



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting of July 27, 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 June 29, 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. All Washed Up Car Spa – located along Logan Boulevard, in the City of Altoona.
6. Johnston Storage Units - located along Bentley Drive off Route 764 in Allegheny Township.
7. Whetstone Manufactured Homes – located along County Route 101 in Greenfield Township.
8. 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: JT Mattas Rentals LLS Subdivision
 - City of Altoona: Logan Partners No Impact Subdivision
 - City of Altoona: Stover Lot Merge
 - Antis Township: Bellemead Civic Association Subdivision
 - Antis Township: Fetterman Minor Subdivision
 - Blair Township: Henry Lot Consolidation
 - Frankstown Township: Wolf Side Lot Addition
 - Greenfield Township: Imler Minor Subdivision
 - Huston Township: Stern Subdivision
 - Logan Township: Geist Lot Consolidation Plan
 - North Woodbury Township: Detwiler Garage Addition
 - Snyder Township: Walk Lot Line Change
 - Tyrone Township: Todd Subdivision
 - Woodbury Township: Gunnett Estate Lot Line Addition

ACTIONS BY GOVERNING BODIES

9. Duncansville Borough – Zoning Ordinance Amendment to regulate advertising signage.

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:

- Statewide, PennDOT grant application for Federal Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program – Wildlife Crossing Strategic Plan Development
- City of Altoona, HRG for Weis Markets -PA DEP Chapter 105 general permit application for Brush Run Stream Bank Stabilization Project
- City of Altoona, MDM Engineering for All Washed Up Auto Spa, PA DEP Chapter 102 permit application for Stormwater Discharge Associate with Construction Activities
- Antis Township, Keller Engineers for Rutters #82, PA DEP Major Modification Chapter 102 permit for Stormwater Discharge Associated with Construction Activities, additional hauling road to transport waste
- Frankstown Township, Alexandra Creany, PA DEP NPDES renewal application for single residence sewage treatment
- Juniata Township, Duke Energy for North Allegheny Wind Repower Project, PA DEP Chapter 102 Land Development Permit Application
- Tyrone Borough, Vitro Automotive Glass, Pittsburgh Glass Works LLC, PA DEP NPDES Permit Renewal application

Letters of Support

- Rails to Trails of Central PA, Lower Trail Improvement Project -PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program grant application
- Rails to Trails of Central PA, Lower Trail Improvement Project -PA DCED Multimodal Transportation grant application
- Rails to Trails of Central PA, Lower Trail Improvement Project -Appalachian Regional Commission Program grant application
- Hollidaysburg Borough, Canal Basin Park Gateway Connector Bridge project -PA DCED Multimodal Transportation grant application

LONG RANGE PLANNING

11. Altogether Altoona – Kitchen Table Discussion on community identity and the large issues facing the City.
12. Internet for All –A brief overview of the meeting materials for the outreach efforts to identify households and business that are underserved or not served at all with broadband services.

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:
- August 18 – CPDAP Quarterly Meeting
 - August 23 – HPMS PennDOT Field Audit
 - August 29 to 31 – FEMA Webinar for Hazard Mitigation Planning Update
 - August 31 – Blair County Planning Commission Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The next board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 AM on August 31, 2023 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.



BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes for July 27, 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
Thomas M. Holsinger
Herbert Shelow, Sr.

Bruce Erb, Commissioner

Members absent:

Benjamin Postles
Linda Smith

Guests:

Walt Frank
Carol A. Dannenberg
Devin Saylor
Regis Nale

Staff:

David McFarland III, Planning Director
Sherry Socie, Strategic Planner
MacKenzie Caron, Community Planner
Jamie Klink, Regional Planner
Wesley L. Burket, Transportation Planner
Rhonda Kelly, Planning Aide

Representing:

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

Commissioner Liaison

Townships Collectively
Townships Collectively

Altoona Mirror
Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog Group
City of Altoona
Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog Group

2. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the June 29, 2023 Blair Planning Board meeting were approved.

Motion: To approve the June 29, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes, for Item #2 of this agenda:

Moved: Thomas Holsinger

Seconded: Herbert Shelow

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

3. Public Comment Period –No public comment at this time.

4. Commissioner Liaison Forum – Commissioner Erb commented that today the Blair County Commissioners will approve a broadband project that is to essentially reach all sections of the County. The project includes nine enhancements to existing towers. The project is the County's first use of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) monies.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

5. All Washed Up Car Spa – located along Logan Boulevard in the City of Altoona. This development plan proposes construction of a drive-thru car wash with vacuum islands, new pavement, stormwater management facilities and parking spaces that include 4 standard, 2 ADA and 4 bicycle. The plan proposes to merge six adjoining parcels into two lots, one with an existing single-family home and the other for the proposed car wash. Access to the site is via a one-way ingress and one-way egress. A secondary exit is proposed for delivery and garbage trucks or citizens that decide to exit prior to using the car wash; the exit would utilize removable bollards to exit onto an existing alley. The Board members discussed this secondary exit and recommended that the developer include a separate way to access the lower vacuum facility or eliminate the removable bollards from the proposed secondary exit. Sidewalks, landscaping and lighting are proposed; it is recommended that the developer ensure exterior lighting is shielded/directed to prevent glare on neighboring properties/roadways. It is also recommended that the developer consult with PennDOT and the City of Altoona to address potential impacts to the local transportation system. No immediate environmental concerns exist. The report for stormwater management indicates the post-development rate is below the pre-development rate. In summary, the Blair County Planning Commission finds this development to be generally consistent with the countywide planning efforts as presented in the *Alleghenies Ahead* Regional Comprehensive Plan provided the applicant adequately addresses our comments and concerns during the City's review process.

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

Moved: Nicola Ardizzone

Seconded: James Dixon

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

NOTE: *Public comments received since the Planning Commission's review of this proposal -All Washed Up Car Spa – raise concern if a new car wash fits into the community landscape of this corridor due to the number of existing car washes within a five-mile radius. As a result of its discussion, the Planning Commission recommended, if the City has not already done so, to hold public hearing on this proposal to provide an opportunity for public comment.*

6. Johnston Storage Units – located along Bentley Drive in the City of Altoona. This development plan proposes construction of a storage unit building with proposed parking that includes two ADA spaces. The storage building will replace an existing mobile home on the site with access to the site via a 20- to 24-foot-wide gravel drive. Phase 2 will include removal of an existing house and expansion of the storage facility. The presence of prime ag soil does exist on the entire property and portions of the site are within the 100-year floodplain; however, these features should not be significant concern as the building would not be located within the floodplain and the site is already developed and no other potential farmland is to be converted or developed. As the site is located within the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River Watershed, the stormwater management facilities improvements should help mitigate potential negative impacts to the 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 #6 on this agenda:

Moved: James Dixon

Seconded: Thomas Holsinger

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

7. Whetstone Manufacture Homes – located along Everett Road in Greenfield Township. This development plan proposes placement of a 980-square-foot manufactured house on a 0.58-acre lot that contains an existing, single-family home. The plan includes construction of a new, gravel driveway off Everett Road to access the proposed manufactured home. The Planning Commission generally recommends that single-family residential lots be subdivided when building an additional residence and driveway for future permitting purposes. It is recommended that the developer consult DEP and Greenfield Township to assess potential negative impacts. The site is located in the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata Watershed, within the 100-year flood plain. The proposed plan does not include a post stormwater management plan; however, the developer specifies that a field survey was conducted and that a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) was issued to amend the flood maps at this site. It is recommended that the developer ensure all building specifications meet Greenfield Township's Floodplain Ordinance

requirements. The Board's discussion resulted in further recommending the developer have an additional DEP review regarding current and future sewage needs at this site. The developer should ensure all facilities be designed in accordance with Bobs Creek and Dunning Creek Stormwater Ordinance. In summary, the Blair County Planning Commission does not find this development to be consistent with the countywide planning efforts as presented in the *Alleghenies Ahead* Regional Comprehensive Plan. Provided the above comments are adequately addressed, the Blair County Planning Commission requests a resubmittal for its review of any significant changes made to the plan.

