



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting of February 29, 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 January 25, 2024 minutes of the Blair County Planning Commission Meeting.
3. Public Comment Period – Public comment will be received at this time.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

4. Antique Depot Storage Units Phase II – Located at the intersection of 2nd Ave and 14th St. in Duncansville Borough.
5. Borough of Hollidaysburg – Subdivision of Stowell Farm
6. Staff Level Subdivision and Land Development Reviews:
 - City of Altoona – VanSickel Subdivision, Walnut Avenue and 38th Street
 - City of Altoona – Kinkade Subdivision, 5th Avenue
 - Tyrone Borough – Kemp Wolford Subdivision, 15th Street
 - Antis Township – Martin Subdivision, Oswald Road
 - Greenfield Township – Moyer Lot Consolidation, Old Timberman Road
 - Greenfield Township – Greenfield Commons Resubmittal, Rush Drive
 - Greenfield Township – Musselman Subdivision, Upper Claar Road
 - Taylor Township – Hinish Nooyen Subdivision, Dumb Hundred Road and Dick Schoolhouse Road

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

7. 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:
 - **Allegheny and Blair Townships and Hollidaysburg Borough** – Land Studies for Blair County Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 waiver for restoration activity – Beaverdam Branch Floodplain Restoration
 - **Tyrone Borough** – American Eagle Paper Mills, Application to PA DEP for Air Quality State Only Operating Permit renewal
 - **Antis Township** – DelGrosso Foods, pre-treatment facility on Kristel Lane, PennVEST grant application
 - **Catharine Township** – Harmoni Towers telecommunication facility, Invitation to Comment
 - **Greenfield Township** – Keller Engineers for A. Duie Pyle – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 102 Land Development and NPDES Permit – Claysburg Site Transfer Terminal
 - **Greenfield Township** – Quarry Road, LLC Application to PA DEP for Chapter 102 permit for land development – removal and restoration of old railroad bed, Quarry Road

- **Logan and Tyrone Townships** – GD&F for Altoona Water Authority – Application to PA DEP for Public Water Supply Permit, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, and Local Building Permit – Horseshoe Curve and Kettle Water Treatment Facilities Ozone System Upgrades
- **Williamsburg Borough** – EBI Consulting for Harmoni Towers – Preliminary Historic Land Use Review – Fox Run Road Tower Installation
- **Woodbury Township** – Williamsburg Municipal Authority – Permit Renewal Application to Susquehanna River Basin Commission for water withdrawal at water well #3.
- **Woodbury Township** – BluAcres LLC for Seven Falls Anglers Club – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 GP-01 Fish Habitat and Enhancement Structures Permit – Clover Creek improvement project

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

8. **BRAVE Update** - Update on the public outreach phase of the Hazard Mitigation Plan update

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

9. **Act 167 Grant Award** – Execute a grant agreement for Act 167 funds awarded in the amount of \$30,000.00 to be utilized in the preparation of a Blair County Stormwater Management Plan.
10. **Employee Handbook** - Updating the job description for the Community Planner position to include a stronger emphasis on public outreach.
11. **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):
 - Board Reorganization to reflect a regional representation
 - Presentation of Local Share Reallocation Example
12. **Commissioner Liaison Forum** - This is an opportunity for the Commissions' liaison to make any reports, comments, or findings to the Planning Commission.
13. **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.
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:**
 - March 1-3 – Blair County Home, Garden & Healthy Living Show
 - March 6 – PennDOT Connects quarterly Steering Committee
 - March 7 - Natural Hazards and Hazard Mitigation Presentation
 - March 12 – PedalCycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
 - March 19 – 21 – G393 Hazard Mitigation for Emergency Managers
 - March 20 – Southern Alleghenies CAP monthly meeting
 - March 28 – Blair Planning Commission monthly meeting
 - March 29 – Good Friday, Office Closed
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ADJOURNMENT

The next board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 AM on March 28, 2024 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.



Blair Planning

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

BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes for February 29, 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
Benjamin Postles
Herbert Shelow, Sr.
Linda Smith
Amy Webster, Commissioner

Representing:

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

Board Member Lawrence Carter entered the meeting at 9:30.

Members absent: none

Guests:

Carol Dannenberg
Andrew Holodnik

Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog
Hollidaysburg Planning, Zoning, Code Enforcement

Staff:

David McFarland III, Planning Director
Sherry Socie, Strategic Planner
MacKenzie Caron, 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 January 25, 2024 meeting; Motion passed.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 25, 2024 meeting, Item #2 on this agenda:

Moved: James Dixon

Seconded: Thomas Holsinger

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

3. Public Comment Period – No public comment.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

4. Antique Depot Storage Units Phase II – located at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and 14th Street in Duncansville Borough. The development plan proposes two new storage buildings, a 2,200 SF and a 2,400 SF. No changes are proposed for site access or parking. No lighting or photometrics were included with the proposal, as such, it is recommended the developer should ensure any exterior lighting is shielded/directed in a manner to prevent glare on neighboring properties and roadways. Although vehicle traffic to site will increase, it is not anticipated to create a

significant, peak-hour impact and therefore no recommendation was made for a traffic study. The site does include the presence of the 100-year floodplain, however the storage units are not being built in the floodplain. The stormwater management control system design is in accordance with the Duncansville stormwater management ordinance. Also, a portion of the gravel lot will be converted to a grass lawn to help mitigate some of the negative impact to the watershed.

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: Nicola Ardizzone
Seconded: Benjamin Postles
Voted: 8 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

5. Borough of Hollidaysburg -BC Holdings 2020, LLC Stowell Farm Subdivision – located in Hollidaysburg Borough. The plan submitted proposes subdividing 7.539 acres from a 68-acre property for the future site of a stormwater management facility. The residual lot of 60.3 acres has no proposed development in this plan. The 7.539 acres is to be accessed by a 1.288-acre access and utility easement along Bedford Street. This proposed subdivision is for the Borough’s acquisition of the 7.539 acres via eminent domain.

It is not anticipated that vehicle trips would have a negative vehicle impact on the local transportation system. The site includes the presence of the 100-year floodplain and prime agricultural soils, but because this plan does not include any development at this time, such as the proposed stormwater facility presumed in the future, there is no immediate environmental concern at this time. The site is located in the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River Watershed; again, because no development is proposed in this plan, no negative impact is anticipated.

Comments and questions were heard from the Chairman and several Board members. In particular, that the status of this property had not changed from the previous plan submitted, which was found to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Caron responded and clarified that inconsistency was due to the proposed zoning change from TND to R2 for the entire property; she stated that this current plan is for a subdivision of land, it does not a zoning change. Questions were raised regarding the size of the proposed detention pond and if an engineering study was conducted for the retention pond. Ms. Caron responded that no official proposal has been submitted for a detention pond at this site. She deferred to the Hollidaysburg Planning Director Andrew Holodnik, who was present at this meeting. He explained that the Borough engineers have been working on this.

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

6. 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 – VanSickel Subdivision, Walnut Avenue and 38th Street
- City of Altoona – Kinkade Subdivision, 5th Avenue
- Tyrone Borough – Kemp Wolford Subdivision, 15th Street
- Antis Township – Martin Subdivision, Oswald Road
- Greenfield Township – Moyer Lot Consolidation, Old Timberman Road
- Greenfield Township – Greenfield Commons Resubmittal, Rush Drive
- Greenfield Township – Musselman Subdivision, Upper Claar Road
- Taylor Township – Hinish Nooyen Subdivision, Dumb Hundred Road and Dick Schoolhouse Road

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations for Item #6 on this agenda
Moved: James Dixon
Seconded: Linda Smith
Voted: 8 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

7. 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:

- **Allegheny and Blair Townships and Hollidaysburg Borough** – Land Studies for Blair County Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 waiver for restoration activity – Beaverdam Branch Floodplain Restoration
- **Tyrone Borough** – American Eagle Paper Mills, Application to PA DEP for Air Quality State Only Operating Permit renewal
- **Antis Township** – DelGrosso Foods, pre-treatment facility on Kristel Lane, PennVEST grant application
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- **Williamsburg Borough** – EBI Consulting for Harmoni Towers – Preliminary Historic Land Use Review – Fox Run Road Tower Installation
- **Woodbury Township** – Williamsburg Municipal Authority – Permit Renewal Application to Susquehanna River Basin Commission for water withdrawal at water well #3.
- **Woodbury Township** – BluAcres LLC for Seven Falls Anglers Club – Application to PA DEP for Chapter 105 GP-01 Fish Habitat and Enhancement Structures Permit – Clover Creek improvement project

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Item #7 on this agenda
Moved: Thomas Holsinger
Seconded: Nicola Ardizzone
Abstained: Benjamin Postles on the Harmoni Towers telecommunication facility in Catharine Township
Voted: 6 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

LONG RANGE PLANNING

8. BRAVE Update: – Planning Director Dave McFarland explained that municipal outreach meetings have been scheduled regionally as well as public workshops that have been scheduled regionally. The purpose of the outreach is to gather data and input for the five-year update of *BRAVE*, the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The municipalities will provide their concerns and ideas. The public workshops will lay out the Hazard Mitigation Plan as to what it is and what we are doing. The citizens will provide their concerns about hazards that may be missing from the current Plan and to hear their ideas for mitigation of the hazards. A survey will soon be made available also for the public.

It was noted that the GAC (Government Advisory Committee) will also be meeting in March at which there will probably be some discussion on hazard mitigation.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

9. Act 167 Grant Award – Strategic Planner Sherry Socie stated that the DEP Act 167 grant was awarded in the amount of \$30,000.00 for the County's Stormwater Management Plan. Electronic signatures were acquired from both Chairman Bill Hall and Secretary Pat Baechle. As soon as the executed grant agreement is made available the process can begin to obtain a consultant to do the Plan.

10. Employee Handbook - An updated job description was handed out to the Board for the open position of Community Planner. Director McFarland explained that some things have been removed that are no longer pertinent to the position and that public outreach was added into the primary duties. This job description needs to be changed in the employee handbook. The entire handbook will be updated at some point. Chairman Hall cautioned that as an entry level position, the ad should not be written that would deter applicants from submitting an application.

11. Planning Director's Report –

- **Restructuring the Planning Commission Board.** A handout was provided for discussion on restructuring the appointment representation on the Planning Board. The handout provided two restructuring proposals that were reviewed by Planning Director Dave McFarland; he pointed out that the proposals are not set in stone and that this discussion is only a starting point for the restructuring process. The next step would be to present it to the GAC (Government Advisory Committee) and then the 26 stakeholders, which are the 25 local municipalities plus the County. The Planning Commission appointments belong to the County Commissioners who will determine if they want the appointments restructured. The current structure has existed since 1964, with appointments as follows: 3 from the City, 3 from the Townships and 3 from the Boroughs. The proposed change is to address municipal needs and concerns on a regional basis rather than a municipal basis, with the concept that neighboring municipalities likely have more commonalities with those in a surrounding area than say a municipality in another region of the County. A lengthy discussion ensued. Appointments were originally made by the GAC for a broad talent base and then approved by the Commissioners; unlike now, wherein the recommendations are made to the Commissioners by the Borough and Township Associations.

The goal of restructuring the appointments from the three, three, three representations to a regional representation can provide a more countywide oversight. Board member Linda Smith cautioned how appointees would be divided, stating that currently everyone accurately knows their area. Several members expressed that they know the Board oversees the entire County but they rely individually on other members to know their particular areas. Comment was also heard regarding core area representation may require an additional representative because the area makes up half the population in the County however the remaining areas have all the ground where things are being developed. Mr. McFarland pointed out that, to his knowledge, the southwest part of the County has never had representation on this Board and noted the MPO has also made complaints regarding its representation is mostly from the core area. Several members do feel it is time for change.

Mr. McFarland welcomed comments/suggestions can also be provided him via email.

