MEETING MINUTES
CENTRE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 15, 2008

Members Present: Freddie Persic, Vice Chairman; Kevin Abbey, Secretary; Tom Poorman; Bob Dannaker and Jack Shannon

Members Absent: Robert Corman, Chairman; Cecil Irvin and Tom Hoover

Staff Present: Bob Jacobs; Anson Burwell; Chris Schnure; Mike Bloom and Mary Wheeler

Others Present: Tom Zilla, CRPA; Jon Eich, County Commissioner

1. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chairman Persic called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Re-Organization

Vice-Chairman Persic welcomed Bob Dannaker as the new member of the Planning Commission then turned the meeting over to Mr. Jacobs.

Mr. Jacobs asked for nominations for the Chairman of the Centre County Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Mrs. Persic seconded by Mr. Poorman to nominate Mr. Corman as Chairman. Motion carried to elect Mr. Corman as Chairman of the Centre County Planning Commission for 2008.

Mr. Jacobs then asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Centre County Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Mr. Shannon seconded by Mr. Abbey to nominate Ms. Persic as Vice-Chairman. Motion carried to elect Ms. Persic as Vice-Chairman of the Centre County Planning Commission for 2008.

Mr. Jacobs asked for nominations for Secretary of the Centre County Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Ms. Persic seconded by Mr. Shannon to nominate Mr. Abbey as Secretary. Motion carried to elect Mr. Abbey as Secretary of the Centre County Planning Commission for 2008.

Mr. Jacobs then turned the meeting back over to Vice Chairman Persic.
3. Citizen Comment Period

None

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Abbey to approve the minutes of December 18, 2007, seconded by Mr. Poorman. Motion carried.

5. Planning Commission Member Updates

None

6. Old Business

None

7. New Business

- MPO Update – Mike Bloom

Mr. Bloom gave a power point presentation of the Preliminary Draft TIP for 2009-2012 that will be sent to PennDOT for their review and comment (Attachment #1).

Mr. Eich reminded Mr. Bloom that the Route 350 “S” curve was on the top of the project list once before, but it got knocked off because there is a spring there that serves as the water supply source for the use of Snyder Township, Blair County. Please remind them that the water source is there and don't let them redesign over it.

Mr. Zilla stated that there was recognition by the MPO that Corridor “O” was probably not going to be moving forward anytime soon. So as part of the preliminary engineering of this, there was some talk about looking at some of the travel patterns after I-99 opens to see if there are any changes along Route 350, so that we can weigh some of the environmental considerations, which are considerable through that corridor; against some of the very challenging traffic issues, particularly with the truck traffic safety issues in both Blair and Centre counties. The MPO is trying to recognize that without Corridor “O”, some of the environmental issues will need to be revisited.

Mr. Shannon stated also that there are State Game land issues in this area. Also, there is hardly three or four days go by that there isn't another accident since October. It is a mess and Corridor “O” would have helped tremendously.

Mr. Zilla noted that as a heads up on a policy item that the MPO will face. If we are not successful in getting Spike Funds for the local access interchange in Marion Township, that project would be ready for bid in December 2008. If we do not get Spike Funds, there is no way to advance that project and it is going to sit, which is really going to be the first formal delay. We have been told by PennDOT informally is, that we need to make sure that we are talking to the Turnpike Commission through the discussions of this toll conversion project and make sure that this and the high speed interchange are
part of the list of improvements that they are considering. This sounds easy enough, but the policy issue is: should the MPO come out and say "no we don’t support the toll conversion project", and then it is hard to ask someone for $150m worth of interchanges if they are not supporting the funding mechanism that goes along with it. This will be on the MPO agenda on Tuesday evening and I wanted to give you a heads up. I don’t know whether or not the MPO will change the policy or adopt a different policy. There is some opportunity to fund part of the local access interchange with our base allocation even though other projects would be delayed or deferred while eligible monies would be put together to come up with a portion of the cost of the interchange. After reviewing the preliminary draft TIP, we may be able to come up with 10% or 20% of the cost for the interchange. Whether or not that is enough leverage to get PennDOT Central Office to throw in the remaining 80% - 90%, I don’t know. PennDOT said don’t look at those options until we give you an answer. We did receive a letter which stated that PennDOT would give us an answer in February and at that time we could look for the funds. I am not optimistic about our chances. We are going to be talking to the Turnpike Commission and lobby for some leverage using some of our base funds.

Mr. Abbey questioned the rationale that the MPO would use to defer other necessary projects to help pay for the interchange. It is an embarrassing oversight on FHWA and PennDOT’s part that it was never included in their planning.

Mr. Zilla stated that it is probably the same type of reasoning they would use to weigh and balance other priorities. Is it is a safety issue to warrant bumping it ahead of other projects.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Bloom stated that Jon Eich and Rich Rogers will be new members on the MPO; from Ferguson Township replacing George Pytel will be Steve Miller; Halfmoon Township will be Barbara Spencer and from the Moshannon Valley Region Mike Savage has been appointed. On the Technical Committee in the Moshannon Valley Region John Knowles has been reappointed. There are a couple of vacant seats still remain on the Technical Committee one in the Upper Bald Eagle Region and the other one is a County position that will be filled once the Planning Office Assistant Director position is filled.

Mr. Eich question the rumble strips along the edge of the roadway or centerline. Are they incorporated into the safety program?

