

MINUTES
Cambria County Planning Commission
December 21, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Cambria County Planning Commission was held on Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 12 noon, at Kosta's Restaurant, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Chairwoman, Melissa Komar, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Melissa Komar
Diane Waksmunski
Ron Rovansek
Danea Koss
Charlie Koren
Debra Orner (via telephone)

ABSENT

Russ Kiel
Mark Bucci
Lisa Mays

STAFF

Christopher Allison
Colleen Bukowski
Shanna Sosko
Jacob Zerby

GUESTS

Commissioner Thomas Chernisky

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

Commenting that Commission staff recently submitted a Local Share Account (LSA) application to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development on behalf of the Spangler Fire Company, Mr. Allison shared a letter of appreciation to the Commission from the organization. He explained that due to program guidelines, the non-profit organization was not eligible to apply directly for the funds to assist with renovations to the existing fire company building. Ms. Komar noted that representatives from the Cambria County Humane Society and the Cambria County Fire School have also expressed verbal appreciation for the CCPC's assistance with their LSA applications.

Mr. Allison stated that he received the following notifications from the Cambria County Commissioners regarding the CCPC Board of Directors:

- Ron Rovansek has been reappointed to the CCPC Board of Directors for a four-term, serving until 12/31/2027
- Noting that Russ Kiel declined reappointment to the Board, Mr. Allison stated that Scott Eberhart has been appointed as a representataive from Planning Region 2, serving until 12/31/2027
- Due to the resignation of Lisa Mays, Shawn Venesky has been appointed to the Commission to fulfill this vacancy, serving until 12/31/2025

- Due to the resignation of Mark Bucci, Paul Kunrod has been appointed to fulfill this vacancy, serving until 12/31/2026

Mr. Allison stated that he will contact the new appointees, welcoming them to the Commission. Dr. Koren suggested that they be invited to the office for a brief orientation as to the responsibilities of the Commission staff and members, goals of the CCPC, funding sources, meeting schedules and agendas, etc. Mr. Rovanseck suggested providing the new members with a copy of the Commission's publication, "Who We Are and What We Do," as an initial introduction, as well.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Rovanseck made a motion that the minutes of the November 20, 2023 meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Dr. Koren and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was read by the Executive Director and reviewed by those present. After a brief discussion, there was a general consensus among the members that since the Financial Statement/Treasurer's Report is submitted to every CCPC member prior to the monthly meeting, no in-depth presentation of the report be presented at each meeting. Mr. Allison noted that he would be happy to address any questions or concerns on the financial document should the members so request either prior to or at the monthly meeting. There being no comments on the December Financial Statement, Mr. Rovanseck a motion that the December Treasurer's Report, including expenses listed for payment, be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wakszumski and passed unanimously.

Approval of 2024 CCPC Budget

Mr. Allison stated that the 2024 CCPC Budget had been submitted to every Board Member for review and input. A brief discussion was held regarding the potential to increase the Commission's revenue. Noting that the majority of the Commission's revenue is through the Unified Planning Work Program, which provides federal and state funding for highway and transit planning, Mr. Allison indicated that additional revenue may be generated through grant administration of municipal grants and/or direct municipal contribution for assistance in preparing municipal planning documents (i.e., comprehensive plans, subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO's)). He advised that both would be contingent on grant awards and sufficient staff to direct and complete work activities. Ms. Sosko also noted that an increase to the Subdivision/Land Development Fee Schedule can be also be considered, albeit this would not provide a significant revenue increase but would help to cover staff time incurred in the review process. Commissioner Chernisky noted that several years ago when the fee was instituted, there was considerable backlash from the municipal and surveying community. There being no other discussion concerning the draft budget, the 2024 CCPC Budget was approved as presented on a motion by Mr. Rovanseck, seconded by Ms. Wakszumski. Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORTS

Executive Director

The Executive Director apprised the members of several administrative projects undertaken during November, in particular the draft agreement for human resources consulting services commencing in January 2024, interviews conducted for the open planner position, and Community Development Planner job description.

With regard to technical assistance provided to local municipalities, Mr. Allison reported that staff met with Southmont Borough offering CCPC coordination assistance in applying for grant funding and contracting a consultant should grant funding be secured. Mr. Allison stressed the importance of Southmont Borough forming a partnership with neighboring municipalities in developing a regional comprehensive plan so that securing grant funding can be maximized. He also noted that LSA grant applications on behalf of Spangler Volunteer Fire Company, the Cambria County Fire School, and the Cambria County Humane Society have been finalized and submitted to the PA DCED for funding consideration.

Transportation Planning

Mr. Zerby updated the members on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) planning process, stating that coordination activities are continuing with the consultant and local stakeholders. He noted that the public survey, which was developed to solicit input on highway, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and bridge-related transportation priorities, has been posted on the CCPC website and distributed to municipalities, members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), media outlets, all Cambria County employees, libraries, college campuses within Cambria County, and senior citizen groups through the Area Agency on Aging. Mr. Zerby commented that although the survey has garnered considerable response, staff continues to promote participation in the survey so that the priorities and concerns of the general population of the County can be adequately addressed in future transportation planning. Dr. Koren suggested that the local school districts and vocational-technical schools be contacted in an effort to garner input from high school students as well. Mr. Zerby gladly accepted Dr. Koren's offer to provide contact information in this regard. In response to Commissioner Chernisky's request, Mr. Zerby stated that he will also provide students of the Hiram G. Andrews Center access to the survey.

Community Development Planning

Ms. Sosko explained in further detail Southmont Borough officials' interest in updating their comprehensive plan and the benefits of multi-municipal planning. She noted that Southmont Borough, Brownstown Borough, Upper Yoder Township, Lower Yoder Township, and Westmont Borough share many commonalities with regard to planning, zoning, and community development and all would benefit from a comprehensive plan which could be prepared similar to the six-county regional comprehensive plan, *Alleghenies Ahead*, adopted by Cambria County in 2018; whereby, in addition to a regional outlook, individual goals and action plans could be developed for each municipality. She stated that although Commission staff can guide and foster

cooperative planning endeavors, local municipalities are often reluctant to pursue multi-municipal initiatives.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

After a brief discussion, it was decided that the 2024 CCPC will continue to meet at Kosta's Restaurant at 12 noon on the third Thursday of each month, with the exception of July. Mr. Allison stated that, traditionally no meeting of the CCPC is held during this month; however, a meeting can be scheduled should the need arise.

Ms. Komar stated that she has requested Ron Rovanseck to prepare a proposed slate of officers for 2024. The Commission's reorganization meeting will take place on January 18, 2024.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Dr. Koren, seconded by Ms. Waksmunski. Motion passed unanimously.