Commissioner Webster commented that the current Board of Commissioners tries to encourage folks who have not previously been engaged in government, to become involved, which will provide broader options in the talent bank. She noted the talent bank application is now easier to find on the Commissioners website. Commission Webster complimented that the current board is doing a good job but agrees that we need to look to the future, encourage new ideas and make some adjustments.

Comments were also made that include the need for young people to join the Board to gain experience. A suggestion was made that a task list be generated that explains what the Planning Commission does to used as a guide tool by the Planning Board members who could go out to the local municipal meetings after election year and introduce themselves and explain what services can be provided by the Planning Commission.

Strategic Planner Sherry Socie commented that there are people that do not realize/know about the Planning Commission unless there is something significant and widely publicized. It is a valid point to attend meetings such as the SCCBA (South Central Counties Boroughs Association) and the Fall Township Convention to present what the Planning Commission is and promote people to become involved.

- **Municipal Local Share Discussion** -A handout was provided for discussion that includes the current local share and new scenarios for how the local share is determined for the municipalities. Currently the local share is based on a per capita rate. Director McFarland pointed out the disparity between the smaller versus larger municipalities and provided an explanation of the options suggested on the handout. The Planning Commission can provide and wants to provide services to the municipalities, it is a matter of determining the balance in equity for the municipalities to receive services while compensating the Planning staff. Director McFarland stated that there is a

lot of potential that is not being realized because people are not aware of what the Planning Commission can do for them. This concept will be presented to the GAC members at its meeting in March; the concept was always presented during last year's annual municipal outreach. The suggestion was made that municipalities there could be a carry-over into subsequent years for municipalities that may not utilize their entire amount of the local share in one year.

This concept is an attempt to equalize the local share, determine if it should be changed or leave it as is. It was pointed out that to provide assistance to one of the small municipalities, the mileage alone to their office to provide assistance will utilize its entire local share. Other ideas to determine local share have been mentioned before, such as road mileage-based or property-assessed values. Chairman Hall added that there needs to be consideration of an hourly rate charge for services provided by the Planning Commission to the local municipalities that opt out of participating in the local share. Discussion continued.

- City of Altoona -Comprehensive Plan – This City's Comprehensive Plan is at a full draft at this point. A 45-day public comment period will kick off in April and will end with a formal public hearing. They anticipate the formal adoption to take place in July 2024. This Plan is available on-line at All Together Altoona.com for review and public comment. A question was raised if anyone is aware of a report was ever published on the accomplishments of the last comprehensive plan, *Positively Altoona*.

12. Commissioner Liaison Forum –Commissioner Webster explained that the Commissioners are working on two projects that would impact the Planning Commission. One project is to connect various trails throughout Blair County and over the last few weeks, the public has been invited to attend the Commissioners' meetings for discussions on the creation of an authority to oversee grants for a trail connection project. This effort not only would put Blair County on the map as a tourism destination but also as a life destination. This would be a long-term project that would probably see completion with the next Board of Commissioners.

The other project is the acquisition of property to build a new prison facility; the Commissioners want the Planning Board to be aware, as it will involve some issues in terms of planning and transportation. Commissioner Webster stated that no decision has been made regarding property acquisition; the study they thought was completed is not, as several properties had to be eliminated and they now need to look at other options.

13. Commissioners' Forum – No comments or discussion for this meeting.

14. Question From the Media – No questions.

15. Upcoming Events:

- March 1-3 – Blair County Home, Garden & Healthy Living Show
- March 6 – PennDOT Connects quarterly Steering Committee
- March 7 - Natural Hazards and Hazard Mitigation Presentation
- March 12 – PedalCycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- March 19 – 21 – G393 Hazard Mitigation for Emergency Managers
- March 20 – Southern Alleghenies CAP monthly meeting
- March 28 – Blair Planning Commission monthly meeting
- March 29 – Good Friday, Office Closed

ADDED EVENT: March 18 – GAC meeting (Government Advisory Committee)

ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Commission Board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 29, 2024 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Moved: Benjamin Postles

Seconded: James Dixon

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

Respectfully Submitted



Date Minutes Approved



Blair County Planning Commission

Minutes – February 29, 2024

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