Mr. Bloom stated that was one of the items that had been looked at as part of the Route 350 Project going down the mountain through the “S” curves. Outside of the widening that was one of the issues that PennDOT was going to look into. PennDOT is considering putting them in the centerline and on the roadside. These are referred to as SNAPS (Sonic Noise Alerts Patterns).

Mr. Eich stated that supposedly these rumble strips cut down traffic accidents 25%. They cost about $2,500 per mile.

Mr. Zilla noted that there is a fairly substantial amount of money in the pavement restoration line item in Attachment #2. There is a substantial amount of money set aside between the betterment projects and the pavement restoration line item, which hasn’t had specific projects identified yet, but it is approximately $7m plus the betterment projects. There is a strong commitment to making improvements to the existing system. Possibly this can be used as part of the argument with PennDOT on the Spike Funding.
8. Review of Subdivision and Land Development Plans – Anson Burwell & Chris Schnure

Subdivisions:

1. Nittany Farm Subdivision
   Preliminary Plan
   12-Lots (Residential)
   Marion Township

A motion was made by Mr. Abbey and seconded by Mr. Shannon to approve staff’s recommendation of Conditional Preliminary Approval of the above-mentioned Plan. Motion carried.

Land Developments:

2. Penn State Federal Credit Union Land Development
   Final Plan
   1-Unit (Commercial)
   Benner Township

A motion was made by Mr. Abbey and seconded by Mr. Poorman to approve staff’s recommendation of Conditional Final Approval of the above-mentioned Plan. Motion carried.

Time Extension Requests:

- Grove Park Subdivision, Phase 2 (CFA) File No. 289-06
  Benner Township……………………………………....4th Request ($50.00 Fee Required)
- Piper Path Subdivision Plan (CFA) File No. 164-05
  Snow Shoe Township……………………………………....10th Request ($350.00 Fee Required)

Note: CPA = Conditional Preliminary Plan Approval
CFA = Conditional Final Plan Approval

A motion was made by Mr. Shannon and seconded by Mr. Abbey to approve the above-mentioned Time Extensions. Motion carried.

January’s Major Subdivision and Land Development Plan Sub-Committee meeting:

Mr. Burwell stated that the monthly Major Subdivision and Land Development Plan Sub-Committee meeting has been cancelled for January.

9. Director’s Report and Other Matters to Come Before the Commission

Mr. Jacobs stated that one of the issues that is becoming more prevalent is in municipalities that are under the County’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and when these municipalities decide to pursue parkland dedication and fee in lieu of ordinances. These municipalities look to us develop these regulations for them. As approved by the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), they are designed to be in the subdivision and land development ordinance. The municipalities have no option other than adopting stand alone regulations to provide for parkland dedication/fee in lieu of regulations.
In some cases, municipalities have placed them in their zoning ordinances, which is not permissible under the MPC. From our standpoint, we are recommending that this be include in the County’s ordinance as proposed three (3) years ago. This will require notifying all of the municipalities to see if they would like to participate. Along those lines, Gregg Township is also looking at Conservation Design regulations. This is also geared specifically towards subdivision and land development ordinances. As we see more of these types of criteria being pursued by municipalities, it behooves us to pursue this at a county-wide level and make sure those regulations or criteria can be incorporated into the County ordinance so that the municipalities can take advantage of them if necessary. Staff will continue to give you an update on those types of activities. Next month, a draft of the parkland dedication/fee-in-lieu-of regulations will be presented.

Mr. Jacobs stated that a new Assistant Director will be selected within the next few weeks.

Mr. Jacobs also stated that at next month’s meeting SOAR (the Save our Allegheny Ridge) group will be present to provide their point of view on the wind turbine industry. Also, since there are no plans for the February meeting some of the Planning Staff will be presenting an overview of their work activities.

Mr. Abbey questioned Mr. Eich and asked if he was tuned into the wind farm information that was presented at the December 18th meeting of the Planning Commission? Mr. Abbey stated that he would like to see the Planning Commission take a proactive stand on this and invite the people who are science based to come in and make a presentation so that we all understand and have as many facts as possible and can really drill down to what is the essence of their concerns and hear it directly.

Mr. Eich stated that it wouldn’t surprise him if this is the first of many proposals of this type.

Mr. Abbey agreed with Mr. Eich and stated that it is a reality that is coming, and our sense was that we wanted to have as many facts as possible so that an informed decision could be made. The Planning Commission needs to be in a position to embrace the alternate energy if it is the right location and it makes sense. We were a bit concerned that we had only one side of the coin.

Mr. Jacobs stated that there was a Public Hearing last week on the Community Development Block Grant Funding. In terms of the number of projects and the amount of money requested, we have almost $1m requested and $300,000 to allocate. These are the decisions that Commissioner Eich and the other Commissioner’s will need to make for the 2008 CDBG funding round. Mr. Milliron will give you an update at next month’s meeting as to which municipalities or eligible groups are requesting funding.

Mr. Eich stated that the County Commissioners just filled their seats on the Coordinating Committee and it was done with alternates, even though Commissioner Rogers and Mr. Eich are the voting members, Mr. Dershem is the first alternate and Mr. Jacobs is the second alternate. Please send us a recommendation when you are ready to fill this spot?

With no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Mr. Poorman and seconded by Mr. Shannon to adjourn at 7: 24 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert B. Jacobs

rbj
THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT THE
FEBRUARY 19, 2008
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING