



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting of September 28, 2023, 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 – The Minutes of the August 31, 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. Gardner's Candies Storage Building – located at 2600 Adams Avenue in Tyrone Borough. This development plan proposes construction of a storage facility for ingredients and finished products.
6. 3417 Route 764 LLC – located at 3417 Route 764 in Allegheny Township. This development plan proposes construction of a new building for garage and office space for a trucking business.
7. Euro Motor Cars -located at 560 Chimney Rocks Road in Blair Township. This development plan proposes construction of new auto repair garage.
8. Sarah Furnace Estate Redevelopment – located at the intersection of Quarry Road and Dunning's Highway in Greenfield Township. This development plan proposes the conversion of an existing mansion to a private bed and breakfast along with the conversion of an existing barn into a private corporate event/meeting center.
9. 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:
 - **Tyrone Borough:** Ryan and Ashley Walk Subdivision, located at 771 5th Street
 - **Allegheny Township:** Skupien-Smychynsky Lot Line Change at 111 Twin Site Lane
 - **Greenfield Township:** Marasco Business Park, located on Corporate Blvd and Cottonwood Road

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

10. 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:

- **City of Altoona** – Gwin Dobson & Foreman Consulting Engineers for Altoona Water Authority – Logan Boulevard Waterline Replacement – Land Use Review for PennVEST Funding Application
- **City of Altoona** – Letterle & Associates for Mallow Service Center of Altoona – Application to PA DEP for NPDES GP-5 Permit for Discharges from Petroleum Product Contaminated Groundwater Remediation Systems
- **Hollidaysburg Borough** – KCI Technologies for Blair Senior Services – Application to PA DEP for NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Stormwater Associated with Small Construction Activities
- **Allegheny Township** – RES Coal, LLC – Permit Renewal Application to PA DEP for Coal Mining Activity Permit #07920101
- **Frankstown Township** – The EADS Group for Peoples Natural Gas Company LLC – GP-5 Application to PA DEP – Gas Distribution Line Installation, DeGol Industrial Drive MLX
- **Greenfield Township** – PA Game Commission – Application to PA DEP for Joint Permit for Small Projects – Bob’s Creek Gravel Bar Removal, State Game Lands No. 026
- **Huston Township** – Stiffler McGraw for Huston Township Supervisors – Installation of Swiveling Standpipes on Blair County Bridges 17, 18, and 20
- **Logan Township** – Noemie M. Eardley – Application to PA DEP for NPDES and Water Quality Management Part II Permits – Single residence sewage treatment plant
- **Logan Township** – Gwin Dobson & Foreman for Altoona Water Authority – Application to PA DEP for PWS Minor permit amendment, Chapter 102 Construction NPDES, Chapter 105 Waterway and Wetland Encroachment – Logan Boulevard Watermain Relocation
- **Logan Township** – Logan Township Supervisors – Cashman Road Sewer Extension – Land Use Review for Community Development Block Grant Funding FFY 2021, 2022, 2023
- **Logan Township** – PennDOT application to PA DEP for Water Obstruction Permit – Bridge Repair Project, Old Mill Run Road over Mill Run

REVIEW OF ACTIONS BY GOVERNING BODIES

11. Woodbury Township – Review and comment on minor alterations to the Woodbury Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

12. All Together Altoona
- Draft Components for Decision-Making Framework
 - Core Values
 - Planning Principles
 - Priorities “Big Things”
 - Better Places and Public Spaces
 - Neighborhoods With Pride and Opportunity
 - Kitchen Table Conversation #2
 - ‘Gives’ and ‘Gets’ Associated with Project Development

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

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:

- September 28 – SARA Summit
- September 29 – HBCC Annual Breakfast Meeting
- October 2 – Hazard Mitigation Committee Meeting
- October 4 & 5 – PennDOT Planning Partners Conference
- October 9 – Indigenous Peoples' Day -Office Closed
- October 11 – Chamber Event: Down on the Farm (changed from Sept 27)
- October 15 thru 17 – APA-PA State Planning Conference
- October 26 – Blair County Planning Commission Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The next board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. October 26, 2023 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes for September 28, 2023

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

Representing:

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

Bruce Erb, Commissioner

Commissioner Liaison

Members absent:

Thomas M. Holsinger
Benjamin Postles
Herbert Shelow, Sr.
Linda Smith

Townships Collectively
Townships Collectively
Boroughs Collectively
Townships Collectively

Guests:

Walt Frank
Carol A. Dannenberg
Regis Nale

Altoona Mirror
Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog Group
Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog Group

Staff:

David McFarland III, Planning Director
MacKenzie Caron, Community Planner
Rhonda Kelly, Planning Aide

Staff Absent:

Sherry Socie, Strategic Planner
Wesley L. Burket, Transportation Planner

2. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the August 31, 2023 Blair Planning Board meeting were approved.

Motion: To approve the August 31, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes, for Item #2 of this agenda:
Moved: Lawrence Carter
Seconded: James Dixon
Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

3. Public Comment Period – Mr. Regis Nale of Hollidaysburg explained that he had not been asked to speak but would like to speak on behalf of the Gaysport residents regarding the increased number and severity of flooding events over the last 30 years as more and more development occurs upstream. His intent is to provide a good understanding of what these residents experience in terms of flooding events – two events in 100 years is more tolerable than two or three events in one summer – two flood events occurred within a two-week period. When recovery clean-up efforts,

which included furnace replacement, were completed for these mostly older residents (on fixed incomes), a few weeks later these same residents experienced a second flood. Mr. Nale pointed out that each flood event also resulted in an increase in the resident's flood insurance. He also pointed out that the 'mini ditch' is usually dry in summer but floods in the spring and fall; however, proposed development upstream and the lack of enforced stormwater regulations will impact the 'mini ditch' with more flooding.

Chairman Hall stated that this may not be the platform for Mr. Nale's concern, that it is an issue to be taken up with Hollidaysburg Borough. Mr. Nale replied that his purpose here is to provide this Board with a good understanding of the situation for their subsequent review and consideration of a proposed plan to be submitted to this Planning Board.

Mr. Nale communicated that the Conservation District is on board with mitigation efforts for a stormwater facility in the Gaysport area with CDBG funds to be delegated for the project. To summarize this concern, Mr. Nale stated that the Stowell Farm, located immediately behind and upstream from the Gaysport neighborhood, is for sale and that a developer is seeking to change the current zoning from Traditional Neighborhood to General Residential to develop the property. Changing the zoning would create more flooding and would be a disservice to the Gaysport residents.

Chairman Hall reiterated that this is a Hollidaysburg Borough issue; and when this Board receives a zoning change review request, what this Board looks at is whether the zoning change requested by the municipality is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan; that this Board's comment -even if the change is determined not a good idea- does not hold any real authority. Mr. Nale stated that 98 percent of the time, the Borough does follow the Planning Commission's recommendations. He repeated his purpose of bringing the issue to the Board to be fully informed about the situation regarding an upcoming request to change the zoning. He thanked the Board.

4. Commissioner Liaison Forum – Commissioner Erb reported that the Commissioners are continuing with their budget liaison meetings and noted that he and Mr. McFarland had met within the last two weeks or less. He also reported that the ABI/Crowsnest project was given an extension to complete the project that is receiving American Rescue funds. The finished project will provide new or improved service to approximately 1,700 households and/or businesses.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

5. Gardner's Candies Storage Building – located at 2600 Adams Avenue in Tyrone Borough. This plan proposes construction of a new 20,000 square-foot storage facility on an existing storage campus. Improvements to the site include paved access drives, concrete loading/unloading pads and stormwater management facilities. The existing ingress/egress will be used for delivery trucks. No additional parking is proposed, however, if future hiring requires additional parking, the developer should ensure compliance with the Borough's parking requirements. Environmentally, the site includes prime ag soils with portions of the site located in the 100-year flood plain and is located in the South Bald Eagle Creek Watershed. However, concerns are not anticipated because the existing site is already a developed industrial site and no new development is planned for the floodplain areas. Additionally, the plan includes underground detention pumps and trenches to help offset water runoff. There was clarification that although specific stormwater retention is a local level requirement, there are State expectations as well. In summary, the Blair County Planning Commission finds this development to be consistent with the countywide planning efforts as presented in the *Alleghenies Ahead* Regional Comprehensive Plan.

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

Moved: James Dixon

Seconded: Patrick Baechle

Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

6. 3417 Route 764 LLC – located at 3417 Route 764 in Allegheny Township. This plan proposes the construction of a 2,500 square-foot office building and a 4,000 square-foot garage for a trucking business. Additional site improvements include paved parking with an ADA space as well as gravel parking in front of the garage, stormwater management and grading for a possible future garage extension. The proposed access is a 24-foot wide, paved, bi-directional drive. A concrete walkway is proposed for the front of the office building but not along 6th Avenue; it is recommended the developer consider sidewalks along 6th Avenue for pedestrian safety. Although landscaping is proposed, no exterior lighting or photometrics were included in the Plan; it is recommended any exterior lighting should be shielded/directed to prevent glare on neighboring properties and roadways. Prime ag soils exist on the

site; however, concerns are not anticipated because the site was previously developed as an industrial site and because the development is proposed for the current graveled area, any potential farmland is not to be developed and re-seeding grass is proposed for an existing gravel area to help mitigate the impact on the Beaver Dam Branch of the Juniata Watershed. Because a stormwater plan was not included, it is recommended the developer ensure compliance with the Township's stormwater management.

The Board discussed concerns about gravel migrating into stormwater facilities and onto 6th Avenue as well as concern about the omission of sidewalks. Ms. Caron stated that Allegheny Township does not require paving for this type of development and added that the plan proposed paving for most of the area. The letter does recommend sidewalks for pedestrian safety. She pointed out that the Planning Commission is advisory, it is not regulatory.

Mr. Ardizzone commented that stormwater plans should be required as part of plans submitted for development reviews. Mr. Baechle voiced concern about the impact on neighboring municipalities due to varying municipal stormwater requirements; that if regulations were in place and enforced (beginning upstream and down) it would help prevent flooding in communities downstream. Mr. Farland commented that this proposed plan actually reduces the amount of impervious surface and is probably why the stormwater ordinance was not triggered.

Chairman Hall agreed that the varying municipal stormwater regulations are an issue. He added that stormwater management plans, in terms of the engineering design calculations work in theory but he is not aware of reports on the actual success of the design. He further commented that sidewalk waivers for areas that do not currently have sidewalks are self-defeating, then there will never be sidewalks. Mr. Baechle commented that it would be helpful to have a plan that guides sidewalk necessity if the development is located in an active pedestrian area.

In summary, the Blair County Planning Commission finds this development to be consistent with the countywide planning efforts as presented in the *Alleghenies Ahead* Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #6 on this agenda:
Moved: James Dixon
Seconded: Lawrence Carter
Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

7. Euro Motor Cars – located at 560 Chimney Rocks Road in Blair Township. This plan proposes construction of a 4,440 square-foot automotive repair garage. Additional site improvements include a gravel parking area and stormwater management facilities. It is not anticipated that the potential for increased traffic to be significant enough to warrant an impact study; however, it is recommended the developer consult the Township to assess any unforeseen negative impacts. No landscaping, lighting or photometrics were included with the proposal and is therefore recommended that the developer ensure landscaping complies with the Township's regulation; any exterior lighting should be shielded/directed to prevent glare on neighboring properties and roadways. There are no environmental concerns regarding this proposed development. The developer should ensure compliance with the Township's stormwater management regulations and should help mitigate potential negative impacts on the Beaver Dam Branch of the Juniata Watershed. In summary, the Blair County Planning Commission finds this development to be consistent with the countywide planning efforts as presented in the *Alleghenies Ahead* Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #7 on this agenda:
Moved: Lawrence Carter
Seconded: Patrick Baechle
Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

8. Sarah Furnace Estate Redevelopment – located at the intersection of Quarry Road and Dunning Highway in the Township of Greenfield is proposed by Sheetz Inc. Prior to the redevelopment, demolition is proposed for existing fencing and a small outbuilding. The historic Sarah Furnace Estate redevelopment includes converting the existing barn into a private meeting/corporate event center for Sheetz Inc; a 6,600 square-foot addition is proposed for a culinary prep space with a rooftop deck and outdoor pavilion. The mansion is to be converted into a bed and breakfast for out-of-town Sheetz staff. Additional site improvements include three (3) paved parking areas with ADA spaces, one shuttle bus parking area, five-foot wide walking paths and stormwater management facilities. The

proposed landscaping will provide overall improvement to the bioretention capacity of the soil. The developer should ensure exterior lighting is shielded/directed to prevent glare on neighboring properties and roadways. The site is located in the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River Watershed with portions of the site are in the 100-year flood plain and does have some wetland features on the property but should not pose an immediate concern; the developer proposes rain gardens and landscaped infiltration berms to mitigate runoff.

Mr. Carter questioned if the Pennsylvania Historic Commission is involved, Ms. Caron responded that the property does not appear in the historic registry database which means the PA Historic Commission cannot take any action.

Mr. McFarland noted that an archeological study was completed on the property when the industrial site was initially developed.

Motion: approve the staff actions and additional recommendations for Item #8 on this.

Moved: James Dixon

Seconded: Lawrence Carter

Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

9. 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 the requests prior to sending response letters:

- **Tyrone Borough:** Ryan and Ashley Walk Subdivision, located at 771 5th Street
- **Allegheny Township:** Skupien-Smychynsky Lot Line Change at 111 Twin Site Lane
- **Greenfield Township:** Marasco Business Park, located on Corporate Blvd and Cottonwood Road

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #9 on this agenda:

Moved: Patrick Baechle

Seconded: Nicola Ardizzone

Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

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- **Logan Township** – Logan Township Supervisors – Cashman Road Sewer Extension – Land Use Review for Community Development Block Grant Funding FFY 2021, 2022, 2023
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Mr. Baechle as about several acronyms, which Ms. Caron explained as follows: NPDES stands for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and PWS stands for Public Water Supply. Ms. Caron stated that the October agenda will include a plan for the Logan Boulevard Watermain Replacement Project is multi-municipal that includes the City of Altoona and the Townships of Allegheny, Frankstown and Logan. No street trees are proposed for removal. The submittal includes a full plan set, which Ms. Caron offered to provide the Board with a review in its entirety if they would like.

