

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
January 15, 2015

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 15, 2015, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Mr. Belz.

PRESENT

David L. Belz
Tim Whited
Russell Kiel
Lonnie Batdorf
Ronald Rovansek
Eric Wolf
Jim White

ABSENT

Toni Renee Anderson

STAFF

Ethan C. Imhoff
Christopher D. Allison
Shanna M. Murphy
Colleen A. Bukowski

GUESTS

Jim Bonini, Chief Clerk

A moment of silence was held in memory of Robert E. Fisher, Jr., who recently passed away. Mr. Fisher was a dedicated member of the Commission from January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2014.

Mr. Belz noted that Mr. James White was appointed to the Commission for a four-year term, commencing on January 1, 2015. Mr. White was welcomed to the Commission and brief introductions followed. Noting that there remains a vacancy on the CCPC board of directors from the southern planning region, Mr. Imhoff stated that the County Commissioners are considering the appointment of Mr. William Trevorrow to the Commission. Mr. Batdorf requested that Mr. Imhoff suggest Mr. Kurt Freidhoff as a possible candidate as well.

Mr. Jim Bonini, Chief Clerk of Cambria County, attending the meeting as a guest, was also welcomed. Mr. Bonini stated that as the County's Chief Clerk he felt it important to have a general understanding of the responsibilities and financial operations of all the County offices, commissions, and authorities. Thus, his attendance at today's meeting was to gain insight as to the general operations of the CCPC.

Mr. Belz noted that this meeting would be the Commission's annual reorganization meeting, with election of officers taking place at this time. Mr. Kiel made a motion that the current slate of officers be retained. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Whited seconded the motion. The following slate of officers was unanimously approved:

Chair - David L. Belz
Vice-Chair - Ronald Rovansek
Treasurer- Lonnie Batdorf
Secretary - Eric Wolf

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were presented at this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. Whited, the minutes of the December CCPC meeting were approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report was read by Mr. Imhoff and reviewed by those present. Mr. Kiel made a motion that the January Treasurer's Report and the bills listed for payment be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Batdorf and passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Imhoff stated that there was no significant correspondence to be read at this meeting.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

Mr. Imhoff stated that the contract with Gannett Fleming for the preparation of the County's Long Range Transportation Plan had been executed, enabling preliminary stages of the planning process to begin. He encouraged all interested Commission members to consider serving on the steering committee for this project.

Mr. Imhoff briefed those present on several meetings he had attended in December. He further explained that his meeting with the Executive Director of the Cambria County Economic Development Authority focused on current initiatives as well as possibilities for the economic development component of the long range transportation plan update. Mr. Imhoff noted that he recently attended a meeting regarding the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Southern Alleghenies region. He explained that, as a member of the steering committee for this initiative, he will provide input into the development of this plan.

Providing an update on the vacated SCI property in Cresson Township, Mr. Imhoff stated that the Township has been unsuccessful in its efforts to acquire the property. He explained that the Commonwealth intends to subdivide a ten-acre tract of the property which houses an operating juvenile detention facility from the 400+ acre property and to accept bids for the sale of the remaining acreage.

Updating those present on the implementation of the U.S. Route 219 Corridor Plan, Mr. Imhoff indicated that he had attended a meeting with PennDOT and Carrolltown municipal officials to discuss how the goals of the plan will be incorporated into the Department's proposed improvements along the corridor. He noted that PennDOT also hosted a meeting to discuss the design and development of a new Sheetz store which will be located along Route 219, across from the store's existing site in the borough.

Mr. Imhoff stated that as a result of meetings with Carrolltown Borough officials, he contacted a representative of Peoples Natural Gas Company (PNG) in an effort to facilitate discussions about the feasibility of expanding natural gas service to Carrolltown Borough. Based on his discussions with PNG, Mr. Imhoff explained that because the Public Utility Commission is interested in expanding access to natural gas to rural communities throughout the Commonwealth, PNG is investigating the possibility of providing this commodity to several municipalities in Cambria County, specifically Gallitzin Township and Gallitzin and Tunnelhill Boroughs. A discussion ensued regarding the long-term benefit of increased economic development and residential fuel savings vs. the consumer costs for necessary infrastructure and upgrading to natural gas appliances.

Mr. Imhoff reported that efforts to coordinate municipal interests and funding applications for development of a joint comprehensive plan for Westmont Borough and Upper Yoder Township are continuing. He noted that Southmont Borough has also recently expressed interest in participating in this planning initiative.

Transportation Planning

Mr. Allison stated that a stakeholders listing and a steering committee is currently being organized for the Long Range Transportation Plan update. He noted that a kick-off meeting for the project is anticipated in February.

Continuing with an initiative to update the functional classifications of several roadways in the county, Mr. Allison stated that he had met with the PennDOT District 9-0 staff to discuss adding portions of Route 271 to the National Highway System network. He noted that proposed functional class updates will be discussed at the upcoming JATS meeting and a more in-depth presentation of the updates will be conducted at the February CCPC meeting as well. Mr. Allison reminded those present that roadway classifications can affect what funding is applied to bridge and roadway improvements and how those improvement projects are prioritized.

Mr. Allison briefed the members of the various meetings he had attended in December. He explained that a public meeting for the Prospect Viaduct bridge rehabilitation project revealed that the project, which involves the replacement of expansion joints on the structure, is expected to take place during 2015. Mr. Allison noted that at stakeholders meetings of Revitalize Johnstown and Lift Johnstown, he discussed the upcoming long range transportation plan and encouraged both groups to participate in the public input phase of the plan development.

Providing an update on the coordination of the County's interchange lighting maintenance and repair, Mr. Allison indicated that he reviewed several invoices from Barclay Electric and forwarded them to the County Commissioners' office for payment. A discussion was held regarding the signage lighting in the vicinity of the Route 219/Elton Road interchange. Questions were raised regarding whether the lighting of the signs in this area was the responsibility of the municipality, the county, or PennDOT. Mr. Belz stated that it is his understanding that maintenance of the signage lighting is not the County's responsibility and Mr. Allison stated that he will investigate the matter further.

Community Development Planning

Reporting on the continuing efforts to locate and develop a park-and-ride lot in the vicinity of Route 22 in the Cresson/Gallitzin area, Ms. Murphy stated that she meet with the Tunnelhill Borough Council to discuss the project. She indicated that the Council members were very supportive of the project and offered plowing assistance should the lot be located near the Gallitzin interchange. Ms. Murphy noted that although the municipal officials of the affected communities are in favor of the project, commitment to sharing in the annual lighting costs continues to be a major obstacle.

Ms. Murphy reported the quality assurance and control on the Local Transportation Asset Inventory had been completed. She stated that in addition to this endeavor, field visits were conducted to eighteen HPMS segments throughout the county.

Ms. Murphy noted that the CCPC website has been updated with new photos and municipal website links. Staff also created a new sub-site for the Route 219 Improvement Project where monthly updates will be posted.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Imhoff indicated that there was no "Old Business" to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

In light of Robert Fisher's passing, Mr. Rovansek made a motion that a \$100 memorial donation be made to the East Conemaugh Borough Fire Company. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kiel and passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Whited, seconded by Mr. Rovansek. The motion passed unanimously.