

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
April 15, 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, April 15, 2021, at 12 noon. The meeting and teleconference line were publicly advertised pursuant to public notice. CCPC members and staff attended via video/teleconference.

Mr. Wolf called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf
James White
Ron Rovansek
Debra Orner
Diane Waksmunski

ABSENT

Rev. Sylvia King
Danea Koss
Russ Kiel
Lonnie Batdorf

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. White, seconded by Ms. Orner, the minutes of the March 18, 2021 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The April Financial Statement was read by Mr. Imhoff and reviewed by the Commission members. There being no questions or comments on the report, Mr. Rovansek made a motion that the April Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Imhoff stated that there was no correspondence to be read at this meeting. He noted that an RFQ for the 2021-2023 CCPC audits had been advertised and the Commission is awaiting responses which are due May 31, 2021.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

Providing an abbreviated status report, the Executive Director commented that the update to the Cambria County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

has been completed and will be reviewed later during this meeting. Noting that he had prepared a draft letter to the City of Johnstown regarding proposed amendments to the City's zoning ordinance and map, Mr. Imhoff stated that CCPC review comments contained in the correspondence will be reviewed in detail under "New Business." Mr. Imhoff also commented that much of his time during the past month has been focused on coordination activities and discussion with pertinent stakeholders regarding the BUILD application, proposed changes at the federal level that may affect Cambria County's status as a metropolitan statistical area; priorities for transportation-related earmarks; and development consultant selection for the Johnstown Housing Strategy pilot project.

Mr. Imhoff stated that with the anticipated receipt of significant COVID relief funds, County officials will be meeting to discuss how these funds can be leveraged to implement priorities identified in the County Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Chernisky noted that although guidelines as to how the funds can be spent are still forthcoming, the money will be allocated to projects that will ultimately save the taxpayers' money, assist local municipalities, and boost the local economy.

Mr. Imhoff reported that CCPC staff continues to coordinate county bridge inspection and improvement activities with PA DOT and Keller Engineers. He apprised the members that Red Mill Bridge has been identified as structurally deficient and the structure is currently closed to vehicular traffic and is scheduled for replacement in 2022. He noted that temporary mitigation measures are being implemented to ensure safety at the site until bridge replacement is initiated.

Transportation Planning

Providing an update on development of the benefit-cost analysis (BCA) for the BUILD application, Mr. Allison reported that stakeholders have determined that the most cost-efficient option for this component of the application is to have the original BCA updated by the previous consultant. Mr. White questioned who will be paying the costs of the BCA update and what entities are involved in the BUILD application. Mr. Allison replied that stakeholders include the City of Johnstown, CamTran, Vision 2025, Johnstown Area Heritage Association, and Cambria County. He stated that although the CCPC funded the original BCA through its Unified Planning Work Program, as of yet no entity has agreed to accept financial responsibility for this initiative. Mr. Allison also commented that PA DOT was approached about funding the BCA update but declined.

Mr. Allison reported that he continues ongoing coordination activities with PennDOT in regard to transportation funding and performance-based planning efforts, improvements to the 2023 Transportation Program planning process, and upcoming MPO meetings. He noted that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for April 29th and will be held via teleconference.

The Transportation Planner noted that two county-owned bridges, Creslo and Van Ormer, are currently under construction and will be completed by Fall, 2021.

Community Development

Ms. Sosko reported that the comprehensive trail map contained in the Cambria County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan has been updated and can be accessed via the Commission's website, www.cambriaplanning.org. She explained that the mapping depicts off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails

throughout the County, highlighting those that were constructed after the original plan was published. Ms. Sosko stated that major public parks and large community parks located along an existing trail network and the Rock Run Recreational Area were integrated into the mapping as well.

Ms. Sosko stated that 52 responses to the William Penn Avenue corridor outreach survey have been received to date. She commended Rev. King for her assistance in distributing additional surveys and encouraging resident response. Noting that survey responses indicated a need for improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks and site distance issues along the corridor, Ms. Sosko stated that implementable strategies for mitigating these shortcomings will be included in the final study.

Senior Planning

Apprising the members of implementation activities regarding the market-rate housing strategy, Ms. Kinka stated that work efforts have focused on discussions with a potential development team and their technical assistance proposal. She noted that conversations with interested investors and local land owners interested in residential development have also been held.

Ms. Kinka reported that she continues to support endeavors to engage and recruit the next generation of future community leaders. In this regard, she noted her participation in interviewing applicants to the United Way Helping Children & Youth Succeed program; ranking/scoring 36 John P. Murtha Public Service Fellowship applicants; and developing a new podcast/videocast young adult forum sponsored by the YMCA and Esport Company. She explained that the Murtha Public Service Fellowship is focused on individuals interested in pursuing a career in public service. She further explained that the purpose of the YMCA/Esport forum is to capture the attention and uplift the voices of the younger generation in the community by showcasing programs/opportunities available to enhance the quality of life for younger adults in the Johnstown/Cambria County area.

OLD BUSINESS

Noting that an in-depth overview of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan update, *Connecting Cambria*, had been provided at the March CCPC meeting and that the final draft was posted to the CCPC's website for review by the members, Mr. Wolf inquired if there were any comments or questions on the document. There being none, he called for a motion to approve the plan. Mr. White made a motion that the 2020 update to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, *Connecting Cambria*, be adopted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Orner and passed unanimously. The Chairman commended the staff for their efforts in documenting the progress made in implementing bicycle and pedestrian initiatives throughout the county. In response a question by Mr. Wolf regarding the New Germany Road/Crestwood Estates/Ebensburg sidewalk initiative identified as a future project priority in the 2018 Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, Ms. Kinka stated that although no one has championed the project, the project has been recognized as an implementable project should renewed interest and/or funding become available.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Imhoff noted that the 2020 Annual Report has been prepared and is posted on the CCPC website. Noting that the report is a legislative requirement, he explained that the document highlights CCPC initiatives and accomplishments of the past year. Mr. Wolf noted that the 2020 Annual Report was included in the information packets provided to the members prior to this meeting.

Mr. Imhoff informed the members that Geistown Borough recently enacted a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Noting that the borough utilized the model SALDO prepared by the CCPC to develop an ordinance specific to Geistown, Mr. Imhoff congratulated borough officials for their forward-thinking planning efforts. Mr. Imhoff noted that CCPC staff is available to assist any municipality in developing a SALDO or similar planning endeavors.

Mr. Imhoff stated that as per the Municipal Planning Code, the Planning Commission is required to review municipal zoning ordinance amendments. He explained that in many cases, zoning amendments are relatively straightforward changes and Commission staff reviews the amendments in-house and provides comments/recommendations to the municipality. He stated that the Commission recently received a request to provide review comments on proposed ordinance and map amendments to the City of Johnstown Zoning Ordinance. Noting that a copy of the draft review letter prepared by CCPC staff was provided to Commission members prior to this meeting, Mr. Imhoff briefly reviewed the following comments contained in the letter:

- Zoning map amendment changing the zoning of a vacant lot from R-2 (Two Family Residential) to C-2 (Community Business District)
 - CCPC comment: Map amendment is consistent with intent and purpose of land use goals of the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan
- Amendment to the ordinance allowing electronic message board signs within residential districts as a special exception
 - CCPC comment: Potential impacts of electronic message board signs should be carefully considered; this type of signage is generally not compatible within a residential district
- Amendment to the ordinance stating that electronic message displays may not display any text, graphic, or image that would be considered to be profane, obscene, or creates a clear and present danger
 - CCPC comment: The words "profane" and "obscene" are difficult to define or defend; recommendation to change or eliminate this language because what is often considered profane/obscene is usually protected free speech
- Amendment to the ordinance stating that the City Building Code Official will enforce the zoning ordinance
 - CCPC comment: Under the PA Uniform Construction Code, zoning enforcement is not an authorized duty of a certified Building Code Official

- Amendment to the ordinance prohibiting non-commercial projected light displays
 - CCPC comment: Question as to why non-commercial Projected Light Displays are not allowed, especially when proposed for approval in residential districts; question as to how residential holiday themed projected light displays are regulated

A discussion on proposed amendments and the comments provided by CCPC staff was held. Mr. White stated that the City Planning Commission also reviewed the proposed zoning ordinance amendments and had similar comments and concerns as those brought forth by Mr. Imhoff. Those present commended City officials for updating the Zoning Ordinance but agreed that CCPC comments/recommendations as presented by Mr. Imhoff should be provided to City staff for their consideration before the zoning ordinance is presented to City Council for final approval.

OTHER BUSINESS

A brief discussion was held regarding the meeting format for upcoming CCPC meetings. There was a consensus among those present that the entire membership be polled as to their comfort level with returning to in-person meetings. Mr. Imhoff indicated that he will poll the members via e-mail and a decision will be made based on member responses.

There being no additional business to discuss, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting.