



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting December 12, 2023

Meeting at 4:30 -- Holiday Social at 5:45

Fort Roberdeau White Oak Hall, 383 Fort Roberdeau Road, Altoona, Pennsylvania

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call – The meeting will begin with a roll call of the members to publicly determine who is present as well as determine if a quorum is present.
2. Approval of Minutes – The Minutes of the September 28, 2023 and October 26, 2023 will be considered for approval.
3. Public Comment Period – Public comment will be received at this time.
4. Commissioner Liaison Forum – This is an opportunity for the Commissioners' liaison to make any reports, comments, or findings to the Planning Commission.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

5. Chopra Pediatrics – located at 1224 7th Avenue in the City of Altoona. This is a land development plan that proposes the construction of a 3,050 square-foot addition to the existing Chopra Pediatrics facility for physician office space. Additional site improvements include new parking facilities, landscaping, and stormwater management facilities and construction of a 40-car parking area. The plan also proposes a lot merge between two parcels into one continuous lot.
6. Wareham Trucking -located along Frederick Road in Taylor Township. This is a land development plan that proposes construction of two 10,000 square-foot tractor-trailer maintenance and storage buildings with detached 2,400 square-foot office space for Wareham Trucking. The plan also includes gravel drives and parking, water and on-lot septic, as well as stormwater management facilities.
7. Staff Level Reviews – Planning staff has reviewed and responded to the following applications since the last meeting. Commission members were given an opportunity via email to review these applications prior to response letters being sent:
 - Allegheny Township – Metzler Subdivision, 1221 Mill
 - Allegheny Township – Pinewood Subdivision Lot Line Reconfiguration, 4738 Mill Road
 - Antis Township – Shawver-HMLM Inc Property Line Change, Brush Mountain
 - Greenfield Township – Whetstone Manufactured House RESUBMITTAL, Everett Road
 - Frankstown Township – Banks-Lawruk Lot Line Adjustment, Majestic Circle
 - Frankstown Township – Brannock Subdivision, Sportsman Road
 - Freedom Township – Daye Lot Merge, Speck and Pepple Roads
 - Snyder Township – Sprankle Subdivision, 938 Hoover's Lane
 - Taylor Township – Dilling Subdivision, Smith Lane
 - Woodbury Township – Biddle Subdivision, Clover Creek Road

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

8. Staff Level Reviews – Planning staff has reviewed and responded to the following requests since the last meeting. Commission members were given an opportunity via email to review these requests prior to response letters being sent:
 - Blair County – Application to PA DCED, Community Development Block Grant Program:
 - **14A Housing Rehabilitation**; Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program – Single Unit Residential - \$503,449
 - **03I Hollidaysburg Borough**; Flood Drainage Improvements – Bedford Street drainage improvements in mini-ditch/culvert - \$112,825
 - **03J Blair Township**; Water/Sewer Improvements – Reservoir Road sanitary sewer - \$84,684
 - **City of Altoona** – Markosky Engineering Group for PennDOT Engineering District 9-0 – Application to PA DEP for Small Project Joint Permit Application – Mill Run Bridge Replacement PA36-SR4005
 - **City of Altoona** – MacDermid Alpha for Alpha Assembly Solutions – Application to PA DEP for national Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit renewal
 - **Roaring Spring Borough** – Stiffler McGraw for Roaring Spring Park, LLC – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 Water Obstruction and Encroachment and USACE 404 Permit Application – Demolition of former Appvion paper mill facility and ancillary structures
 - **Allegheny Township** – Gwin Dobson & Foreman Engineers for Department of Military and Veterans Affairs – Application to PA DEP for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Chapter 102 Permits – Hollidaysburg Veterans Home Waterline
 - **Allegheny Township** – SCS Engineers for Department of Military and Veterans Affairs – Application to PA DEP for Air Quality Permit – Hollidaysburg Veterans Home Boiler Replacement
 - **Catharine Township** – TeamAg Incorporated for Hemlock Lane Farm LP – Application to PA DEP for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Reissuance
 - **Greenfield Township** – Jody Bradley – Application to PA DEP for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) renewal – residential sewage facility, Schellsburg Road
 - **Greenfield Township** – ERM for BL-Diamond LLC – Application to PA DEP for Joint Permit registration – Access road to proposed solar facility
 - **Tyrone Township** – St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church – Application to PA DEP for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Water Quality II Permits – residential sewage facility, Kettle Rd.
9. Grant Update: DCED Local Share Grant Applications.

ACTIONS BY GOVERNING BODIES

10. Hollidaysburg Borough Comprehensive Plan
11. Hollidaysburg Borough Rezoning Petition

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

12. Cincinnati Insurance Group - Contract for Worker’s Comp and non-hired and vehicle coverage.
13. Planning Commissioners’ Forum - This is an opportunity for Planning Commission members to bring items of relevant interest to the attention of the body as a whole.
14. Questions from the Media – This is an opportunity for the media to ask any questions needed to clarify any points made or agenda items discussed during the meeting.
15. Upcoming Events:
 - December 25 -Christmas Day, Office Closed
 - January 1 -New Years Day, Office Closed
 - January 15 -Martin Luther King Day, Office Closed

ADJOURNMENT

The next board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m., January 25, 2024 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes for November-December Combined Meeting December 12, 2023
Fort Roberdeau White Oak Hall, 383 Fort Roberdeau Road, Altoona, Pennsylvania

CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call --

Members present:

William R. Hall, Chairperson
Patrick Baechle, Secretary
James M. Dixon, Treasurer
Nicola Ardizzone
Lawrence Carter
Benjamin Postles
Linda Smith

Bruce Erb, Commissioner

Members absent:

Herbert Shelow, Sr.
Thomas M. Holsinger

Guests:

Mr. Walt Frank
Mrs. Nancy Frank
Mrs. Anne Dixon
Mrs. Pam Baechle
Mrs. Kathy Ardizzone
Mrs. Carter
Mrs. Postles
Mr. Jim Kelly
Mr. Caron

Staff:

David McFarland III, Planning Director
Sherry Socie, Strategic Planner
MacKenzie Caron, Community Planner
Wes Burket, Transportation Planner
Rhonda Kelly, Planning Aide

Staff Absent: none

Representing:

Townships Collectively
Boroughs Collectively
City of Altoona
City of Altoona
City of Altoona
Townships Collectively
Townships Collectively

Commissioner Liaison

Boroughs Collectively
Townships Collectively

Altoona Mirror

2. Approval of Minutes – A motion was made to approve the Planning Commission minutes of the September 28, 2023 and October 26, 2023; Motion passed.

Motion: To approve the minutes of September 28, 2023, and October 26, 2023 Item #2 on this agenda:

Moved: Nicola Ardizzone

Seconded: Lawrence Carter

Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

3. Public Comment Period – No public comment heard.
4. Commissioner Liaison Forum – Commissioner Erb will retire in January. He conveyed his appreciation to the Planning Commission staff and Planning Board members for their valuable work, such as the broadband initiative and the County's strategic plan and was pleased to serve as the Commission's liaison and to have played a small part of the many things this Planning Commission has done and looks forward to hearing about the good to be done in the future by the Planning Commission. He acknowledged the cooperation between the Planning Commission and the County has increased in recent years and that is a very good thing. He thanked the Commission for all its services.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

5. Chopra Pediatrics (RK II LLC) – located at 1224 7th Avenue in the City of Altoona. Regional Planner MacKenzie Caron reviewed this land development plan that proposes construction of a 3,050 square-foot addition to the Chopra Pediatrics facility for physician office space. The site improvements include new parking facilities, landscaping, and stormwater management facilities. The plan also proposes a three-parcel lot merger behind Chopra Pediatrics (also owned by RK II, LLC) for the proposed 40-space vehicle parking lot expansion. Although the proposed building addition eliminates twelve (12) standard spaces, the three (3) ADA spaces will remain. The proposed 40 standard spaces provide a net gain of 28 parking spaces. The proposed bicycle parking aligns with Active Mobility initiatives.

Access to the original parking lot is through an existing 24-foot-wide bidirectional driveway; the elimination of an apparent small, paved apron for a vehicle turn-around could present potential vehicle circulation problems. Access to the proposed parking facility is an alley between the office building; access to the existing lot is via two, 24-foot-wide, bidirectional parking aisles or a 24-foot-wide bidirectional driveway along 8th Avenue. It is recommended, if feasible, to include painted crosswalk striping for pedestrian safety in the alley.

Landscaping includes shrubs and plants along the new building and throughout the site; street trees are proposed along 13th Street and 8th Avenue and the connecting alleyway; this will buffer headlight glare onto and off the property. No lighting plan or photometrics were included with the proposal. It is recommended the developer should ensure any exterior lighting is shielded or directed to prevent glare onto neighboring properties and roadways.

Environmentally, the site is not located within the 100-year floodplain, nor does it contain any wetlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils or Blair County Natural Heritage Inventory areas. The site is located within the Beaver Dam Branch of the Juniata River Watershed. The proposed underground infiltration and detention basin should help offset any potential negative impacts on the watershed as a result of this proposal.

In summary, this proposal is consistent with countywide planning efforts as presented in the Alleghenies Ahead Regional Comprehensive Plan, adopted July 31, 2018, which includes comprehensive planning for Blair County.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #5 on this agenda:

Moved: James Dixon

Seconded: Nicola Ardizzone

Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

6. Wareham Trucking – located along Frederick Road in Taylor Township. Regional Planner MacKenzie Caron reviewed this land development plan that proposes construction of two 10,000 square-foot tractor-trailer maintenance and storage buildings with a detached 2,400 square-foot office space for Wareham Trucking. The plan also includes gravel drives and parking, water, on-lot septic and stormwater management facilities. The developer specifies the intended use of this site is a trucking storage and maintenance facility with plans for additional storage buildings in the future.

Access to the site appears to be a 40-foot-wide gravel drive connecting the gravel, nine-space office parking with one van-accessible space. The plan includes an (assumed) larger gravel truck parking area as well as four gravel parking spaces for the proposed storage buildings. The development has potential to generate increased truck and vehicle traffic; as such, the developer should consult with Taylor Township regarding any potential negative impacts on the local transportation system as a result of filtering truck traffic through a narrow gravel easement.

No landscaping, lighting or photometrics were included in the submittal. It does appear that 10,000 SF of landscaped grass area will be maintained surrounding the proposed office building. The developer should ensure any

landscaping at the site is designed in accordance with the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and ensure any lighting installed is shielded or directed to prevent glare onto neighboring properties and roadways.

Environmentally, this site is surrounded by agricultural security areas and would convert roughly six acres of prime agricultural soils; it is generally not recommended to convert existing crop land for development and the land would be characterized by a facility that could feasibly be condensed in terms of limit of disturbance. The developer should consult Taylor Township and the Blair County Conservation District to determine the best land use for this site so as not to exasperate any existing environmental conditions. The site is located within the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River Watershed. Underground stone infiltration trenches are proposed to manage stormwater runoff, which should help mitigate potential negative impacts on the watershed as a result of this proposal.

Ms. Caron stated that industrial use on the proposed site would affect the surrounding agriculture security parcels. Discussion ensued, during which it was reiterated that Blair Conservation District should be consulted, if it has not already and, additionally, the ABCD Corp should be consulted in terms of agricultural economic development. In summary, this proposal is not consistent with countywide planning efforts to include agricultural representation in economic development decisions, as presented in the Alleghenies Ahead Regional Comprehensive Plan, adopted July 31, 2018, which includes comprehensive planning for Blair County.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #6 on this agenda:
Moved: Patrick Baechle
Seconded: Lawrence Carter
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

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- Snyder Township – Sprinkle Subdivision, 938 Hoover's Lane
- Taylor Township – Dilling Subdivision, Smith Lane
- Woodbury Township – Biddle Subdivision, Clover Creek Road

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #7 on this agenda:
Moved: James Dixon
Seconded: Patrick Baechle
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

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Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Item #8 on this agenda:

Moved: Nicola Ardizzone

Seconded: Benjamin Postles

Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

9. **Grant Update:** – Strategic Planner Sherry Socie updated the Board on the DCED Local Shares Grant opportunity, which ran from September 1 through November 30. Ms. Socie submitted 15 grant applications on behalf of various local municipalities and non-profits for the potential of approximately \$6.3 million for the Blair County area. Initial award status is anticipated for October-November 2024. The Committee and those present congratulated Ms. Socie on her extensive efforts. When the municipalities and non-profits are notified of their award status, they will advise Ms. Socie and she will update the Board as she is made aware.

ACTIONS BY GOVERNING BODIES

10. **Hollidaysburg Borough Comprehensive Plan** – Ms. Caron explained that the Borough of Hollidaysburg submitted their draft Comprehensive Plan update for review and comment by the Planning Commission; this proposed plan update is designed to replace the current plan dating back four decades. Although the draft is well delineated and built out in some areas, such as street and sidewalk improvements, there are deficient areas that lack critical content, need revision and it also does not include the required comprehensive planning efforts with adjoining municipalities.

Agriculture is recognized as one of Blair County's top priorities but the draft Update states that agriculture is not relevant to Hollidaysburg; this Planning Commission does not agree, noting that the Stowell Farm is featured multiple times in the Plan Update (a development proposal on this agenda). Agriculture is not only relevant to the community but is necessary for inclusion in this Plan.

The Stormwater Management section needs more heavily built out in terms of strengths and weakness; this section lists the only threat is that climate change is expected to increase storm flooding events, however, the Stowell Farm is included in this section but not listed as a threat. Also, the NPC requires inclusion of water resource protection planning. A stormwater management action plan must be robust, a priority for environmentally sensitive areas. No potential opportunities are listed in this section. Overall, the stormwater management section appears to be incomplete. The business community support section does not list any threats and only one opportunity.

The implementation section, the final section of this ten-year plan, is a major concern; it fails to be strategic, actionable and does not include clear, bulleted action item timelines. Numerous spelling, grammar and syntax errors appear throughout the submitted draft. Discussion ensued.

Overall, this draft Plan appears to be unfinished, extremely incomplete. The Planning Commission requests that the items pointed out in the review need to be adequately addressed and that any significant changes be resubmitted for review by this Planning Commission.

11. Holidaysburg Borough Rezoning Petition – At the October Planning Commission meeting the Board reviewed a rezoning petition for the Stowell Farm submitted by BC Holdings LLC. Today, the Board is reviewing a formal request from Holidaysburg Borough to rezone the Stowell Farm from a TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development) to R2 (General Residential) Zoning. The Borough's submission provides new information to perform the Board's review. It was pointed out that throughout the draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan, it is specifically mentioned to retain the TND zoning for the Stowell Farm; the Plan's Stormwater Management section also includes information and flood maps pertaining to the Stowell Farm that indicate the flood problem is exacerbated in the Gaysport community. The recommendations made at the October Planning Commission meeting on rezoning the Stowell Farm include the environmental conditions, the agricultural land preservation priority and floodplain encroachment on the property.

Although TND zoning may not be the most appropriate designation for this district given the existing land use and the environmental conditions; however, an R2 zone would allow less restrictions for development. This tract of land requires stringent provisions and diligence when reviewing potential development impacts on surrounding communities. Referring again to the draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan, it specifically states that development on this particular tract of land will require individualized attention to the stormwater needs to minimize the impacts.

The rezoning of this tract of land would align with the County's Comprehensive Plan, nor would it align with the Boroughs draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Items #10 and #11 on this agenda:
Moved: Nicola Ardizzone
Seconded: Patrick Baechle
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

12. Cincinnati Insurance Group – Mr. McFarland reported a premium increase of .50 cents/month for Workers' Compensation for this year. The Board authorized the Director to sign the new insurance agreement.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Items #12 on this agenda:
Moved: Lawrence Carter
Seconded: Patrick Baechle
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

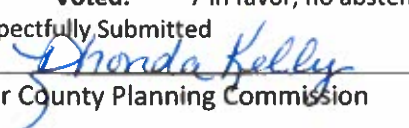
13. Commissioners' Forum – No comments or discussion for this meeting.
14. Question From the Media – Mr. Frank asked if Taylor Township can approve what it wants with regard to the proposed Wareham Trucking development, which Chairman Hall confirmed the Township can do so, even though it is not consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.
15. Upcoming Events:
- December 15 – Broadband Outreach Meeting in Tyrone
 - December 18 – Broadband Outreach Meeting in Williamsburg
 - December 19 – Broadband Outreach Meeting in East Freedom
 - December 25 -Christmas Day, Office Closed
 - January 1 -New Years Day, Office Closed
 - January 15 -Martin Luther King Day, Office Closed

ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Commission Board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m.
Moved: Linda Smith
Seconded: William Hall
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted


Blair County Planning Commission

Date Minutes Approved


Minutes – December 12, 2023