



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



COMMISSIONERS

Josh Maxwell
Marian D. Moskowitz
Eric M. Roe

Brian N. O'Leary, AICP
Executive Director

PLANNING COMMISSION

Government Services Center, Suite 270
601 Westtown Road
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(610) 344-6285 Fax (610) 344-6515

MINUTES: Regular Monthly Meeting
Chester County Planning Commission

Hybrid – GSC Suite 270
January 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Michael Heaberg, Chair; Roberta Cosentino; Matt Hammond; Andrew Wright.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Nate Cline, Vice Chair; Stephanie Duncan; Doug Fasick; Molly Morrison.

STAFF PRESENT IN PERSON: Brian O'Leary, Executive Director; Carol Stauffer, Assistant Director; David Blackburn; Carrie Conwell; Beth Cunliffe; Paul Fritz; Rachael Griffith; Gene Huller; Kevin Myers; Nancy Shields; Brian Styche.

STAFF PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Glenn Bentley; Chris Bittle; Wes Bruckno; Steve Buck; Gwen Duli; Paul Farkas; Libby Horwitz; Ann Lane; Carolyn Oakley; Sally Warren; Diana Zak.

VISITORS PRESENT IN PERSON: None.

VISITORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Caitlin Reinert; Rebecca Waddell; Marilyn Lieb; call-in number ending in 0196.

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular monthly meeting of the Chester County Planning Commission held in person at the Government Services Center Suite 270 and via Zoom audio/video on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, was called to order at 2:01 P.M. by Chair Michael Heaberg.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Rebecca Waddell told the board about a petition, with over 5,000 signatures, that pertains to the safety of the trestle bridge in Downingtown, PA and citizen concerns for the lives that have been lost. Ms. Waddell noted that some improvements have been made, but that signs of kids getting on the bridge are still evident. Ms. Waddell requested an update to what the county is doing to improve the safety and limit access to the trestle bridge and to give an update on the county's proposed trail using the trestle bridge. Brian O'Leary responded to the comments, acknowledging the safety concern and noting that PENNDOT owns the bridge, not Chester County. He added that the county has been advocating with them to make the bridge as safe as possible. PENNDOT is in the process of installing a security fence and said it would take around three weeks to complete. In addition, the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) is looking at creating a webpage on CCPC's website that highlights the status of the trail project, notably the trestle bridge improvements, within the next several weeks. The trail project is moving forward in the following ways: coordinating with regional partners; putting funding into the Transportation Improvement Program; working to obtain county ownership; and making sure the design of the bridge is as safe as possible.

ACTION ITEMS:

Appointment of the 2024 Chester County Planning Commission Board Officers:

A MOTION TO APPOINT MICHAEL HEABERG CHAIR OF THE 2024 CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY MR. WRIGHT, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

A MOTION TO APPOINT NATHAN CLINE VICE CHAIR OF THE 2024 CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY MS. COSENTINO, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

A MOTION TO APPOINT BRIAN O'LEARY SECRETARY OF THE 2024 CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY DR. FASIC, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Appointment of the 2024 Vision Partnership Program Subcommittee:

A MOTION TO APPOINT MOLLY MORRISON, STEPHANIE DUNCAN, AND ANDREW WRIGHT AS THE MEMBERS OF THE 2024 VISION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY MS. COSENTINO, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Endorsement of the 2045 Chester County Watersheds Plan:

A MOTION TO ENDORSE THE 2045 CHESTER COUNTY WATERSHEDS PLAN WAS MADE BY MR. WRIGHT, SECONDED BY MS. MORRISON, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 13, 2023, MEETING OF THE CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY MS. MORRISON, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Act 247 Reviews:

Subdivision and Land Development Reviews:

There were ten (10) Subdivision and Land Development Reviews prepared in December 2023.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TEN (10) SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY MR. WRIGHT, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Mr. Hammond recused himself from the following applications: SD-11-23-17920; CU-11-23-17905.

Mr. Cline recused himself from the following application: SD-11-23-17915.

Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Amendments, Miscellaneous Reviews:

There were seven (7) Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Amendment, and Miscellaneous Reviews prepared in December 2023.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEVEN (7) COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ZONING AND SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE AMENDMENT, AND MISCELLANEOUS REVIEWS WAS MADE BY MS. COSENTINO, SECONDED BY DR. FASIC, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Act 537 Reviews:

Ms. Conwell presented the Commission with four (4) minor Act 537 reviews for the month of December 2023.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOUR (4) MINOR ACT 537 REVIEWS WAS MADE BY MR. HAMMOND, SECONDED BY MS. MORRISON, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS:

Design and Technology Division Update:

Mr. Fritz reported that the 247 planners' research on agricultural-related zoning for the county's municipalities continued. The GIS staff assisted the Community Planning and Sustainability Divisions with mapping and analysis requests for work program projects. GIS Staff also addressed data requests from outside entities and updated existing interactive maps with current data. The Graphics team assisted with various products, including the West Sadsbury Comprehensive Plan, Rural Design Guide, Village Preservation Design Guide, and PowerPoint layouts for events. Mr. Fritz noted that they are looking into ways to advocate for and promote the Planning Commission's Design Guides. CCPC will also be conducting an analysis of growth area zoning ordinances and how they work with design standards.

Next, Mr. Fritz noted that the 2023 proposed non-residential structural square footage (SFF) is over 2.769 million SSF, partially due to a data center application with approximately a million square feet. The 2023 residential lots/units were substantially higher than 2022.

Community Planning Division Update:

Mr. Myers reported that CPD continues to work on 28 Vision Partnership Program (VPP) projects consisting of eight comprehensive plans, eight zoning ordinances, and 12 special studies. Eight are county consulting projects and 20 are cash grant projects. Mr. Myers noted that the Oxford Region Comprehensive Plan project will begin with a kick-off meeting in February.

Next, Mr. Myers summarized a variety of heritage preservation, housing, economic development, and urban center projects.

Lastly, Mr Myers noted the following 2024 VPP grant round I dates: February 5 – grant round opens, March 1 – pre-application meeting deadline, March 22 – grant applications due by 4pm, and May 8 – grant awards announced. A virtual grants meeting will be held in coordination with other county departments on February 15 to educate municipal officials on available county grants.

Ms. Horwitz provided an overview of the non-residential reinvestment map, which is now complete, and noted what the map provides: a resource for discovering new development opportunities; strategies for promoting reinvestment; and indicators of reinvestment potential. Ms. Horwitz shared and summarized the reinvestment map's webpage.

Agricultural Development Council Update:

Ms. Lane reported that the ADC board held its first meeting on January 3 and covered the following: the reelection of Gary Westlake and Barbara Dallap-Schaer as Chair and Co-Chair respectively; a CCEDC presentation on ag plan implementation; a summary of ag-friendly municipal outreach; and a recap of outreach and branding efforts.

Sustainability Division Update:

Ms. Griffith reported that DVRPC has led many regional level projects about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Griffith and Ms. Stauffer have been involved in the climate pollution reduction grant implementation funding and noted that the county is considering applying for grant funds.

Next, Ms. Griffith reported that the ten-year Delaware River watershed initiative, spearheaded by the William Penn Foundation, is ending. This initiative was very successful in creating collaboration between environmental organizations and in providing funding for planning, design, construction, and open space preservation projects that supported water quality improvements in Chester County. Brandywine Conservancy is looking into continuing the collaboration into the future.

Multimodal Transportation Division Update:

Mr. Styche reported that an official announcement was made about the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority receiving Railroad Administration Corridor ID program funding of up to \$500,000 towards the preparation of an approach for preparing a service development plan.

Next, Mr. Styche reported that the Trails Master Plan and Public Transportation Plan updates public meeting held on December 12, 2023 was well attended. Both draft plans are due to be completed in early 2024.

Lastly, Mr. Styche reported on the Rail Freight award announcements. The following two Chester County recipients received awards: Cleveland Cliffs – Brandywine Valley Railroad received \$1.2 million to rehabilitate tracks and a rail scale in the Ritchey Yard; and East Penn Railroad, LLC received \$626,000 to rehabilitate a 1,200-foot storage trackage, extend an 800-foot siding, and install an at-grade trail crossing on the Octoraro Branch.

Director's Report:

Mr. O'Leary mentioned that SEPTA is continuing with their Bus Revolution changes, decreasing bus service and increasing on-demand zones (micro transit).

Lastly, Mr. O'Leary reminded the board of Landscapes3's fifth anniversary in 2023 and noted that the staff plans to do an event this year highlighting the plan's accomplishments and discussing new trends impacting the county.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 3:20 PM WAS MADE BY MR. WRIGHT, SECONDED BY MS. COSENTINO, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian N. O'Leary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Brian N. O'Leary, AICP
Secretary

BNO/ncs