

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
February 18, 2021

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, February 18, 2021, 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
James White
Russell Kiel
Lonnie Batdorf
Diane Waksmunski
Debra Orner
Danea Koss

ABSENT

Rev. Sylvia King
Ron Rovansek

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Batdorf, seconded by Mr. Kiel, the minutes of the January 21, 2021 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The February Financial Statement was read by Mr. Imhoff and reviewed by the Commission members. Noting that the Commission had received \$4,000 in CARES Act Funding, Mr. Imhoff thanked Commissioner Chernisky for the Commissioners' efforts in securing and distributing the federal COVID-19 relief funding. Mr. Imhoff also noted that approximately \$5,000 allocated to the Commission through the County's 2020 liquid fuels funds will not be requested due to decreased level of staff involvement with County bridge projects. He stated that the North Spangler Bridge was the only County bridge project undertaken during 2020; however, increased bridge activity is anticipated for 2021. There being no questions or comments on the report, Mr. Batdorf made a motion that the Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and passed unanimously.

Mr. Imhoff reported that the audit of the financial statements of the CCPC for the year ended June 30, 2020 has fulfilled the three-year audit engagement letter between Barnes, Saly & Company, P.C. and the Planning Commission. He stated that a Request for Quotations for the next three fiscal year audits will be prepared and advertised to ensure timely completion of the current fiscal year audit.

CORRESPONDENCE

Indicating that there was no correspondence to be read at this meeting, Mr. Imhoff stated that PA State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interests forms will be provided to all Commission members and staff. He requested that, upon completion and prior to May 1, 2021, the statements be returned to the Commission.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

Apprising the members of recent Vision Together 2025 activities, Mr. Imhoff stated that Mike Tedesco has been hired as the first Vision President and CEO. Touting Mr. Tedesco's experience in planning, economic development, and fund-raising, Mr. Imhoff expressed optimism in future Vision 2025 goals and accomplishments under Mr. Tedesco's leadership.

Mr. Imhoff provided a brief update on the status of the Johnstown BUILD application, noting that more detailed information is to be presented by Mr. Allison. He stated Amtrak is planning a \$10 million investment in the Johnstown train station, which is good news considering that the facility is the centerpiece of the federal BUILD grant application. Noting that the PennDOT-funded engineering study of the structure is now complete, Mr. Imhoff explained that the report identifies specific deficiencies and investments needed to keep the station a viable landmark in the downtown landscape.

Mr. Imhoff reported that, at Commissioner Chernisky's suggestion, staff completed an update document for the Alleghenies Ahead/Cambria County Comprehensive Plan. He noted that Ms. Kinka took the lead on this initiative and commended her for preparing the update. Commenting that the file documents the high profile accomplishments of the past two years, Mr. Imhoff stated that the Comprehensive Plan laid the groundwork for impactful projects throughout the County and Southern Alleghenies region. In response to a question from Ms. Waksmunski, Mr. Imhoff stated that the update will be posted on the Commission's website as well as the Alleghenies Ahead website. Ms. Waksmunski suggested that it be added to the Commission's Facebook page as well.

Transportation Planning

Providing additional information on the Johnstown BUILD application, Mr. Allison stated that online meetings with the project team and local stakeholders to discuss potential improvements to the application have been continuing. He reported that to facilitate this initiative, Deputy Multimodal Secretary Granger has been contacted to discuss potential UPWP funding for an improvements study to the Johnstown Transit Center, another key element of the BUILD application. Mr. Allison indicated that a cost benefit analysis will also be an integral part of the application.

With regard to the William Penn Avenue corridor plan, Mr. Allison stated that responses to the community survey mailed to residents of the Prospect neighborhood will provide beneficial input for plan preparation. He also indicated that discussions with residents who have indicated an interest in serving on a local planning team will also be forthcoming. Mr. Allison noted that biweekly staff meetings are held to coordinate staff activities regarding the project.

Noting that the state and all MPOs are federally required to review and re-approve various performance measures on an annual basis, Mr. Allison reported that he reviewed 2021 performance measures and targets for safety planning, bridge and roadway condition, and travel reliability/congestion/air quality, and presented them at the January 27, 2021 MPO meeting. He stated that Cambria County is meeting these targets and the state is nearly meeting the targets as well. Mr. Allison noted that the MPO committee members voted to continue supporting the statewide targets for all of the performance measures.

Mr. Allison reported that two Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) applications were submitted from Cambria County for the 2021 MTF funding round. The applications were for sidewalk/streetscape improvements in Loretto Borough and in Portage Borough. Mr. Allison explained that after he reviewed the applications and presented them to the MPO, he prepared and submitted comments to PennDOT on behalf of the MPO, recommending both projects for funding. In response to a question by Mr. Kiel regarding the Portage Borough application, Mr. Allison stated that although the Portage application is considered a "highly recommended" project by PA DOT District 9-0, project funding decisions are made at the state level.

Community Development

Ms. Sosko reported that 26 responses to the William Penn corridor public outreach survey have been received to date. Noting that the purpose of the survey is to identify transportation and safety related issues along the corridor, Ms. Sosko briefly reviewed the survey questions which included primary mode of transportation; walking and cycling safety; sidewalk and pedestrian crosswalk accessibility/safety; lighting; traffic flow/speed limit; and mass transit safety/accessibility. She noted that, in addition to providing very attainable and implementable suggestions, several people have indicated that they are interested in serving on the planning team for the project.

Ms. Sosko noted that since LTAP classes have been virtual for the past year and there are no plans for in-person meetings in the foreseeable future, she would like to brainstorm ideas on how to encourage Cambria County municipal employees and officials to participate in the on-line sessions. She welcomed any suggestions from the members and staff.

Senior Planner

Briefing the members on efforts being made to implement the market-rate housing strategy, *Elevate Johnstown*, Ms. Kinka stated that discussions continue with the Choose Johnstown/Remote Johnstown marketing team as this initiative pertains to the community's available housing stock. She also reported that collaboration continues with the County and Johnstown Redevelopment Authorities, the Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce, interested investors, and potential developers to develop single family

detached homes and multi-family rental properties throughout the County, as well as the revitalization of structures in downtown Johnstown as new market-rate housing. With regard to efforts to facilitate a pilot housing initiative in downtown Johnstown, telephone discussions are planned with individuals who are knowledgeable in the technical aspects of real estate development and who can analyze available data and coordinate an implementable project with potential investors.

Apprising the members of her continued efforts for a pilot mural project in the Johnstown area, the Senior Planner stated that she participated in the January MPO meeting to deliver a summary of the project and to discuss ways with PennDOT officials on how to move forward while the PA DOT Central Office continues to deliberations on statewide mural program guidelines.

Ms. Kinka spoke briefly on the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan/Alleghenies Ahead Two-Year Implementation Update. She explained that the update includes a listing of action items implemented and goals attained under the priorities of Broadband & Cell Service; Business & Workforce Development; Recreational Assets & Natural Amenities; Housing & Blight; Transportation; and Collaboration & Coordination. All those present agreed that reflecting on the achievements of the past two years provides positive affirmation of the County's endeavors to promote and improve the quality of life for its residents.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wolf stated that there were no "Old Business" items on today's agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

With no "New Business" to discuss, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. Keil. Motion carried.