

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
September 18, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 12 noon, at the Young People's Community Center, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Chairwoman, Melissa Komar, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Melissa Komar
Charles Koren
Danea Koss
Paul Kundrod
Shawn Veneskey
Diane Waksmunski

ABSENT

Scott Eberhart
Debra Orner
Ron Rovansek

STAFF

Mark Lazzari
Colleen Bukowski
Shanna Sosko
Jacob Zerby

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky
Commissioner Keith Rager
Jeff Raykes, Stuart Group Consulting LLC

There being no changes to the agenda, Ms. Komar called for continuation of the meeting as per posted agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered at this meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. Koren, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski, the August 21, 2025 meeting minutes were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The September Treasurer's Report was read by the Executive Director and reviewed by those present. Mr. Lazzari reported the September 1, 2025 balance for the Commission's regular checking account as \$136,961.22 and the Money Market Account balance as of September 1, 2025 as \$25,535.34. The Executive Director noted that all expenses listed for payment approval were ordinary operational expenses, i.e., salaries, taxes, benefit and operations expenses. There being no additional comments or questions on the report, Mr. Kundrod made a motion that the September Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Koss and passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS AND PROJECT UPDATES

Mr. Lazzari briefly commented on staff collaboration with the County GIS department and the County Redevelopment Authority, staff attendance at the County Health and Human Services Summit, and participation in the upcoming Discover Downtown Johnstown's annual scarecrow contest. Dr. Koren inquired if the Commission will be involved in a regional police feasibility study being considered by Ebensburg Borough. Mr. Lazzari stated that Commission staff is available to provide technical assistance and staff expertise to any municipality upon request. He noted that a major objective of the preparation and dissemination of the CCPC newsletter and annual report is to educate municipal officials of the types of planning assistance that Commission staff can provide, i.e., identification of planning goals and objectives, ordinance development, public outreach, intermunicipal cooperation strategies, etc.

Commission staff provided updates on the following initiatives:

- West Hills Regional Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Sosko apprised the members that initial work on the plan has focused on community outreach. She commented that the consultant is developing an on-line survey to capture community priorities and visions for the future. Ms. Sosko also noted that students involved in the Westmont High School Community Service Club have been invited to participate in the planning process to garner an appreciation of how young people view the community in which they live and what they envision for the area in years to come. Ms. Sosko stated that a field tour of the West Hills area is scheduled for September 22nd with Stuart Group team members, Commission staff, and municipal representatives invited to attend. She explained that in addition to fostering inter-municipal relationships, the tour will assist in identifying locations/facilities that each municipality wishes to showcase as well as those that may need improvement.

Dr. Koren commented that student involvement in any type of planning project provides another facet of input, keeps young people engaged in the community, promotes a sense of belonging, and fosters future community involvement.

- JHA Choice Neighborhoods Project

Ms. Sosko stated that CCPC staff continues to be heavily involved on the project team for this initiative. She indicated that potential Early Action projects have been suggested and are currently being evaluated for implementation feasibility and relevance to the community.

- Unified Planning Work Program Budget Amendment

Mr. Zerby explained that since preparation of the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan is being funded through the CCPC's 2025-2027 Unified Planning Work Program and contracted through the state's open-ended agreement with Michael Baker

and Associates, an amendment to the 2025-2027 Unified Planning Work Program budget was necessary. He explained that the overall budget for the two-year program was reduced by \$77,450 to reflect direct payment in this amount from PennDOT to the consultant. Noting that the Commission's federal and state planning partners agree with the budget revisions, Mr. Zerby reported that the amended budget will be presented to the MPO for official approval.

- Cambria County Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Program

Ms. Sosko reported that Commission staff recently assisted Cambria County Conservation District staff in operating a drone over agricultural areas to monitor the status of barn construction. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Waksmunski, Ms. Sosko stated that Commission staff time for this project was minimal and cooperation among members of the drone program team fosters communication and collaboration among several County departments/agencies.

At this time, Mr. Jeff Raykes, Managing Principal of Stuart Group LLC presented the Agreement for Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan for the West Hills Region for final signatures. Mr. Raykes proffered a brief biography of his planning background, expressed his enthusiasm for working with the five municipalities involved in the plan, and thanked CCPC staff for their partnership in this planning endeavor. Ms. Waksmunski requested Commission staff to keep the members abreast of upcoming meetings and if Commission member attendance at these meetings would be beneficial.

NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Lazzari stated that the County's selection committee is in the final stage of reviewing engineering firm applications and recommending a County Bridge Engineer to the County Commissioners for their consideration and designation.

Mr. Lazzari reported that representatives from the Hancock Group met with him and the Commission's Administrative Assistant to discuss retirement plan options. He stated that discussion focused on the pros and cons of the Commission's current 401k retirement plan vs. a Simple IRA. Mr. Lazzari stated that after speaking to staff members it appears that employees are pleased with the current 401k plan and action to change plans is not currently being considered.

Mr. Lazzari commented that in light of the state budget impasse, he and Ms. Bukowski will be reviewing anticipated income and expenditures to assure a consistent cash flow through the end of the year. Commissioner Chernisky interjected that the County Commissioners have contacted all area representatives to convey the serious financial impact that county and local governments are experiencing due to the delayed passage of the state budget. He suggested that the CCPC also contact state and federal representatives in this regard.

Mr. Lazzari apprised the members that during the month of October staff will be attending the State Planning Partners meeting in State College and the PA American Planning Association conference in Harrisburg. He explained that the 2-day Planning Partners meeting will afford staff the

opportunity to meet with PennDOT, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration planning partners to discuss current and future transportation initiatives and funding opportunities. Mr. Lazzari noted that he, Mr. Zerby and Ms. Sosko will be attending the 3-day APA conference in Harrisburg. He indicated that this annual conference provides an opportunity for staff to attend educational workshops and network with other planning agencies across the state.

A brief discussion regarding future 2025 CCPC meetings was held. It was noted that due to a scheduling conflict with the YPCC, the October CCPC meeting will be held at the Ebensburg Borough Council Room. Also discussed and approved by general consensus, the time for future monthly CCPC meetings will be 12 noon.

Noting that three Commission members' terms of office expire at the end of this year, Mr. Lazzari requested those members (Ms. Koss, Dr. Koren, and Mr. Veneskey) to contact him regarding their willingness and ability to continue serving on the CCPC Board of Directors. He stated that a recommendation for reappointment/replacement will be submitted to the County Commissioners in December.

OTHER BUSINESS

In response to an inquiry from Dr. Koren, Mr. Zerby reported that two priority local transportation projects on the statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are the Dellwood Street Bridge in Johnstown and Falcon Drive Bridge in Lower Yoder Township.

The following upcoming events were noted: Seat to Seat Bike Ride from Ebensburg to Indiana along the Ghost Town and Hoodlebug Trails; informational program on big data centers, AI and crypto being held at Mt. Aloysius College; and a seminar on Large Scale Solar Projects sponsored by the Westmoreland County Planning Commission.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Veneskey, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski. The motion passed unanimously.