

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
October 20, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, October 20, 2022, 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Chair, Eric Wolf, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf
Ron Rovansek
Russ Kiel
Melissa Komar
Danea Koss
Lisa Mays

ABSENT

James White
Debra Orner
Diane Waksmunski

STAFF

Christopher Allison
Colleen A. Bukowski
Katherine Kinka
Shanna Sosko

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented at this meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Keil, seconded by Mr. Rovansek, the minutes of the September 15, 2022 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Allison read the October Financial Statement, noting that a time extension was recently approved on the CFA Market-Rate Housing Grant. With no questions or comments present on the statement, Mr. Kiel made a motion that the Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rovansek and passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director/Transportation

Updating the members on the job search for a transportation planner, Mr. Allison stated that the position was advertised in the Johnstown Tribune Democrat and posted on monster.com. It was noted that several state and local planning partners are also experiencing difficulty in hiring qualified planning personnel. During an ensuing discussion, suggestions were made regarding the staff vacancy, e.g., contact individuals who have submitted applications for previous staff vacancies; consider retention of a transportation planning consultant on an interim basis.

Mr. Allison reported that the final draft of the William Penn Corridor Plan is nearing completion. He noted that Ms. Sosko and Ms. Kinka will discuss specific aspects of the plan during presentation of their status reports.

With regard to the Unified Planning Work Program, Mr. Allison stated that the 2021-2022 UPWP extension, as well as the 2022-2024 work program have been executed. Work on the 2022-2024 PennDOT contract will begin October 7, 2022. Mr. Allison noted that a meeting of the Cambria County MPO Technical and Coordinating Committees was held in late September and discussion at the meeting focused on the status of current transportation projects in the region.

Noting that he recently attended a ribbon cutting for an eight-mile extension of the Ghost Town Trail, Mr. Allison commended the Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority for their efforts in securing funding for the extension which follows the C & I railroad corridor from Belsano to Cardiff.

Mr. Allison reported that work is continuing on the Red Mill Bridge replacement project. He stated that applications for environmental permits necessary for construction activities are being prepared by Keller Engineers. Mr. Allison also explained that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers outlined mitigation measures which will be taken by the County to offset replacing the historic bridge with a new structure, i.e., marketing efforts and storage of the old structure for ten years.

Community Development Planning

Ms. Sosko apprised the members of a non-residential land development plan submitted for construction of a Dollar General Store in Blacklick Township. She noted that Dollar General stores have been constructed in several municipalities throughout the County within the past year.

Ms. Sosko stated that her work efforts on the William Penn Avenue Corridor Plan have focused on goals and objectives for corridor and neighborhood improvements as well as mapping to be included in the plan. Ms. Sosko and Ms. Kinka noted that residents of the Prospect neighborhood have expressed interest in collaborative efforts to improve blighted properties and promote recreational opportunities within the community. Ms. Komar indicated that the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies (CFA) may be a favorable financial resource in implementing recommendations of the plan.

Providing a brief update on the proposed Mainline Comprehensive Plan, Ms. Sosko commented that no further meetings have been scheduled and in order for this initiative to continue successfully, all municipalities that would be included in the plan must be engaged in the process. She noted that in order to qualify for funding through PA DCED's Municipal Assistance Program (MAP), municipalities must either share a contiguous border or belong to the same school district.

Ms. Sosko reported that under the current UPWP, Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) activities included field checks on selected highway segments throughout the county. She explained that any notable changes that have taken place since 2017 on these segments will be reported to PennDOT.

The meeting was recessed at 12:40 p.m. and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Senior Planning

Ms. Kinka briefed the members on the status of the pilot market-rate housing project in the City of Johnstown being funded through the CFA. She indicated that indoor demolition activities scheduled on the Penn Highlands Building have been delayed and completion of this work is anticipated within the next six months. Ms. Kinka also stated that completion of the project, along with planning, marketing, and financial guidance from the consulting firm of Warmington Oppenheim, must be completed by April of 2024.

Ms. Kinka stated that she completed a sewage facilities planning module for the St. Francis University Wastewater Treatment Plant Replacement Project. She explained that the Commission had completed a planning module for the project in 2021; however, due to minor changes in the plan, the engineer requested that the CCPC review the revised project.

The Senior Planner stated that, as a member of the Women's Help Center Board of Directors, she has been involved with coordination activities among the Cambria County Redevelopment Authority and other social service agencies to address homelessness issues in Cambria County. Ms. Kinka noted that the Women's Help Center is interested in expanding their shelter facility capacity and has begun seeking funding to assist in this endeavor.

Mr. Wolf commented on efforts being undertaken in the City of Altoona, Blair County, to construct single-family detached homes to address housing needs for low to moderate income individuals/families. Ms. Kinka noted that the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission is also focusing on regional housing needs for median income population groups and the impact of gentrification in the six-county region.

OLD BUSINESS

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

NEW BUSINESS

A discussion was held regarding a proposed update to the Commission's Fees Schedule for Plan Reviews, which was last updated in April of 2019. Ms. Sosko apprised the members that staff is recommending an addition to the CCPC's review policy regarding the resubmission of subdivision plans, land development plans, and sewage facilities planning modules that have been reviewed and signed by the CCPC. She explained that the proposed policy addition will clarify when and if a resubmission will be considered a new submission (i.e., major changes; time limitations; DEP required revisions to original submission) and subject to an additional review fee. Ms. Sosko noted that another proposed amendment to the Fee Schedule is formal posting that review fees will be waived for applications filed by a Cambria County municipality. Additional discussion ensued regarding a draft explanation of this process which will be posted to the CCPC website, along with the Review Fee Schedule, upon formal approval of the Commission. Mr. Allison noted that the proposed amendments to the schedule will be submitted to the Commission's solicitor for review and comment. Mr. Wolf suggested that Commission members review the proposed recommendations to

the Fee Schedule and contact staff with specific questions so that final discussion and formal action can be taken at the November CCPC meeting.

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