

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
May 20, 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, May 20, 2021, at 12 noon. The meeting and teleconference line were publicly advertised pursuant to public notice. CCPC members, staff, and guests attended via video/teleconference.

Mr. Wolf called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf
Rev. Sylvia King
Russ Kiel
Ron Rovanseck
Debra Orner
Diane Waksmunski

ABSENT

James White
Lonnie Batdorf
Danea Koss

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Mike Tedesco, President/CEO,
Vision Together 2025
Commissioner Thomas Chernisky

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Mr. Wolf suggested that the first agenda item under "New Business" be addressed at this time. After brief comments regarding education and employment experiences of recently-hired Vision Together 2025 President/CEO, Mr. Imhoff introduced Mr. Mike Tedesco. Mr. Tedesco expressed enthusiasm in his leadership role, noting that he is impressed with the consortium of civic leaders, business and non-profit stakeholders, and grass roots community individuals who have been instrumental in developing, organizing, and implementing numerous initiatives to improve the quality of life in the Johnstown region. Mr. Tedesco explained that his role as President/CEO is to facilitate connection and cooperation among capture teams, interested stakeholders, and community members at-large as they strive to achieve goals that will benefit the entire area. Noting that he is very eager to help transition Johnstown and the surrounding area into a vibrant 21st Century community, Mr. Tedesco invited comments from the CCPC members. Noting the importance of transparency in any organization, Ms. Orner invited Mr. Tedesco to speak at an upcoming women's luncheon being sponsored by the Greater Johnstown Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Orner espoused the importance of educating the public as to what has been accomplished since the formation of Vision 2025, what is currently being undertaken, and what the future holds for Vision Together 2025. Echoing Ms. Orner's comments, Reverend King invited Mr. Tedesco to a Juneteenth Celebration being sponsored by the NAACP. She noted that an informational table at the Central Park venue would be an excellent opportunity to educate and engage the public at a

grassroots level. Mr. Tedesco accepted the invitations and agreed that garnering input and encouraging participation of local residents is key to positive strategies for change.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Rovansek, seconded by Mr. Kiel, the minutes of the April 15, 2021 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Imhoff stated that he and the Commission members have been invited to attend a meeting with the County Commissioners on June 28th. Noting that a copy of the invitational e-mail was provided to all Commission members, Mr. Imhoff suggested that members planning on attending the meeting notify the CCPC office staff. Commissioner Chernisky commented that the meeting will provide an opportunity for the Commission staff/members to update the Commissioners on current activities and future planning priorities.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

Mr. Imhoff reported that he participated in conversations hosted by Vision Together 2025 wherein local stakeholders had the opportunity to offer input on individual organization priorities that will also provide a positive impact on transforming and revitalizing the Johnstown region as a whole. He stated that the community strategy sessions centered around building consensus on community initiatives/priorities so that earmark and American Rescue Act funding can be leveraged to get the best return on this unprecedented influx of funding. Commissioner Chernisky interjected that the County Commissioners are also holding discussions with County commissions/authorities/agencies to determine how best to utilize American Rescue Act funding at the County level. He noted that blight remediation and improvements to County-owned assets, as well as implementation of other initiatives identified in the County Comprehensive Plan, are priorities which have been identified thus far.

Transportation Planning

Mr. Allison apprised the members on the status of the RAISE (formerly BUILD) application, noting that Michael Baker International has been retained to complete the benefit-cost analysis. He also noted that Vision 2025 has agreed to fund the analysis preparation. Mr. Allison stated that improvements to the Johnstown Incline Plane have been identified and will be included in the application request. Stating that the City of Johnstown will be the formal grant applicant, the Transportation Planner indicated that members of City Council will be given the opportunity to review and approve the application at the June Council meeting.

With regard to the William Penn Avenue Corridor Study, Mr. Allison reported that Commission staff participated in a field inspection to view residents' concerns as noted on the public outreach survey and to identify a meeting location within the Prospect neighborhood where an all-day public forum can be held. He explained that an in-person meeting within the neighborhood would facilitate discussions among residents and CCPC staff to identify multi-modal transportation priorities and implementable projects. Offering to assist in locating/securing a meeting place, Rev. King stated that she will also assist CCPC staff in encouraging residents to participate in the public forum.

Mr. Allison reported that he coordinated a meeting of the Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in April. He informed the members that in addition to discussing Congressional earmark project requests, the MPO approved the Connecting Cambria 2.0 Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan and the 2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

Providing an update on the Red Mill Bridge, Mr. Allison stated that a recent state inspection revealed serious foundation issues which necessitated a recommendation that the structure be closed to pedestrian traffic, in addition to vehicular traffic (which has been prohibited since 2009). Mr. Allison stated that he facilitated and attended a meeting with the inspection engineer, County bridge engineer, PennDOT staff, and the County maintenance manager at the bridge site which resulted in the County maintenance department agreeing to install fencing and additional closure signage at the site. He also noted that various concerns from individuals living near the bridge site (school transportation, waterline placement) are also being addressed.

Community Development

Ms. Sosko reported she recently completed a map which depicts the yearly progress made in developing bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout Cambria County. Noting that the map will soon be posted to the Commission's website, Ms. Sosko stated that the map is a good visual resource for the general public to locate trails and track the progress Cambria County has made in expanding the existing trail network and developing new off-road trail assets. Ms. Waksmunski commended Ms. Sosko for her efforts on trail mapping and urged Commissioner Chernisky to encourage the public to utilize this very noteworthy on-line tool as he touts the recreational assets of Cambria County. Ms. Sosko stated that that in an effort to assist in developing future bicycle and pedestrian goals and priorities, she is investigating the feasibility of determining the percentage of people in Cambria County who live within walking distance of an established cycling/walking trail.

Ms. Sosko stated that she continues to promote the training and assistance available to municipalities through PA DOT's LTAP. She noted that a recent mailing to every municipality in the county included information on the types of assistance offered through the program and a technical information page focused on how to prevent pollution with sediment barriers.

Senior Planning

In the absence of Ms. Kinka, Mr. Imhoff reported that on behalf of the County Department of Emergency Services, Ms. Kinka has prepared an RFP for the County Hazard Mitigation Plan. In addition, she has prepared and submitted an application to the Community Foundation of the Alleghenies for funds to hire a development consultant to assist in the implementation of a pilot market-rate housing project in the City of Johnstown.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wolf noted that there was no "Old Business" to discuss on today's agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Stating that the responsibilities of the County Planning Commission is grounded in state law, specifically the Municipal Planning Code (MPC), Mr. Imhoff suggested that the CCPC By-laws be updated to reflect recent changes in the MPC. Mr. Imhoff explained that in addition to these updates, he would also recommend that language be modernized (Chair vs. Chairman) and the section pertaining to the structure of the CCPC meeting agenda be eliminated. Noting that copies of the current CCPC By-laws were provided to the Commission members, Mr. Imhoff encouraged members to peruse the document and provide him with any additional suggestions for updates prior to or at the next CCPC meeting. In response to a question by Ms. Waksmunski concerning a 2018 update to the By-laws, Mr. Imhoff stated that the consolidation of municipalities into three (vs. five) planning regions versus has facilitated a balanced geographic representation within the membership of the Commission. Mr. Imhoff noted that according to the By-laws, the County Commissioners must review and approve any amendments prior to adoption by the Commission. Commissioner Chernisky suggested that the County Solicitor and Chief Clerk also be given the opportunity to review and comment on proposed amendments to the document.

Noting that the June CCPC meeting will be held in-person at Kosta's Restaurant, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting.