

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
September 16, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, September 16, 2021, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Mr. White called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

James White
Lonnie Batdorf
Diane Waksmunski

ABSENT

Eric Wolf
Rev. Sylvia King
Russ Kiel
Danea Koss
Ron Rovansek
Debra Orner

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered at this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 19, 2021 meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Batdorf, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski. Motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Imhoff read the September Financial Statement, briefly reviewing revenue and expenditures for the past month. Noting the addition of the Market-Rate Housing Grant to the Account Receivable listing, Mr. Imhoff clarified that \$40,000 of the \$80,000 grant will be disbursed for consulting services and the balance will be available for property development. In response to a question by Mr. White concerning whether the Planning Commission is expected to receive a portion of the County's American Rescue Plan Act funding, Mr. Imhoff stated that although the Commission is not slated to directly receive any of these funds, this major influx of funds to the County will allow the Commissioners to re-apportion general funds to other worthwhile initiatives.

There being no questions or comments on the report, Mr. Batdorf made a motion that the September Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Waksmunski and passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Imhoff apprised the members of an Act 152 and Tax Sales Seminar which has been scheduled for September 29, 2021. He stated that the seminar has been organized to inform County residents, property owners, municipal officials, and pertinent authorities about the Act 152 demolition program and tax sales and will also provide an education experience for potential buyers of blighted properties that are listed for tax sale. Mr. Batdorf noted that the annual meeting of the Cambria County Building Codes Enforcement Agency would also be an excellent venue to disseminate this type of information because many borough/township officials will be in attendance. Mr. Imhoff commented that he will mention this suggestion to the Executive Director of the County Redevelopment Authority, one of the agencies hosting the seminar. In response to Mr. White's concern about the outcome of abandoned properties that are sold through judicial sales, Mr. Imhoff stated that the Cambria County Land Bank is now in operation and will be an effective tool in helping to eliminate/improve blighted properties throughout the County. At this time, Commissioner Chernisky expounded on the Act 152 and Tax Sales Seminar and the positive effects of eradicating blight within every municipality in the County.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

Updating those present on the Red Mill Bridge situation, Mr. Imhoff stated that the County is making every effort to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which ensures that consulting parties with an interest in the project be notified of project updates and given opportunity to provide comments so that any potentially negative impacts can be mitigated. He indicated that Keller Engineers is preparing documents that will be submitted to various individuals/contractors for preservation/removal of the structure. He stated that several entities (Cambria County Historical Society; Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority, Indiana County; and nearby property owners) have been contacted to determine interest in storing the structure after it is removed; however, none are willing to assist with this endeavor. The Executive Director noted that the Red Mill Bridge situation will continue to be a priority for the County Commissioners and CCPC staff.

Mr. Imhoff reported that Vision 2025 will soon be advertising/hiring a full-time staff member and administrative support staff, rather than retaining a consultant, for the many initiatives coordinated by Vision's current Executive Director. Mr. White inquired about whether the mission of Vision 2025 is project or information oriented. In response, Mr. Imhoff stated that since Vision 2025 has recently been established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity, the organization can be more project-oriented than it has in the past. He noted that Vision 2025 will serve as a public/private partnership fostering collaboration among municipal and County governments and private businesses/entities to improve the quality of life and promote growth and development throughout the County.

Mr. Imhoff reported that he continues to meet with the County, City of Johnstown, and Vision 2025 members to discuss best uses for the unprecedented American Rescue Plan funding coming into the region. He noted

that legal requirements of the legislation are important considerations in the spending process.

Transportation Planning

Mr. Allison briefly reported on staff involvement regarding several transportation initiatives. He noted that input from the William Penn Avenue Corridor Plan public meeting has been reviewed by staff and a stakeholder meeting to assess the public input and assist in determining the next steps of plan development will be scheduled. Mr. Allison reported that staff participated in HPMS quality assurance field inspections whereby PennDOT staff reviewed CCPC data for accuracy and provided guidance on proper HPMS data collection procedures. Noting that no major errors were found in CCPC data collection procedures or information reported, Mr. Allison stated that PennDOT input was valuable and will be utilized while performing upcoming HPMS field views. The Transportation Planner mentioned that the August meeting MPO was held both in-person and virtually. He indicated that the hybrid session was successful and will be considered for future MPO meetings.

Providing additional comments on the Red Mill Bridge in Blacklick Township, Mr. Allison stated that both PennDOT and the PA Department of Environmental Protection advised that an emergency environmental permit to safely remove the structure is applicable in this situation. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Batdorf regarding the cost of an emergency permit, staff stated that they will contact PA DEP for this information. Mr. Allison also noted that the County Solicitor is involved with any decision-making to ensure that all legal procedures are followed. He indicated that while parties involved are cognizant of the historic preservation process and will make every attempt to preserve the structure, they are also keenly aware of the importance of ensuring safety at the County-owned bridge.

Community Development

Providing an abbreviated Community Development status report in the absence of Ms. Sosko, Mr. Imhoff stated that the Commission received a request from members of the Stackhouse Park Board of Directors to develop a trail map of Stackhouse Park. He indicated that Ms. Sosko will manage this project, creating both a digital and paper map which will delineate trails and amenities throughout the park.

Senior Planning

Ms. Kinka reported that she has continued to coordinate preparation of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Explaining that preparation of the plan will be funded through a PEMA grant, Ms. Kinka stated that the County solicitor is currently reviewing the contract between the County and MCM Consulting Group, the firm that will prepare the plan. She stated that upon contract execution, a local planning committee will be formed to provide input and guidance during plan development. In response to Ms. Kinka's request for individuals to serve on the HMP planning committee, Mr. Batdorf agreed to serve as a member of the committee.

Ms. Kinka stated that with receipt of the CFA Market-Rate Housing Grant funds, implementation of the Johnstown housing strategy will soon be moving forward. She noted that collaboration continues among stakeholders,

building owners, investors, and the consultant partners as initiation of the pilot project comes to fruition.

Apprising those present of recent activity with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Vision Together team, Ms. Kinka noted that installation of the new mural in downtown Johnstown, adjacent to the Musical Park, is expected soon. She explained that the mural was designed by Greater Johnstown students and was painted by a professional artist.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Imhoff stated that pending review by the County Commissioners, proposed minor changes to the CCPC Bylaws will be discussed at the October CCPC meeting and official action on the amendments can be taken at that meeting as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Imhoff stated that due to the lengthy nature of today's meeting, discussion and review of the Transportation Revenue Options Commission (TROC) Report will take place at the October CCPC meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Batdorf, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski, the meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.