

MINUTES  
Cambria County Planning Commission  
November 19, 2020

To assure continued safety and well-being of members and staff, the regular monthly meeting of the CCPC was held via zoom video conference/teleconference on Thursday, November 19, 2020, at 12 noon. The meeting and teleconference line were publicly advertised pursuant to public notice. CCPC members and staff attended via video/teleconference.

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

PRESENT

Eric Wolf  
Russell Kiel  
Diane Waksmunski  
Ronald Rovansek  
Debra Orner  
James White

ABSENT

Rev. Sylvia King  
Lonnie Batdorf

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky  
Ed Cherian, Competitive Power Ventures

Commission Chair noted that an Executive Session had been held prior to this meeting to discuss personnel matters. All members present at this meeting were also in attendance during the Executive Session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public participated in the teleconference and no public comment was offered at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Waksmunski made a motion that the minutes of the October 15, 2020 CCPC meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kiel and passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Imhoff noted that this report, as well as all other pertinent information, was provided to the members prior to this meeting via e-mail. The November Financial Statement was read by Mr. Imhoff and reviewed by the Commission members. There being no questions or comments on the report, Mr. White made a motion that the Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kiel and passed unanimously.

In other financial matters, Mr. Kiel made a motion that the following salary adjustments discussed during the Executive Session be approved as a part of the 2021 budget: Ethan Imhoff annual salary be adjusted to \$78,730 and Shanna Sosko annual salary be adjusted to \$48,080; in addition, all staff, with the exception of Mr. Imhoff, are to be afforded a

3% cost-of-living increase, effective January 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and passed unanimously. Mr. Wolf noted that the following items were also discussed during the Executive Session: Establishment of salary ranges for CCPC positions be developed by the Executive Director; Legal opinions about health care benefit for existing retirees be obtained; Staff salary listing on the budget be all-inclusive rather than individually listed.

Mr. Imhoff stated that a draft 2021 budget was prepared and provided to each Commission member. He briefly reviewed the proposed budget, noting defined and expected expenses and anticipated revenue sources. Mr. Imhoff stated that with an updated salary schedule and confirmation on 2021 health care costs, the draft 2021 budget will be finalized and presented at the December meeting. Mr. Imhoff also noted that the 2019-2020 CCPC audit, prepared by BarnesSaly, LLC, has been completed and was distributed to each Commission member prior to this meeting. Noting that no deficiencies in internal control were identified by the audit, Mr. Wolf congratulated staff on a clean audit.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

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

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### Solar Power Presentation

At this time, Mr. Ed Cherian, Director of Renewable Energy of Competitive Power Ventures, provided a presentation on CPV's Maple Hill Solar Project Land Development Plan. He explained that the solar farm being proposed in Portage Township involves the installation of solar panel arrays, electrical inverters, chain link security fence and concrete pads with electrical equipment. Mr. Cherian discussed renewal energy projects developed by his firm; advancements in solar technology and positive attributes of solar power; state and local permitting requirements and status; and favorable economic impacts of the project. Through the use maps, CAD drawings, and photos of the site, Mr. Cherian presented specifics of the proposed energy project in Portage Township. He also noted that a drone visual of the site can be shared with the Commission at a later date should the members be interested.

Noting that he was quite impressed with the proposed project, Mr. Kiel inquired about Portage Township officials' reaction to the project. Mr. Cherian stated that Township officials have been very supportive, indicating that the project will not only provide a financial benefit to the township and local businesses, but will also be a favorable use of an area that has been extensively deep and surface mined and would otherwise be undevelopable land.

Mr. Imhoff thanked Mr. Cherian for his presentation and noted that the Maple Hill Solar Project will be an asset in diversifying the County's energy portfolio. Commission members expressed appreciation to Mr. Cherian as well and the meeting continued.

## STATUS REPORTS

### Executive Director

The Executive Director reported that he facilitated and attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Veterans Park/Allegheny Portage Railroad trail in Cresson Township. He noted that the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies was instrumental in funding the project, with labor having been provided by Cresson Township employees. Mr. Imhoff also indicated that he attended a site visit to discuss First Energy's planned relocation of a substation adjacent to the trail project. He apprised members that First Energy has committed to providing a temporary trail during construction activities and will restore the trail to original condition.

Mr. Imhoff reported that, at Russ Kiel's suggestion, he facilitated a meeting among local stakeholders and Greystone Estates developer, Jeff Long. He explained that the zoom meeting focused on Johnstown's market-rate housing strategy and the possibility of a senior housing development in the City's downtown district. Mr. Imhoff indicated that the meeting was positive and has opened the door to further discussion.

Regarding the CCPC application to Cambria County for reimbursement of COVID-related expenses, Mr. Imhoff stated that he was recently notified that the Commission's application has been approved in the amount of \$4,002.96. He explained that the County's CARES Act funding will reimburse the Commission for expenses necessary to continue uninterrupted operations during the coronavirus pandemic, i.e, purchase of laptop computers/software/licensing; meeting notice advertising; zoom subscription; and safety supplies.

Mr. Imhoff noted that he has been invited to speak at the "State of Cambria County" event scheduled for December 15, 2020.

### Transportation Planner

Updating the members on the progress of the William Penn Avenue Corridor Plan, Mr. Allison stated that biweekly staff meetings are held to coordinate staff activities and continued development of the plan. He reported that current activities are focused on forming a steering committee and developing a public involvement/outreach strategy which can effectively garner local input in a safe, socially-distant environment. Mr. Allison noted that this will be a challenging task but staff has been discussing creative ways to gather citizens' comments and visions for the Prospect area in relation to the corridor plan.

Mr. Allison reported that discussions focusing on the FFY 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update have been initiated between Commission staff and PA DOT District 9-0 staff. He indicated that he has begun soliciting project requests from municipalities, as well as County priorities, for the update.

The Transportation Planner stated that although the Johnstown BUILD application was unsuccessful during the most recent funding round, it was considered in the highly-rated list. He indicated that he has begun coordinating with project stakeholders and pertinent transportation agencies to refine the Johnstown Junction application to incorporate feedback received by the Department of Transportation. An updated BUILD application will then be resubmitted during a future funding round.

## Community Development

Ms. Sosko reported that subdivision and land development plan submissions have been very steady during the past month. She explained that although she continues to work remotely, she has been able to complete reviews and provide advisory comments (if necessary) in a timely manner.

Providing an update on work efforts utilizing the County's Geographic Information System, Ms. Sosko stated that she has begun preliminary mapping for the William Penn Avenue corridor project. The mapping will include a general project location map, crash data, and bus route information. She noted that she also continues to develop a map depicting bicycle and pedestrian assets throughout the County. This work initiative will be included in the update of the Connecting Cambria Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Ms. Sosko stated that she and several other members of the Complete Count Census Committee were recently recognized by the County Commissioners for their efforts in raising awareness throughout the County of the importance of responding to the 2020 U.S. Census. She noted that the County's self-response rate was nearly 70%.

## Senior Planner

Ms. Kinka briefly apprised the members of on-going implementation activities pertaining to the market-rate housing strategy, *Elevate Johnstown*. She stated that discussions continue with the City of Johnstown and CZB to develop a virtual presentation targeted to local investors which would focus on existing development and fiscal opportunities in downtown Johnstown. She indicated that there seems to be an increased interest in downtown development with regard to housing, recreation, and other business ventures.

Noting her continuing involvement in creating a neighborhood-friendly landscape in downtown Johnstown, Ms. Kinka reported that she has offered technical support to City staff in the amendment of a citywide ordinance which currently prohibits leashed dogs from entering public parks, playgrounds, and green spaces. She stated that she also participated in a strategizing workshop centered on enhancing the local foods system in Johnstown, particularly access to fresh foods in areas where alternative modes of transport can be utilized.

Ms. Kinka reported that she continues to participate in Vision Together 2025 endeavors. She explained that in an effort to engage and recruit the next generation of future community leaders, a survey is being developed to garner information about how local governmental and non-profit organizations recruit individuals to serve in leadership capacities and what qualifications are expected of those individuals who serve. Ms. Kinka stated that to promote Vision's efforts in encouraging public art, she contacted a PennDOT environmental planner to discuss the feasibility of using the retaining wall along Route 56 near Point Stadium as a canvas for a pilot mural project.

In reference to Ms. Kinka's efforts in recruiting future community leaders, Commissioner Chernisky stated that the County Commissioners have made a concerted effort to create diverse membership on County boards and authorities. He explained that the Commissioners seriously consider appointees recommended by the specific organization and they also request a short biography from prospective candidates. Commissioner Chernisky also indicated that due to the diverse nature of the various

organizations and their respective meeting times, it is sometimes challenging to recruit individuals to serve in these various capacities.

Noting that her appointment to the CCPC is set to expire at the end of 2020, Ms. Diane Waksmunski affirmed her interest in being reappointed to the Commission for another four-year term.

#### OLD BUSINESS

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

#### NEW BUSINESS

Noting that since the Maple Hill Solar Farm presentation was the only agenda item listed under "New Business" and no further business had been brought to his attention, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting.