



Blair Planning

Blair County Planning Commission
Altoona Metropolitan Planning Organization
Blair County Government Advisory Committee

BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting of March 28, 2024 8:30 AM

Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, 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 – Consideration of the combined February 29, 2024 minutes of the Blair County Planning Commission Meeting.
3. Public Comment Period – Public comment will be received at this time.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

4. Altoona Dermatology Associates Expansion – Located at Logan Boulevard and Mosser Street in the City of Altoona. This proposal is for the consolidation of two adjoining lots, owned by Altoona Dermatology Associates, for the purpose of creating one contiguous 0.496 acre parcel for the expansion of the existing medical facility. This proposal also includes the construction of a 2,000 SF addition to the building, as well as new sidewalks and landscaping.
5. Valvoline Instant Oil Change– Located at 201 Sierra Drive at the site of the former Kings Family Restaurant, in Allegheny Township. This proposal is for the development of a 1,664 SF quick-change oil garage with two service bay lanes, associated parking, landscaping, and stormwater management.
6. Holiday Hills Phase 2 – Located off of Holliday Hills Drive in Hollidaysburg Borough. This proposal is for Gretka Realty to construct 14 duplexes, a private road, and stormwater management improvements.
7. Staff Level Subdivision and Land Development Reviews:
 - City of Altoona – Altoona Renaissance Lot Merge, 6th Avenue
 - City of Altoona – Castle Lot Line Change, E. Southey Avenue
 - Hollidaysburg Borough – Gildea Stump Subdivision, Beech Street
 - Antis Township – Vaughn Subdivision, N. Locke Stgreet
 - Antis Township – Waite Subdivision, Asbury Lane
 - Blair Township – Crowley, Quevy, Jancula Lot Line Change, Pennington Dr and Tudor Lane
 - Freedom Township – Red Tail Ridge Subdivision, Puzzletown Road
 - Logan Township – Lonsinger Lot Merge, East Hamilton Lane
 - Tyrone Township – Yoder and Swarey Lot Line Relocation, Sickles Corner Back Road
 - Tyrone Township – Youngstone-Dunkle Subdivision, Youngstone Lane
 - Woodbury Township – Brumbaugh Subdivision, Royer Mountain 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:

- **Hollidaysburg Borough** The EADS Group for Gretka Real Estate - Application to PA DEP for NPDES and Permit for Land Development – Holliday Hills Phase 2
 - **Frankstown Township** – Levine Engineering, LLC for Frankstown Township – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 Permit – Sylvan Heights Sewer Extension
 - **Huston Township** – Keller Engineers for Matthew and Amanda Caruso – Sewage Facilities Planning Module for PA DEP
 - **Logan Township** – Altoona Water Authority – Application to PA DEP for PWS Permit – Rehabilitation of existing Kettle Water Storage Tank
 - **Logan Township** – Altoona Water Authority – Application to PA DEP for PWS Permit – Rehabilitation of existing Grandview Water Storage Tank
 - **Taylor Township** – New Enterprise Stone and Lime Co. – Application to Susquehanna River Basin Commission for Surface Water Withdrawal Increase – Roaring Spring Quarry
9. Letter of Support – PA DCED for the City of Altoona Municipal Assistance Program Funding Request for Zoning Code Update
 10. Letter of Support – PA DCNR for Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission Regional Greenways Mini-Grants Program

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

11. BRAVE Update - Update on the public and municipal outreach efforts undertaken in support of the 2025 update of the Blair County Hazard Mitigation Plan (BRAVE)

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

12. Government Advisory Committee – Report on the Government Advisory Committee meeting held March 18, 2024, specifically related to board reorganization and local share changes.
13. Planning Director's Report - The Planning Director will give a brief update on professional development and administrative issues for the organization, including (but not limited to):
14. Commissioner Liaison Forum - This is an opportunity for the Commissions' liaison to make any reports, comments, or findings to the Planning Commission.
15. Planning Commissions' Forum - This is an opportunity for Planning Commission members to bring items of relevant interest to the attention of the body as a whole.
16. 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.
17. Upcoming Events:
 - March 29 –Good Friday, Office Closed
 - March 31 - Easter Sunday, Happy Easter!
 - April 3 – Introductory meeting with the Commissioners
 - April 4 – Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting
 - April 4 -Blair Chamber Policy Committee
 - April 8 – Solar Eclipse
 - April 11 – Domestic Terrorism & Violent Extremism Training
 - April 13-16 – National Planning Conference
 - April 17 -Southern Alleghenies CAP monthly meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The next board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 AM on April 25, 2024 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.



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BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes for March 28, 2024

Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania

CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call –

Members present:

William R. Hall, Chairperson
James M. Dixon, Treasurer
Patrick Baechle, Secretary
Nicola Ardizzone
Lawrence Carter
Thomas M. Holsinger
Herbert Shelow, Sr.
Amy Webster, Commissioner

Representing:

Townships Collectively
City of Altoona
Boroughs Collectively
City of Altoona
City of Altoona
Townships Collectively
Boroughs Collectively
Commissioner Liaison

Members absent:

Benjamin Postles
Linda Smith

Townships Collectively
Townships Collectively

Guests:

Walt Frank
Carol Dannenberg
Andrew Holodnik

Altoona Mirror
Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog
Hollidaysburg Planning, Zoning, Code Enforcement

Staff:

David McFarland III, Planning Director
Sherry Socie, Strategic Planner
MacKenzie Caron, Regional Planner
Emilie Evey, Community Planner
Rhonda Kelly, Planning Aide

Staff Absent:

Wes Burket, Transportation Planner

2. Approval of Minutes – A motion was made to approve the Planning Commission minutes of the February 29, 2024 meeting; Motion passed.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the February 29, 2024 meeting, Item #2 on this agenda:

Moved: Thomas Holsinger

Seconded: James Dixon

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

3. Public Comment Period – No public comment.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

4. Altoona Dermatology Associates Expansion – located along Logan Boulevard in the City of Altoona. The development plan includes merging two lots into one parcel and proposes construction of a 2,000 sf addition to expand the existing medical facility. Improvements to the site include updated parking with new striping, ADA access and a bike rack; additional improvements include new sidewalks, a crosswalk and landscaping. Access to the site via Mosser Street remains unchanged. No lighting or photometrics were included in the plan; it is recommended that any exterior lighting is shielded or directed in a manner to prevent glare on neighboring properties and roadways. The site is located in the

Beaver Dam Branch of the Juniata River; a rain garden is included in the proposal to help offset potential negative impacts to the watershed. Discussion ensued. A recommendation was made to ensure ample backing-out space is available in the parking area.

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 #4 on this agenda
Moved: Patrick Baechle
Seconded: Nicola Ardizzone
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

5. Valvoline Instant Oil Change – located along Sierra Drive in Allegheny Township. The development plan submitted proposes construction of a 1,664 sf building at the site of the former Kings Family Restaurant to be demolished. The driveway and parking area will be reconfigured and include ADA parking, along with new internal drive aisles, sidewalks and stormwater inlets. Sidewalks are recommended along Plank Road. The site access drive is to be widened to a 30-foot, bi-directional drive. The developer should ensure proposed landscaping complies with the Township’s requirements; shrubbery should be placed on the edge of Plank Road to prevent headlight glare. Exterior lighting is to be shielded or directed to prevent headlight glare on neighboring properties and roadways.

Although the estimated peak-hour vehicle trips do not meet the requirement for a transportation impact study, it is recommended the developer consult with PennDOT and Allegheny Township to assess any unforeseen impacts to the transportation system. There are prime agricultural soils on the site but because the proposed development is in an urban area and has previously been developed, it is not a significant concern. The site is located within the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River; the proposed development will result in a 27 percent reduction in impervious surface that will help mitigate negative effects to the watershed. The developer is to ensure all stormwater management controls comply with the Township’s requirements for commercial development.

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: Nicola Ardizzone
Seconded: Lawrence Carter
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

6. Holiday Hills Phase 2 – located off Holliday Hills Drive in the Borough of Hollidaysburg. The submitted plan proposes construction of 14 new duplex townhouses, a new private, 24-foot-wide bi-directional access road connecting Beaver Street to Holliday Hills Drive. The proposed development would be on a shared parcel that includes seven existing townhouses that were approved in 2022. This new development proposal includes parking, paved driveways and a stormwater management facility. It is recommended the developer consult with the Borough and PennDOT to assess any unforeseen transportation concerns. Sidewalks were not proposed; a recommendation was made to include sidewalks to connect existing sidewalks along Holliday Hills Drive and Beaver Street, as well as along the private access road. No exterior lighting or photometrics were included in the proposal; it is recommended that sidewalks be included along sidewalks and that any exterior lighting is shielded or directed to prevent glare. Environmentally there are prime agricultural soils and steep slopes on portions of the site. Generally, it is not recommended to convert prime ag soils, however, this development is not necessarily opposed, as the development would convert the unused vacant lot into a multi-family housing community. The site is located within the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River. The developer states the proposed stormwater management facility will be designed in accordance with the Borough’s ordinance and NPDES regulations.

Comments were heard regarding street trees and it is recommended they be included and that they not all be of the same species in case of a blight to one, not all will be lost. There was also discussion on zoning; the original development was under a strict covenant in terms of high density and mixed use. Mr. Holodnik responded that both sites are zoned residential and believes the current proposal is from a different developer than the original Holliday Hills but would fall under the same covenant for development. Ms. Caron will look into this and provide confirmation

to the Board. Additional comments and a recommendation were made that sidewalks should be included on both sides, not just one, for the interior private access drive.

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: Herbert Shelow

Seconded: James Dixon

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

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:

- City of Altoona – Altoona Renaissance Lot Merge, 6th Avenue
- City of Altoona – Castle Lot Line Change, E. Southey Avenue
- Hollidaysburg Borough – Gildea Stump Subdivision, Beech Street
- Antis Township – Vaughn Subdivision, N. Locke Street
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- Blair Township – Crowley, Quevy, Jancula Lot Line Change, Pennington Dr and Tudor Lane
- Freedom Township – Red Tail Ridge Subdivision, Puzzletown Road
- Logan Township – Lonsinger Lot Merge, East Hamilton Lane
- Tyrone Township – Yoder and Swarey Lot Line Relocation, Sickles Corner Back Road
- Tyrone Township – Youngstone-Dunkle Subdivision, Youngstone Lane
- Woodbury Township – Brumbaugh Subdivision, Royer Mountain Road

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #7 on this agenda

Moved: Thomas Holsinger

Seconded: Lawrence Carter

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

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

8. **Staff Level Reviews** – Planning staff has reviewed and responded to the following requests since the last meeting. Commission members are given opportunity via email to review these requests prior to response letters being sent:

- **Hollidaysburg Borough** The EADS Group for Gretka Real Estate - Application to PA DEP for NPDES and Permit for Land Development – Holliday Hills Phase 2
- **Frankstown Township** – Levine Engineering, LLC for Frankstown Township – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 Permit – Sylvan Heights Sewer Extension
- **Huston Township** – Keller Engineers for Matthew and Amanda Caruso – Sewage Facilities Planning Module for PA DEP
- **Logan Township** – Altoona Water Authority – Application to PA DEP for PWS Permit – Rehabilitation of existing Kettle Water Storage Tank
- **Logan Township** – Altoona Water Authority – Application to PA DEP for PWS Permit – Rehabilitation of existing Grandview Water Storage Tank
- **Taylor Township** – New Enterprise Stone and Lime Co. – Application to Susquehanna River Basin Commission for Surface Water Withdrawal Increase – Roaring Spring Quarry

A question was raised on the item listed for Taylor Township regarding the surface water withdrawal. Ms. Caron explained that the application to the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to withdraw from Well #3 for blasting purposes. Ms. Caron will provide the permit details to the Board after the meeting today.

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

Moved: Nicola Ardizzone

Seconded: Patrick Baechle

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

9. Letter of Support – for the City of Altoona for a PA DCED grant application for Municipal Assistance Program funding for their Zoning Codes and Subdivision and Land Development Updates.
10. Letter of Support –for the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SAP&DC) for a DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program grant application. This will be Round 11 of the Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program funds.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Items #9 and #10 on this agenda
Moved: James Dixon
Seconded: Thomas Holsinger
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

Planning Director Mr. McFarland added comment on the Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program that is currently open, that if the Board is aware of anyone with a small trail or park project that they should contact the Planning Office to start the review process and to promote the project to DCED. Additionally, he added that SAP&DC may be updating its Greenways Plan, which was last updated in 2007; grant applications submitted next year would start funding for 2026.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

11. BRAVE Update: – The County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan, BRAVE is in the process of a five-year update. Mr. McFarland reported that the Planning Commission has been conducting outreach to gather data on the County’s hazards. Thus far, it has been a two-prong effort; one being the general public outreach (he noted this public outreach did not run as smoothly as the last time) that included a state-generated worksheet for the public to record their input. The second prong is municipal outreach, which mainly focused on capacity issues and the need to add a capacity study as an element in the Plan. The municipal feedback indicates the capacity study should focus either at a five-year focus with 10 years on the outside, or a two-year focus with five years on the outside. Strategic Planner Ms. Socie located a free DCED grant opportunity for a capacity study; it would require all 26 municipalities and the governing board to sign the agreement. Another option would be to have the study completed county-wide region-by-region as directed by the grant. Another option may be to submit a letter of intent to PEMA for any possible funding.

Stormwater Management Plan – The Planning Commission is about to begin Phase I for a county-wide Stormwater Management Plan (Blair County has never had one); this is an element in the current Hazard Mitigation Plan. as the County has never had one. Mr. McFarland noted that the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River is the largest watershed in the County and has never been looked at from this perspective. A \$30,000 grant has been awarded and is awaiting the signed grant agreement from the State. Funding for Phase II is available if Phase I is completed by August.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

12. Government Advisory Committee – A GAC meeting was held two weeks ago that included the following discussions:
 - Reorganizing the Planning Commission Board. Mr. McFarland stated that this was met favorably by the GAC members. They prefer the option to regionalize the Board that would provide one representative for each region but with two representatives for Regional 3 and two for Regions 5; Region 3 would be a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ one from the City and one from the Township. Region 5 would be geographically split with an eastern and western rep. The next step is to present it to the municipalities and then obtain their votes.
 - Local Share Change. Mr. McFarland stated that this was met favorably by the GAC members. It would include an additional element of a 25 percent carve-out for an hourly rate and the remaining 75 percent would be determined as is currently done via a per capita rate. The County would continue to pay half of the total local share. Mr. McFarland will present and explain the full details to the Board in time for budget discussions. The next step in the process will be presenting it to the municipalities and obtain a vote. Chairman Hall asked how the smaller municipalities felt about the change; Mr. McFarland responded that they were not present for the meeting.
 - Development Reviews at County-Level. Mr. McFarland presented a concept to consolidate/coordinate the development review process at the County Level with the current ordinances process for each municipality with the Planning Commission becoming the Planning Agency. Another option would involve combining all the ordinances to create one, consistent county ordinance. Another option includes a model ordinance consistent for rural areas and for urban areas, recognizing the City is not a township or borough and vice versa.

Chairman Hall pointed out that changes to the development review process into a county-level would bring about a regulatory enforcement process rather than the current advisory process; this change would require hiring additional staff with regulatory qualifications. The change would also create liability implications requiring increased insurance costs. He feels that neither the Board nor staff should incur personal, financial liability.

Commissioner Webster raised a question regarding the Board's reorganization. She asked if there was an objection to a written agreement in terms of the split representation in the City. Mr. McFarland responded that during the initial conversation it was a suggestion that they had agreed made sense; but could end up as a written agreement.

13. Commissioner Liaison Forum –Commissioner Webster commented that the Commissioners are looking forward to the opportunity to meet next week with the Planning Commission.
14. Commissioners' Forum – Mr. Holsinger said he did not receive all of the emails from the Planning Commission. Ms. Caron explained that the Planning Commission recently contacted the internet provider to address a large-scale Outlook issue involving gmail and aol addresses. Adjustments were made by the provider to resolve the issue.
15. Question From the Media – No questions.
16. Upcoming Events:
 - March 29 –Good Friday, Office Closed
 - March 31 -East Sunday, Happy Easter!
 - April 3 -Introductory meeting with the Commissioners
 - April 4 -Blair Chamber Policy Committee
 - April 8 -Solar Eclipse
 - April 11 -Domestic Terrorism & Violent Extremism Training
 - April 13-16 -National Planning Conference
 - April 17 -Southern Alleghenies CAP monthly meeting
 - April 25 -Blair Planning Commission monthly meeting

Mr. Dixon pointed out staff changes. Mr. McFarland introduced Emily Evey as the new Community Planner, who will be doing the development reviews from here on out. He announced that MacKenzie will be leaving in two weeks and that the Planning Commission will be looking to replace that position. Ms. Socie complimented MacKenzie on the wonderful job she has done and that it will be a huge loss for the Planning Commission. Mr. Dixon stated that she will be missed.

Discussion occurred regarding the solar eclipse on Monday, April 4, 2024 in terms of staff dismissal for the afternoon. Permission was granted by the Board.

A question arose regarding the Annual Ethics Disclosure form, specifically if the form needs to be completed for each organization they are involved; the instruction form was read, verifying that individuals that hold more than one office and/or position must file a copy of the form at each filing location.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

Moved: Herbert Shelow

Seconded: Jim Dixon

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

Respectfully Submitted



Date Minutes Approved


