

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
June 15, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Diane Waksmunski, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Diana Waksmunski
Danea Koss
Lisa Mays
Mark Bucci
Charlie Koren

ABSENT

Melissa Komar
Russ Kiel
Ron Rovanseck
Debra Orner

STAFF

Christopher Allison
Shanna Sosko
Jacob Zerby

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. Koren, seconded by Mr. Bucci, the minutes of the May 18, 2023 meeting were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Allison read the June Financial Statement, noting total accounts receivable, current outstanding invoices and receipts and expenditures from June 1 through July 15. Those present reviewed the financial statement and Mr. Bucci made a motion that the June Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment be approved. The motion was seconded by Dr. Koren and passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS

At this time, Mr. Bucci provided an overview of the Grid-Scale Solar Workshop sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors which was held on June 13, 2023. Noting that the workshop was very well attended by several Cambria County, Somerset County, and Indiana County municipal officials, he stated that speakers at the session were very informative and provided information on both large scale and small-scale commercial and residential projects. Mr. Bucci noted that speakers at the session stressed that large open spaces and transmission lines are major incentives for solar developers. He also commented that many solar energy projects are currently being considered throughout Cambria County and there

are no regulations in place for solar development in many of the County's 63 municipalities. He suggested that as CCPC staff acquires more education on solar technology, ordinances, and successful municipal solar regulations, the County Planning Commission could provide much-needed guidance to local municipal officials. A brief discussion was held regarding the possible development of a county-wide solar ordinance. It was noted that should such an ordinance be developed and enacted, formally adopted municipal ordinances would supersede county regulations.

Mr. Bucci also indicated that in addition to solar energy, hydrogen is an up-and-coming energy source. The Executive Director requested Mr. Bucci to keep Commission staff and members abreast of upcoming workshops and any related information provided by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors regarding energy technology and development throughout the state.

Executive Director

With regard to the 2024 Cambria County Long Range Transportation Plan update, Mr. Allison reported that the scope of work and budget update, as prepared by CCPC staff, has been approved and PennDOT has assigned Michael Baker Inc. to prepare the update. Noting that \$100,000 in supplemental UPWP funding will support the preparation of the plan, Mr. Allison stated that initiation of the update is anticipated within the next few months. Apprising the members that staff and a steering committee will provide input to the consultant during the preparation of the plan, the Executive Director encouraged Commission members to consider participating on the LRTP steering committee. In response to several questions, Mr. Allison explained that the LRTP will address all modes of transportation in Cambria County, i.e., highway, rail, air, and bicycle/pedestrian.

Ms. Sosko stated that a small-scale update to the County's Bicycle/Pedestrian plan will also be undertaken within the next year. She explained that the Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority is very active and heavily involved in planning and maintaining bicycle/pedestrian trails throughout the County and an in-depth update is not necessary every two years.

Mr. Allison reported that a pass-through agreement between the CCPC and CamTran for funding of CCTA's transit center feasibility and design study has been drafted. He explained that Huitt Zollars consulting team has been selected to prepare the study and funding will be provided through an addendum to the current Unified Planning Work Program.

Providing a brief update on the Red Mill Bridge project, Mr. Allison reported that a groundbreaking ceremony was held in June and Merlo Construction has begun construction replacement activities. Completion of the project is expected by October 31, 2023.

Mr. Allison stated that he had determined that an entry-level planner would be the most compatible option to fill the open staff position. He noted that a job description is being prepared.

The meeting was recessed at approximately 12:50 p.m. and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

Transportation

Mr. Zerby reported on various transportation activities undertaken during the past month. He stated that, in cooperation with Commission staff and PennDOT staff, an initial prioritization list has been developed for the Transportation Improvement Project (TIP) update. Noting his involvement in preparations for the Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) meeting, Mr. Zerby stated that he has been coordinating with MPO members to implement a more streamlined process for organizing and facilitating these meetings.

The Transportation Planner reported that he has continued to assist Tunnelhill Borough representatives with their initiative to develop multi-modal transportation projects, specifically sidewalks and bicycle lanes, to connect to the anticipated 911 Memorial Trail. He indicated that he has suggested that the scope of the project be scaled to realistic smaller project phases to better facilitate funding and timely use of AARPA funding. Mr. Zerby noted that he will continue to provide guidance to the Tunnelhill Borough committee in this municipal endeavor.

Community Development

Noting that she also attended the Tunnelhill Borough committee meeting, Ms. Sosko stated that development of the 911 Memorial Trail will have a major impact on tourism in Cambria County, specifically those municipalities located in close proximity to the trail. She indicated that during the past two months she has provided letters in support of applications submitted to the PA DCED seeking funding through the Department's Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program.

Ms. Sosko stated that in addition to reviewing and providing comments on many municipal subdivision and land development plans, she has been developing GIS mapping for the Public Participation Plan. Ms. Sosko indicated that the transportation planner has revised the plan to provide a more user-friendly document and she will correlate GIS mapping to reflect the demographics addressed in the plan.

Reporting that she attended the Aerium Summit held at the John Murtha Johnstown Cambria County Airport, Ms. Sosko expressed enthusiasm for the positive private/public aviation collaboration, upcoming educational opportunities, and innovative drone technology and usage discussed at the three-day summit. Noting that she also attended the Summit, Ms. Waksmunski echoed Ms. Sosko's enthusiasm for the Summit presentations and touted the potential positive impacts these initiatives can have on the future of Cambria County. A discussion was held which focused on how new aviation initiatives, drone technology, and expanded aerospace educational opportunities can positively impact business and industry as well as foster workforce development and sustainable employment in the County. Also briefly discussed was the potential for involvement of school board members and educators in promoting and expanding aviation educational opportunities within the County's school districts.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Allison stated that traditionally no CCPC meeting is held in July. He noted that the CCPC annual sunshine notice reflects that no meeting is held in July.

Noting that land use designations on the County's GIS mapping system do not reflect the actual municipal zoning map designations, Mr. Bucci inquired how the County mapping designations are determined. Ms. Sosko explained that the County GIS mapping is based on information generated through the County Assessment Office. She further noted that although digitizing of the zoning layer for the GIS mapping has been initiated, the process is very time-consuming process and funding constraints and limited staff time has prohibited this initiative from continuing at a steady pace.

On a motion by Mr. Bucci, seconded by Dr. Koren, the meeting was adjourned.