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations contingent upon an approval by the engineer and approval by the DEP and an additional review by this Board for Item #7 on this agenda:

Moved: Nicola Ardizzone

Seconded: Patrick Baechle

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

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 the requests prior to sending response letters:

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- Snyder Township: Walk Lot Line Change
- Tyrone Township: Todd Subdivision
- Woodbury Township: Gunnett Estate Lot Line Addition

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

Moved: Lawrence Carter

Seconded: Nicola Ardizzone

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

ACTIONS BY GOVERNING BODY

9. Duncansville Borough -Zoning Ordinance Amendment to regulate advertising signage. The proposed amendment replaces Section B of Article 11 with more explicit language contained in ten (10) provisions that regulate placement, maintenance and design standards for advertising signs and billboards in the Borough's agricultural, commercial and industrial districts. Mr. Baechle asked for clarification as to why the Borough requested this amendment. Ms. Caron and Chairman Hall explained that the amendment provides more robust standards of how and where advertising signage is permitted. Mr. Baechle provided the opinion that there is too much advertising, that there should be more signage restrictions and he asked if this Board could do more in terms of reviewing ordinances to ensure visual appeal to the area. It was noted that Duncansville is required to present sign placements to the Zoning Board for approval. Ms. Caron also explained that the robust language contained in the amendment provides additional scrutiny. Chairman Hall agreed with Mr. Baechle regarding signage, in particular the distractive electronic signs. In summary, the Blair County Planning Commission finds this proposed zoning amendment 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 #9 on this agenda:

Moved: Patrick Baechle

Seconded: James Dixon

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

METROPOLITAN CLEARINGHOUSE

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Letters of Support

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- Rails to Trails of Central PA, Lower Trail Improvement Project -PA DCED Multimodal Transportation grant application
- Rails to Trails of Central PA, Lower Trail Improvement Project -Appalachian Regional Commission Program grant application
- Hollidaysburg Borough, Canal Basin Park Gateway Connector Bridge project -PA DCED Multimodal Transportation grant application

Motion: To approve the staff actions and recommendations listed for Item #10 on this agenda:

Moved: Lawrence Carter

Seconded: Patrick Baechle

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

LONG RANGE PLANNING

11. AT&T Contract– Mr. McFarland stated that an addendum was needed for this agenda and explained that there has been notification that the Planning Commission will need wireless connectivity for several grants to complete field work and that, in general, it will be beneficial to have wireless connectivity assigned to staff. As a government operator, the Planning Commission is eligible to receive a more robust service through AT&T FirstNet. Mr. McFarland is requesting a motion from the Board to enter into a contract with AT&T FirstNet to provide equipment and monthly wireless connectivity service for a not-to-exceed amount of \$45 per line or approximately \$300.00 per month. He responded to Chairman Hall that currently, staff members are not provided phones and that cellular connectivity is currently unavailable in the office.

Motion: To approve a contract for cellular service with AT&T FirstNet as listed in Item #11 on this agenda:

Moved: Patrick Baechle

Seconded: Tom Holsinger

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

NOTE: Items 12 and 13 (All Together Altoona and Internet for All respectively) listed on the agenda were reversed for the actual discussion during the meeting.

12. Internet for All – The PA Broadband Development Authority wants to develop comprehensive digital opportunities to bring broadband service to all Pennsylvanians at speeds of at least 25 megabits per second and uploads of at least 3 megabits per second as standard for modern times. Mr. McFarland explained that the State is conducting a survey throughout the Commonwealth with its localities, counties, authorities, etc. to identify where broadband is not served or is underserved; he noted there are quite a few areas with DSL and dial-up that do not perform at the defined standard rate for modern times.