Mr. McFarland pointed out that Huston Township's swiveling standpipes are the first of potentially several similar projects. He explained that standpipes are used for fire control, that by dipping one end of the pipe in the river, the standpipe becomes an instant fire hydrant. He noted this is an element listed in the action plan of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Item #10 on this agenda:
Moved: Patrick Baechle
Seconded: James Dixon
Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

REVIEW OF ACTIONS BY GOVERNING BODY

11. Woodbury Township – Woodbury Township proposes several updates to its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Article 1: limitations of liability for the Township in terms of subdivision and land developments; Article 2: various language and definition entries such as Appointing Authority, Landowner, Land Development, etc.; Article 5: stormwater conveyance in driveways and roadways, stormwater damage provisions, required erosion and sedimentation plans when any grading/excavating is involved. Ms. Caron referenced a development discussed earlier in the meeting in terms of triggering the stormwater ordinance and that when grading is involved, that triggers the stormwater ordinance. Article 11: grant and modification waiver information for relief of requirements; Article 12: language for enforcement of the ordinance and any penalties.

Ms. Caron responded to Mr. Baechle that in fact, the Township's ordinance already contains stormwater design, that this change involves stormwater specifically in terms of driveways and roadways. Ms. Caron also explained that SALDO stands for Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Mr. Baechle voiced concern if the Board provides a 'yes' vote regarding an ordinance, if that alleviates the Township's responsibility in the case of stormwater. Ms. Caron explained that this Board's review is to determine if the plans, ordinances, etc. are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that generally, more regulation is recommended in terms of stormwater. Mr. Ardizzone commented that the point of the ordinance's disclaimer in terms of the Township's responsibility, is to protect themselves from the private sector doing things that affect the public sector.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Item #11 on this agenda:
Moved: Nicola Ardizzone
Seconded: Lawrence Carter
Voted: 5 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

LONG RANGE PLANNING

12. All Together Altoona – Mr. McFarland reviewed CZB Consulting's report to the City of Altoona as follows:

'Kitchen Table' Conversation #1 (conducted at the July 2023 Planning Board meeting)

- Core Values are: resourceful, self-reliant and gritty
- Aspirational Values are: entrepreneurial, inclusive and bold
- Planning Principles are the rules that govern and help translate values into action; the framework of the City's decision-making for the next ten years. Those principles are to:

- have 'skin in the game'
- demand and maintain higher standards
- embrace risk-taking and new approaches
- protect and strengthen Altoona's inherent assets. Planning Principles
- Priorities or "Big Things"
 - Better Places and Public Spaces
 - Neighborhoods With Pride and Opportunity

Mr. McFarland initiated today's 'Kitchen Table Conversation #2

Kitchen Table Conversation #2 -The 'Gives' and 'Gets' Associated with Project Development *NOTE: Mr. McFarland emphasized the three project scenarios are fictional but are meant to prompt discussion to shape and develop Altoona's new comprehensive plan.*

The Board completed the exercise and members provided their input to each scenario.

13. ADDED ITEM -Stormwater Planning Grant -Mr. McFarland explained that in May 2023 the Planning Commission applied to the PA DEP for a Stormwater Planning grant (funding opened after 20 years). The award notice has not yet been received but is to be provided in September. If awarded, the grant will provide the first of a three-phase process to update Stormwater management modeling, ordinances, standards, etc. Phase I identifies issues and the steps to address the issues; Phase II develops the model and the ordinances; and Phase III is to have all the municipalities adopt the ordinances and assist with implementing the ordinances. Mr. McFarland added that once a municipality has its stormwater plan in place, the constituent municipalities must adopt an ordinance. He also noted that this funding was recently opened after 20 years.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

14. Planning Commissioners' Forum – Chairman Hall commented on the street blight curbing and sidewalk conditions and that by resolving the county-wide issue of installation and maintenance responsibilities, it would go a long way to improving the street blight. A brief discussion ensued.
15. Question From the Media – No questions for this meeting.
16. Upcoming Events –
 - September 28 – SARA Summit
 - September 29 – HBCC Annual Breakfast Meeting
 - October 2 – Hazard Mitigation Committee Meeting
 - October 4 & 5 – PennDOT Planning Partners Conference
 - October 9 – Indigenous Peoples' Day -Office Closed
 - October 11 – Chamber Event: Down on the Farm (changed from Sept 27)
 - October 15 thru 17 – APA-PA State Planning Conference
 - October 26 – Blair County Planning Commission Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Commission Board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2023 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Moved: James Dixon

Seconded: Lawrence Carter

Voted: 8 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted

Date Minutes Approved





Blair County Planning Commission

Minutes – September 28, 2023

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