

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
October 21, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Wolf called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf
James White
Lonnie Batdorf
Rev. Sylvia King
Russ Kiel
Danea Koss

ABSENT

Diane Waksmunski
Ron Rovansek
Debra Orner

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky
Gerald Parisi

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered at this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 16, 2021 meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Batdorf, seconded by Mr. Kiel. Motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Imhoff read the November Financial Statement, noting revenue and expenditures for the past month. There being no questions or comments on the report, Mr. Batdorf made a motion that the November Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and passed unanimously.

Mr. Imhoff stated that a draft 2022 budget was prepared and provided to Commission members for their review. He noted that the draft included a consultant services expense in the amount of \$80,000, which is a pass-through expense covered by the CFA Johnstown Housing Pilot Project grant. He also stated that the budget included a proposed increase in the County's appropriation and liquid fuels allocation to the Commission. Mr. Imhoff explained that he felt that these increases are justified based on the level of staff involvement with a myriad of county and bridge related projects as well as the fact that the County appropriation to the Commission has remained the same since 2013 (\$70,000) and prior to that year the Commission had received a \$90,000 annual appropriation.

Mr. Imhoff stated that he will be meeting with the County Commissioners to discuss the proposed budget within the next week. There being no questions at this time on the 2022 draft budget, Mr. Imhoff encouraged the members to contact him with any comments or questions on the budget that may arise prior to his meeting with the Commissioners.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Wolf stated that there was no correspondence to discuss at this meeting.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

Mr. Imhoff apprised the members of recently-enacted federal legislation that will potentially have a very positive impact on tourism and investment opportunities in Cambria County. He explained that the passage of HB 2278, *An Act to Designate the September 11th National Memorial Trail Route*, provides a high profile for the entire trail and the collection of trails that comprise the route between Shanksville, New York, and Washington, DC. Noting that a portion of the trail route passes through Cambria County, Mr. Imhoff stated that he is confident that the legislation will bring increased exposure and credibility to our network of regional trails and will have a significant positive impact on the region.

Mr. Imhoff reported that he continues to participate in Vision Together 2025 meetings. He noted that recent priorities were evaluation of the organization's priority goals, staff hiring, and development of meetings with local stakeholders to strategize about the focus of American Rescue Plan funds.

Transportation Planning

Mr. Allison provided an update on staff involvement with several transportation initiatives. He stated that he participated in a meeting with PennDOT District 9-0 staff and Portage Township officials to discuss the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the Township-owned Jamestown Road bridge over the Norfolk Southern railway. He explained that Norfolk Southern and PA PUC representatives will be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the project, funding scenarios, and long-term maintenance of the structure. Mr. Allison reported that Commission staff also attended a meeting to discuss Westmont Borough's Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) application to PennDOT. The application will request funds to develop a bicycle/pedestrian link between the Westmont High School campus and Menoher Blvd. via Stanford Avenue. The Transportation Planner also commented that he provided technical assistance to aid the County Emergency Management Department's efforts in requesting funding from the PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) for transportation projects impacted by Hurricane Ida-related flooding.

Updating those present on the Red Mill Bridge situation, Mr. Allison stated that CCPC staff continues to coordinate with the County Commissioners, the PA State Historic Preservation Office, the Army Corps of Engineers and the PA Department of Environmental Protection to determine if an emergency permit for demolition of the superstructure will be granted. He explained that quotes for superstructure removal have been solicited and every effort is being taken to comply with the historic preservation process.

Both he and Mr. Imhoff commented that removal of the bridge will hopefully be completed by year's end.

Community Development

Ms. Sosko stated that staff coordinated and attended the accessibility workshop held at the Ms. Wheelchair Pennsylvania. She explained that, in addition to the contestants, representatives from the CCPC, PennDOT, CamTran, Richland Township, and area legislators attended the workshop to discuss avenues to improve wheelchair accessibility along local sidewalks and possible funding sources for the upgrades. Ms. Sosko stated that in an effort to raise accessibility awareness and the need for sidewalk upgrades, several individuals participated in traversing a "walk and wheel" route from Richland Towners to the Richland Town Center in Richland Township. Commissioner Chernisky commented that this event provided an effective forum to bring attention to the difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities and to encourage municipal officials to advocate for accessibility when upgrading or planning new community projects.

Ms. Sosko reported that staff attended a meeting with elected officials and representatives from Portage Township and Portage Borough regarding the possibility of adopting a regional comprehensive plan. She stated that she discussed the planning process of Alleghenies Ahead with the attendees, answered questions, and discussed possible next steps with regard to this initiative. Mr. Kiel noted that the Township and Borough currently share many services, i.e, ambulance, fire protection, etc.

Senior Planning

Referencing her involvement with the the Ms. Wheelchair Pennsylvania accessibility workshop, Ms. Kinka commented that by traversing the route that the 2021 Ms. Wheelchair Pennsylvania uses frequently, individuals were able to better understand the lived experience of persons with disabilities as well as anyone who does not have access to individual modes of transportation. She noted that infrastructure improvements are needed throughout the County to increase the safety of all pedestrians.

Ms. Kinka reported that the Vision Together 2025 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Capture Team mural has officially been installed at the children's music park location in downtown Johnstown. She noted that an official unveiling/ribbon-cutting is being scheduled and student artists who worked under the guidance of the artist-in-residence will be recognized at the ceremony.

The Senior Planner stated that the contract with MCM consulting for the County Hazard Mitigation Plan has recently been executed. She noted that meetings with the Local Planning Team and the County's municipalities will be scheduled and municipal officials will be requested to complete hazard/risk assessment forms to facilitate plan preparation.

OLD BUSINESS

Noting that the County Commissioners approved the revised By-Laws of the Cambria County Planning Commission on September 23, 2021, Mr. Imhoff entertained any questions or comments on the proposed minor changes to the document. There being no further comments or discussion on the By-Laws

amendments, Mr. White made a motion that the By-Laws be amended as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kiel and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Transportation Planner, Chris Allison, presented an overview of the Turnpike Revenue Options Commission (TROC) final report. Noting that the Commission was tasked with developing comprehensive funding recommendations for Pennsylvania's vast transportation network, Mr. Allison reviewed the Commission's findings with regard to funding gaps, funding efficiencies, and current/proposed revenue sources. Mr. Allison noted that the Commission developed a three-phase funding strategy over the course of 5+ years and implementation of any recommendations presented in the report will require legislative action.

OTHER BUSINESS

Former Community Development Planner, Gerald Parisi, commended the current CCPC staff for their efforts in continuing/promoting sound planning practices through the County. He commented that innovative planning at both the County and municipal level will foster economic and community development throughout the County.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.