

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
February 16, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Eric Wolf, Chair, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Eric Wolf
Debra Orner
Ron Rovansek
Melissa Komar
Diane Waksmunski
Mark Bucci

ABSENT

Russ Kiel
Danea Koss
Lisa Mays

STAFF

Colleen A. Bukowski
Katherine Kinka
Shanna Sosko
Jacob Zerby

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting for a brief Executive Session to discuss reorganization. The regular meeting was reconvened at 12:15 p.m.

REORGANIZATION

Mr. Wolf stated that Ms. Komar, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented a slate of nominees for consideration for the upcoming year. Mr. Rovansek made a motion that the slate of nominees be approved and the following members be elected for 2023:

Chair - Melissa Komar
Vice-Chair - Diane Waksmunski
Treasurer - Russell Kiel
Secretary - Danaea Koss

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bucci and passed unanimously.

At this time, Mr. Eric Wolf notified the members and staff that he had submitted his resignation from the Commission to Commissioner Chernisky, effective today, February 16, 2023. Members and staff expressed appreciation to Mr. Wolf for his dedication and leadership over the past ten years, noting his input during the pandemic and amid staff changes was exemplary and most appreciated. Commissioner Chernisky also expressed his appreciation to Mr. Wolf for his willingness to serve on the Commission and assist in guiding current development and future growth of Cambria County.

Newly-elected Chair, Ms. Komar, continued to chair the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Rovansek, seconded by Ms. Orner, the minutes of the January 19, 2023 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Executive Director, the February Financial Statement was read by Ms. Bukowski and reviewed by those present. With no questions or comments on the report, Mr. Rovansek made a motion that the February Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Waksmunski and passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS

Transportation

Mr. Zerby noted that in an effort to acclimate himself to his duties and responsibilities as Transportation Planner, he has reviewed the 2015-2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and the current Unified Planning Work Program to familiarize himself with the CCPC's role in these transportation initiatives. He also noted that he has completed online training relative to federal transportation grant awards as well as guidelines regarding the state sunshine law. Mr. Zerby indicated that although Mr. Allison continues to be the Commission's primary liaison regarding the Red Mill Bridge replacement project, the Director has apprised him of the project and he is anxious to become more involved going forward. Providing an update on the Red Mill Bridge project, Mr. Zerby explained that work is moving ahead in a timely manner, with right-of-way easements and property acquisition being the current focus. The Transportation Planner commented on his involvement with finalization of the William Penn Avenue Corridor Study, specifically an upcoming stakeholder meeting and the concept of a pollinator garden in the City's Prospect neighborhood.

Community Development

Ms. Sosko reported that in addition to ongoing review of municipal subdivision and land development plans, during the past month she provided technical assistance to a Westmont Borough resident regarding the process for applying for a zoning variance. Ms. Sosko also apprised the members that in December, 2022 she reviewed an amendment to the City of Johnstown's zoning ordinance with regard to parcels located in the 8th Ward owned by Mom's House. She explained that the proposed amendments, which proposed rezoning three parcels from C-1 (Neighborhood Shopping District) to R-1 (One-Family Residence), were consistent with the intent and purpose of land use goals contained within the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Sosko noted that the City was provided with the CCPC's advisory review comments.

Ms. Sosko commented that she continues to coordinate with other staff regarding finalization of the William Penn Avenue Corridor Plan and discussion of possible future projects in the Prospect neighborhood utilizing current available funding through the Community Foundation of the Alleghenies (CFA).

Ms. Sosko reported that staff continued discussions with representatives from Westmont Borough Council regarding possible development of a regional comprehensive plan. She stated that Commission members will be kept abreast of this initiative as it unfolds.

The Community Development Planner stated that updates to the County's interactive map of trail progress have been made utilizing input from the County Conservation and Recreation Authority, Laurel Highlands Historical Village, and Friends of the Incline Trails. A brief discussion was held regarding the definition of a trail and it was generally agreed that trails depicted on the interactive map must be safe and accessible to the public and owned and maintained by a public entity.

Senior Planning

Ms. Kinka informed the members that she will be leaving the Commission, effective March 1, 2023. She thanked the members for the opportunities afforded to her during her six-year tenure with the Commission. Noting that projects in which she has had a key role will be transitioned to other staff members, Ms. Kinka provided status updates on the following projects: (1) CFA Market-Rate Housing Grant - status update discussion held with project developer; review and coordination of technical assistance with WOD consulting team; (2) William Penn Corridor Study - stakeholders and public meetings to be held to present the plan; ongoing discussion regarding feasibility and funding considerations for development of a beautification/recreation project (pollinator garden). Discussion of the logistics of developing a pollinator garden (ownership and maintenance, neighborhood compatibility, etc.), CFA funding, and the possibility of utilizing solar lighting in the area was held. Staff agreed to investigate solar lighting initiatives already in use, i.e., Lilly Borough/Washington Township trail; City of Johnstown Iron Street trail. Staff and members also noted Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy as potential resources for garden development.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Komar inquired about whether completion dates had been added to the list of projects and goals developed by the staff in December 2022. Staff deferred comment to the Executive Director who will be present at the March meeting.

Ms. Kinka apprised the members that she and Mr. Zerby had recently attended a meeting with local, state, and federal stakeholders regarding development of the 911 National Memorial Trail. She explained that Tunnelhill Borough officials are particularly interested in the proximity of the trail alignment to the borough and how multi-modal improvements within the borough can foster connectivity to the trail and positively affect their community.

Ms. Sosko stated that the County's Emergency Management Director continues to investigate the use of drones in delivering emergency services in the County. She indicated that the EMS department has submitted a funding application for the initiative.

Ms. Komar commented on the importance of staff availability to the public and commended staff for their continued outreach to local municipal officials. There being no additional business to discuss, Ms. Komar adjourned the meeting.