Southern Alleghenies, nearly four years ago, identified in the six-county region (that includes Blair County), the general areas of service and non-service. The Internet for All initiative will look at specific areas/roads to identify underserved, non-served citizens; for example, a road with a group of five houses that does not have service and, over on another road, are six houses with service but not at the standard speed. Workshops, called “Meeting In A Box” have recently been conducted in Mount Union and State College. Mr. McFarland attended the workshop in Mount Union where participants were provided with a “Meeting In A Box” packet that will help engage the communities’ residents, businesses and organizations to promote and implement a plan for better connectivity. Attendees were encouraged to go out into the communities with the survey to determine broadband connectivity and digital access. The surveys are due back to the State by the end of August. Planning Commission Board members were provided the survey and encouraged to distribute it out into the community, especially to those they know do not have internet service; the Board members were encouraged to also complete the survey. Surveys are to be returned to Mr. McFarland, who will submit them to the State. The survey is also available online.

Chairman Hall suggested the form be sent to the GAC (Government Advisory Council) and the municipalities with the recommendation to ensure the survey is made available. Mr. McFarland stated it will also be sent to the libraries and that the “Meeting In A Box” events will also provide survey opportunities for the different areas of the counties. Mr. McFarland explained that along with actual connection availability, there are two other aspects of internet connectivity that tend to be overlooked; one is, affordability and secondly, education, do the citizens know how to use it and also, for those that know how to use it, do they know the full extent of what they can do.

13. All Together Altoona -The City of Altoona has hired the CZB firm to help guide them through their comprehensive plan initiative called *All Together Altoona*. The Steering Committee for this initiative is assigned to perform ‘Kitchen Table Conversations’, which are opportunities to get the word out to people and to obtain feedback. Mr. McFarland is providing a conversation today for the Board members. The Board members are welcome to (but not expected) open a table discussion with others as well; any feedback is due back to Mr. McFarland prior to August 10 to meet the consultant’s deadline.

Mr. McFarland began this Kitchen Table Conversation, explaining that Part, Question 1 is asking to identify three big things that should be addressed, things so consequential it could be the difference between a thriving or declining community.

1. Mr. Ardizzone presented the need to focus on infrastructure.
2. Mr. Baechle presented the need to maintain what is already established, such as trim street trees, repair sidewalks/curbing. As discussion ensued, Mr. McFarland and Chairman Hall added the issue of housing blight. Mr. McFarland also stated that sidewalks fall under Infrastructure, maintenance and accessibility.
3. Mr. Baechle presented the need to prepare/accommodate for electric bicycles and cars to meet operational needs, such as additional bicycle lanes and car-charging capabilities. Discussion ensued.

Mr. McFarland moved the Kitchen Table Conversation on to Part B, explaining the two identical lists of core values; the Board members and staff were asked individually to give, in their opinion, three values that identifies the community over the last 25 years; and then were asked individually to give, in their opinion, three values they want to see for the community in the next 25 years; the consensus as follows:

Looking Back
self-reliant
hesitant
friendly

Looking Forward
entrepreneurial
determined
resourceful and ambitious

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

14. Planning Commission Forum – Mr. Baechle asked that the agenda items include the specific addresses for subdivisions/land developments.
15. Question From the Media – Mr. Frank asked about the Letters of Support for grant items listed on the agenda, if they had been approved. Ms. Caron explained that they were approved all in one vote under the Metropolitan Clearing House. Mr. Frank also asked about the grant amounts and he will contact Mr. Burket for that information.
16. Upcoming Events –
 - August 18 – CPDAP Quarterly Meeting
 - August 23 – HPMS PennDOT Field Audit
 - August 29 to 31 – FEMA Webinar for Hazard Mitigation Planning Update
 - August 31 – Blair County Planning Commission Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Commission Board meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 31, 2023 at the Altoona Water Authority, 900 Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m.
Moved: Lawrence Carter
Seconded: Thomas Holsinger
Voted: 7 in favor, no abstentions, so ordered by Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted



Date Minutes Approved

