025-2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Mr. Zerby stated that review comments received by federal and state planning partners have been addressed and the program document has been approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). He noted that activities to be undertaken during the first year of the program will be presented at an upcoming CCPC meeting. In response to Dr. Koren's inquiry whether funding through this program will be affected pursuant to the initiatives of the current federal administration, Mr. Zerby stated that according to PennDOT planning partners, funding for the two-year program is expected to remain as appropriated. Mr. Zerby noted that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has extended the time line for its involvement in the National Electric Vehicles Infrastructure (NEVI) program.

Mr. Zerby reported that final invoicing under the 2023-2024 UPWP for the CamTran Transit Center Feasibility Study has been submitted. He

stated that he has requested copies of the final study to be kept on file and to be submitted to federal/state planning partners.

In response to a question from Dr. Koren regarding the transportation modes included in the Draft National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFW), Mr. Zerby explained that Routes 56 and 219, as well as the Johnstown Airport, were excluded because the total tonnage of freight required to be included in the system was not met by these infrastructures. Mr. Zerby explained that CCPC comments to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation will request that Route 56, U.S. Route 219, and the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport be included in the National Multimodal Freight Network. He stated that freight connectivity and economic growth, the key role of the airport in the region's air cargo and logistics operations, and location of key defense contractors in the region will be cited as rationale for including these transportation assets in the NMFW.

A discussion was held concerning the Cambria County Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Program, with Commissioner Chernisky explaining the use of drone technology in coordination with emergency services and search and rescue operations. Mr. Zerby explained that because drone technology may also be applicable to various transportation-related activities, i.e., bridge inspections and HPMS data collection, Commission staff is seeking funding through the UPWP to train/license CCPC staff in this technology. He indicated that PennDOT staff is very receptive to this endeavor and will assist in securing the necessary funding approval.

Ms. Sosko reported that staff has been meeting with municipal representatives regarding the West Hills Regional Comprehensive Plan. She stated that current efforts are focusing on refining the scope of the plan, defining consultant services, and determining Commission staff responsibilities/ assistance. She indicated that the next step in the planning process will be to finalize funding sources and secure a consultant to prepare the plan.

Ms. Sosko stated that staff has been meeting monthly with members of the West Hills Regional Fire Department to facilitate the formation of the West Hills Regional Fire Commission, which will be tasked with managing the business operations of the regional fire department. She noted that the consultant has prepared a draft document which will guide the formation of the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

County Bridge Engineer - CCPC staff is assisting the County Commissioners in their efforts to select a County Bridge Engineer.

Cambria County Municipal Infrastructure Assistance Program - CCPC staff is assisting the County Commissioners in formulating a ranking system to be used to allocate liquid fuels funding to municipal projects.

Planning Commission Newsletter - CCPC staff is undertaking preparation of a quarterly newsletter which will be distributed to each municipality in the County and other interested organizations. The newsletter will provide CCPC outreach and contact information and will present various topics of interest such as grant opportunities; active transportation projects; municipal planning and ordinances; status of ongoing projects, etc.

Employee Manual Updates - As time permits, the CCPC Employee Manual will be updated to accurately reflect current CCPC policies, i.e., recently approved employee/retiree health benefits

County Comprehensive Plan and Greenways Plan Updates - Executive Director is participating in discussions regarding an update to the six-county *Alleghenies Ahead* Comprehensive Plan as well as an update to the Southern Alleghenies Greenway and Open Space Network Plan. Discussions to date have included potential funding sources, timelines, and a scope of work for each plan.

Statement of Financial Interest - As appointed public officials, Commission members were requested to complete a "Statement of Financial Interest," as required by the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (State Ethics Law). Ms. Bukowski noted that the Statement must be completed and returned to the CCPC office by May 1, 2025.

With no additional business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Ms. Orner, seconded by Mr. Kundrod. Motion passed unanimously.