

MINUTES  
Cambria County Planning Commission

August 16, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, August 16, 2017, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, Mr. Wolf.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf  
Lonnie Batdorf  
David L. Belz  
Diane Waksmunski

ABSENT

Ronald M. Rovanseck  
Toni Renee Anderson  
Russell Kiel  
Rev. Sylvia King  
James White

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Etta Albright

Mr. Wolf noted that Etta Albright, a resident of the Cresson area, requested the opportunity to provide comment at today's meeting. In order to afford Ms. Albright ample opportunity to speak, Mr. Wolf suggested that the "Public Comment" portion of today's meeting be held after presentation of the Treasurer's Report and several of the staff status reports.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Belz, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski, the minutes of the June 15, 2017 CCPC meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The July-August Financial Statement was read by Mr. Imhoff and reviewed by those present. Mr. Imhoff noted that although the report notes receivable income in the amount of \$5,800 from the County's 2016 allocation to the Commission, he feels fairly confident that the amount will not be forthcoming from the County. In response to a question from Mr. Batdorf concerning how this will affect the CCPC annual audit, Mr. Imhoff stated that the auditor is aware of this reduction in the County's allocation. He explained that that over the past few years, the Commission's allocation has been reduced to cover postage expenses since the Commission uses the County's postage meter for outgoing mail. There being no other questions or comments on the report, Mr. Batdorf made a motion that the July-August Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Belz and passed unanimously.

## CORRESPONDENCE

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

## STATUS REPORTS

### Executive Director

Providing highlights of accomplishments and activities of the past two months, Mr. Imhoff stated that the Admiral Peary Highway Corridor Plan is complete and available as a text document, on CD, and as a PDF document on the Commission's website ([www.cambriaplanning.org](http://www.cambriaplanning.org)). He explained that the Study identifies safety problems and implementable solutions that will improve vehicular and pedestrian safety and provide connectivity of assets within the focus area. Mr. Imhoff noted that through extensive community outreach and participation, seven implementable priority projects which would enhance safety were identified. He briefly explained the following four projects identified in the plan: (1) Sidewalk connection between Mount Aloysius College and downtown Cresson; (2) Turning lanes along Admiral Peary Highway to facilitate entrance/exit from Mt. Aloysius College; (3) Trail connector between Veterans Park in Cresson Township and the Allegheny Portage National Historic Site; and (4) Highway improvements at the Admiral Peary Highway/PA State Route 53 intersection. Mr. Imhoff stated that coordination between CCPC staff and Mount Aloysius College officials to secure private and grant funding for the sidewalk project is currently underway. According to Mr. Imhoff, initial stages of development of the trail connector project are progressing in a positive manner. Trail development and maintenance issues are being coordinated among the Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority, Cresson Township, and the National Historic Site.

Mr. Imhoff reported that at a recent MPO meeting, Toby Fauver, PA DOT Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, provided an update on passenger rail service along the Pennsylvania line between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. Mr. Imhoff stated that Mr. Fauver's informational presentation indicated that although there may be local support for increased passenger rail service, this initiative is not currently a PennDOT priority due to the initial cost and the need for ongoing subsidies to sustain the service. Mr. Imhoff commented that Secretary Fauver noted that PennDOT is investigating the feasibility of establishing rapid commuter bus service between Johnstown and Pittsburgh in lieu of additional passenger train service. Mr. Allison noted that Mr. Fauver believes that usage of the bus service will assist in determining whether or not a market exists for train ridership. Several individuals in attendance at today's meeting felt that bus transportation is subject to traffic delays and will not be an accurate indicator of potential train ridership.

Updating the members on the status of county bridge replacements and repairs, Mr. Imhoff stated that Carney's Bridge in Washington Township is to be completed in September and construction on the Wildwood Bridge in Allegheny Township is expected to be completed by October. Mr. Imhoff noted that repairs to three other County-owned bridges are currently underway utilizing the additional \$5.00 vehicle registration fee enacted last year by the County Commissioners.

### Transportation

Mr. Allison reported that in addition to coordination activities involving the County Bridge replacement and repair program, staff has been

working on developing a funding strategy and work plan which will allow the County to apply to the State's new Road Maintenance and Preservation (Road MaP) Program. He explained that this program can provide up to \$2 million for County bridge and roadway projects, with qualifying matching funds. Mr. Allison noted that funding through the Road MaP Program can be applied to both County and municipal bridge repair and maintenance needs.

Noting that PennDOT is planning to resurface a section of Route 56 at the Washington Street intersection, Mr. Allison stated that the Johnstown Planning Commission has requested that accommodations for a pedestrian trail head be included as part of the project. He explained that a trail head would enhance coordination efforts between a Vision 2015 capture team and the County Conservation and Recreation Authority to restore and maintain existing walking trails along the Inclined Plane hillside.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

At this time, Commission Chair invited Etta Albright to address the Commission. Ms. Albright commented that Admiral Richard Peary's connection to the Cresson area is of major historical importance and could prove to be an economic boon to the area if properly recognized and marketed. Ms. Albright also commented on the Admiral Peary Highway Corridor Plan. Her main concern was that goals outlined in the Plan did not address community needs to abate the increased opioid addiction problems being faced by the Cresson community, i.e., the need for welcoming community space and amenities for young people. Strongly stating that plan goals should not focus on Mount Aloysius College, a private institution, Ms. Albright expressed concern about the maintenance and liability of the proposed sidewalk connecting the college campus with downtown Cresson. She felt that the maintenance and liability of the walkway would place undue hardship on the businesses and property owners located along the walkway route.

In response to Ms. Albright's comments and concerns, Mr. Imhoff explained that the Corridor Study was geared to transportation planning, focusing on safety improvements along the Admiral Peary corridor. He further explained that the pedestrian walkway was only one of the implementable goals identified in the corridor study and that other safety priorities, i.e., Route 53/Route 22 intersection improvements and pedestrian trails, were also discussed in the plan. Mr. Imhoff stated that the pedestrian walkway will be within PennDOT right-of-way and a maintenance plan will be in place before the project is contracted.

#### Community Development

Providing a brief update on community development activities undertaken during the past two months, Ms. Sosko reported that the 2017 Public Participation Plan has been completed and posted on the CCPC website. Noting that the plan format has been revamped, Ms. Sosko stated that the 2017 update includes comprehensive datasets and detailed mapping information.

Ms. Sosko stated that an inventory of bicycle and pedestrian trails in Cambria County is currently being prepared. She explained that the inventory will provide information as well as GIS mapping for several trails within the County and will be included in the final Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan initiative currently being developed by CCPC staff. Ms. Sosko distributed a map depicting bicycle/pedestrian/vehicular crash data that she had prepared for the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.

Ms. Sosko informed the members that the Commission will be hosting two upcoming LTAP classes. A workshop on the Americans with

Disabilities Act is scheduled for November 30, 2017 and a class on Traffic Sign Basics will be held on December 7, 2017.

#### Senior Planner

Ms. Kinka apprised the members of the status of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan planning initiative. She explained that members of the steering committee were tasked with identifying at least one location for new bicycle infrastructure and one location for new pedestrian infrastructure within the County. Information gleaned from steering committee input is currently being analyzed and categorized. Ms. Kinka stated that she continues to collect regional trail data and research best practices for developing comprehensive mapping of all bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the county.

Providing an update on the *Alleghenies Ahead* regional comprehensive plan, Ms. Kinka stated that at a recent meeting of the SAPDC, the consultant team stressed the importance of "technical" vs. "adaptive" work that is necessary if identified goals of the plan are to be achieved. She explained that recent projects within the region that exemplify adaptive work, which will provide a more sustainable future, include the Somerset fiber/broadband and the Quemahoning pipeline. Noting that he had attended the *Alleghenies Ahead* public meeting in Carrolltown, Mr. Wolf stated that the demographic and workforce information presented indicated that the area will experience a labor shortage within the next thirty years. He stated that the focus of today's planning efforts should center on enhancing amenities such as outdoor recreation, affordable housing, efficient transportation, etc., which will attract and encourage young people to relocate and/or remain in the area.

Ms. Kinka stated that she has been involved with the Central Park Square Marketing Team, a Vision 2015 capture team. She explained that efforts of this team have been focused on developing a planning process to organize existing businesses and property owners along Johnstown's Central Park Square to promote the area's existing resources and encourage new investors. The goal of this initiative is to identify the City's Central Park Square as its own destination and to create a formal network of self-advocacy and support for businesses located in the CBD.

Noting that Vision 2025 has identified an interest in a mini revitalization plan for the Old Conemaugh Borough section of the City of Johnstown, Ms. Kinka stated that a walking tour of the neighborhood has been scheduled for early September. She explained that the neighborhood's location as a gateway to the City via Route 271, as well as its proximity to the CBD, makes it a prime area for revitalization activities.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wolf stated that there was no "Old Business" to discuss at this meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Noting that there was no "New Business" to discuss at today's meeting, Mr. Wolf entertained a motion for adjournment. On a motion by Mr. Belz, seconded by Mr. Batdorf, the meeting was adjourned. Motion passed unanimously.