

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission

March 16, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, March 16, 2017, at 12 noon, at the CCPC Offices, 401 Candlelight Drive, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

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

PRESENT

Ronald M. Rovansek
David L. Belz
James White
Lonnie Batdorf
Rev. Sylvia King
Diane Waksmunski

ABSENT

Toni Renee Anderson
Russell Kiel
Eric Wolf

STAFF

Ethan C. Imhoff
Christopher D. Allison
Katie Kinka
Colleen A. Bukowski

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were presented at this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Batdorf, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski, the minutes of the February 16, 2017 CCPC meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Imhoff reviewed the March Financial Statement, noting the accounts receivable and expenses paid and to be approved for payment. He explained that an expense for office chairs for all employees as well as a computer system for Ms. Kinka was for approval. For the benefit of the recently-appointed board members, Mr. Imhoff reviewed the CCPC's various funding sources. The March Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, was approved on a motion by Mr. Batdorf. The motion was seconded by Mr. Belz and passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Imhoff stated that he had received a request from IUP for the Commission to consider hosting a GIS intern. He indicated that he will keep the Commission members apprised of this internship position as additional information is provided.

Mr. Rovansek suggested that Rev. King and Ms. Waksmunski be provided with copies of the Commission's "Who We Are and What We Do" publication.

STATUS REPORTS

Mr. Imhoff noted that oral presentations of the monthly status reports would not be given at this meeting. He encouraged members with specific questions on the reports that were provided prior to the meeting to contact the appropriate staff member for further discussion or clarification.

OLD BUSINESS

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

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Imhoff reported that the 2016 Annual Report was prepared by staff and provided to all Commission members. He noted that the publication, which provides a synopsis the Commission's activities and projects undertaken during the past year, is a requirement of the Municipalities Planning Code.

Mr. Imhoff stated that feedback garnered through the housing and economic development discussions of the February CCPC meeting was imparted to the regional comprehensive plan consultant. Noting that according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 4,700 residential units in Cambria County are vacant and likely abandoned, Mr. Imhoff stated that the discussion topics for today's meeting will focus on how these properties affect municipalities and the County as a whole, as well as possible ways to reduce this blight.

Discussion among CCPC members centered on the following:

- Abandonment and blight must be addressed to retain those who live here and to entice new people to the area
- Alleviating blight issues at the municipal level is a costly and lengthy process and involvement of the court system is needed to enable municipal governments to gain ownership and implement demolition activities
- Funding sources for blight elimination
 - County Land Bank (currently being considered by County Commissioners)
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for demolition activities
 - Recent implementation of Act 152 by Cambria County. This Act enables the Recorder of Deeds to collect a \$15 fee for each deed and mortgage recorded. Fees collected will be administered by the County Redevelopment Authority to demolish structures that are municipally or publicly owned.
 - Consideration of a 10% increase in County property taxes with a 10-year cap for the purpose of generating funds to be used exclusively to demolish blighted properties throughout the County
 - Consideration of development of a non-profit organization which could manage volunteers to complete demolition activities, i.e., "reverse Habitat for Humanity"

Rev. King indicated that she will contact Habitat for Humanity to gain insight as to if this organization might provide demolition services and/or guidance for structuring this type of volunteer activity.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski. Motion passed unanimously.