MEETING MINUTES  
CENTRE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
September 16, 2008

Members Present: Robert Corman, Chairman; Freddie Persic, Vice Chairman; Kevin Abbey, Secretary; Cecil Irvin; Bob Dannaker and Jack Shannon

Members Absent: Tom Poorman and Tom Hoover

Staff Present: Bob Jacobs; Sue Hannegan; Anson Burwell; Chris Schnure; Mike Bloom

Others Present: Jon Eich, Commissioner

1. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Corman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Citizen Comment Period

Commissioner Eich noted that the County Commissioners signed the CDBG contract for $380,000. There are 4 projects:

(1) Affordable Housing
(2) 2 - sewer line projects in Rush Township
(3) Centre Hall Mountain project

The submission of the competitive CDBG Grant Application for Rush Township was approved to complete their project in the North Philipsburg area. They are taking the $90,000 that the County is contributing to leverage $500,000 from state competitive money plus they are putting in approximately $270,000.

- 911 System - The Commissioners are heading to Westmoreland County on October 6 to review their system.

- Agland – Commissioner Eich noted that Mr. Irvin was present this morning as the Commissioners did their second closing in two weeks on farms in Ferguson Township, one which was 130 aces and the other was 150 acres. Commissioner Eich stated that he definitely wants to thank the township for their contribution to the program because it makes our dollars go further.

- Statistics on crashes on Route 322 over the last 20 years: There have been 24 fatalities; 562 injuries; 619 crashes. We have about 16 accidents per 100 vehicle miles on Route 322 here in Centre County. The statewide average is 1.4 accidents per 100 vehicle miles, so we are 11 times higher than the statewide average. We will continue to look for ways to get funding to do something about that.

Commissioner Eich stated that every time “a missing link” is improved (as occurred in the narrows
east of Lewistown), traffic speed tends to increase and this summer the narrows opened up and now you can run all the way from Harrisburg to the top of Seven Mountains. This situation has most likely contributed to the unsafe travel conditions. A grant funded program called Smooth Operator is in progress and you will see more troopers on the road especially on I-99 between the Bellefonte / Shiloh Road Interchanges. Sometimes there are groups of police cars. Hopefully Route 322 is included in this program. Township officials must request more coverage.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. Irvin to approve the minutes of August 19, 2008, seconded by Ms. Persic. Motion carried.

4. **Planning Commission Member Updates**

Mr. Irvin stated that there are now 15 farms protected in Ferguson Township.

5. **Old Business**

None

6. **New Business**

- **MPO Update – Mike Bloom**

Mr. Bloom presented information as noted on (Attachment # 1) to the Planning Commission members regarding:

  - **I-80 Tolling** - on September 11, 2008 the application was denied by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

  - **Federal Safe Routes to School Application** – In May 2008, PennDOT Central Office announced the opening of the application for funding from the Federal Safe Routes to School (FSRTS) Program. One application was received from Centre County: State College Borough – Easterly Parkway roundabouts (Easterly Parkway Elementary School) – all applications will be reviewed, evaluated and ranked by a statewide committee. MPO’s and Rural Planning Organizations will not be involved with that process other than to provide comments.

  - **Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan** - The CCMPO adopted the CCLRTP 2030 in September 2006. A new LRTP will be prepared beginning in the fall of 2008, with a tentative schedule for adoption of a new plan in September 2010.

  - **Route 322 Corridor Safety Improvements** – The current 2007-2010 CCTIP and the new 2009-2012 CCTIP will take effect on October 1, 2008 and will include funding for the Route 322 Corridor Safety Improvements project that may include centerline rumble strips, passing zone elimination and left turning lanes at key intersections.
Membership Changes – Jim Simler, Philipsburg Borough Manager will represent the Moshannon Valley Planning Region on the Technical Committee.

Frank Hampton will represent the PennDOT Central Office on the Technical Committee replacing Harold Nanovic who retired in June. Tom TenEyck who represented PennDOT Central Office on the Coordinating Committee, retired in August 2008. Larry S. Shifflet, Director of PennDOT’s Center for Program Development and Management will represent the Central Office until a permanent appointment is made.

Bob Crum who represented the Centre Region Planning Commission (CRPC) on the Technical Committee and served as the Secretary to the Coordinating Committee, resigned as Director of CRPA effective September 5, 2008. CRPC is working to appoint a temporary Technical Committee representative until a new Director is appointed.

The MPO will appoint an interim Secretary to the Coordinating Committee at the September meeting. The following options have been offered by the MPO staff: Appoint Robert B. Jacobs, Director of the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office or appoint a voting member of the Coordinating Committee.

Comprehensive Plan Update – Sue Hannegan

Staff is continuing to work on the chapter updates. One of the chapters is done and has been sent to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for review. As soon as it has been returned with comments, it will be brought before the Planning Commission. The other chapters are in various stages of development.

Economic Development – Mike Bloom

Mr. Bloom stated that an Underutilized Site Inventory is underway. The purpose of this effort is to inventory properties that are currently within reach of available infrastructure, but have real or perceived barriers to reuse or rehabilitation. Again these sites could be anything from vacant land, to vacant or underutilized buildings and brownfield sites. Inventory data for each property may include: known or perceived contaminations on site; soil types; slopes; the lay of the land; the availability of the utilities that are there; access to transportation facilities; the character of the surrounding communities; existing land use, and zoning. Once staff has the inventory information in place, the properties will be evaluated for suitability for various types of development. Staff is envisioning this inventory as a tool that could be used by the local officials; real estate brokers; and developers as a means to identify potential development sites; options for reclaiming or rehabilitating them if necessary, and then marketing and support for future development. Again it is all in the name of Community Revitalization and Development. We know some of these boroughs and smaller communities have sites that are sitting there; vacant storefronts and buildings that have been underutilized for years. Staff will be working to bring some of these back onto the market and hopefully breathe a little life into some of the communities and help their local economies. This is just one element of the Economic Development Chapter and we are envisioning a tool box that we can hand out to the local officials, residents, developers to say these are the options that are out there for you and options on how we can assist your efforts.

Chairman Corman encouraged staff to get the Chamber of Business and Industry involved in this as well. Mr. Jacobs stated that staff would try to get the Chamber involved.
Mr. Abbey stated that a presentation was given at Ferguson Township regarding the West College Avenue Corridor in the vicinity of O.W. Houts and the 900 block and interestingly one of the terms that the developer used with regards to some of the existing commercial activities along that corridor was "functional blight". It strikes me that it is obviously a term of art and I don’t know how well it would be defined but you might consider this in the underutilized property search. I was intrigued with where they identified properties and buildings that are presently occupied but could be far greater enhanced.

Mr. Bloom stated that staff wrestled with how to encapsulate this project, because something could be done on a grand scale, but it is important to tackle this from a planning perspective taking into consideration recent changes in the economy and transportation. We thought it best that the smaller communities are looked at because they have the infrastructure available, they have the utilities and the transportation infrastructure required to do effective infill development.

□ **Marcellus Gas Well Drilling – Sue Hannegan**

There are four activities currently underway related to the Marcellus Gas Well Drilling:

1) Two “Marcellus” gas wells have been drilled in the county, but not “fraced”;
2) Seismic testing will be taking place the end of the month in an area of Snow Show and Burnside Townships;
3) A lateral pipeline project has been proposed to extend from Clearfield County east through the vicinity of Clarence and connect to the north-south Texas Eastern line;
4) An educational component (Attachment #2) in the form of a workshop for municipal officials is planned for mid-October. The three topics to be covered during that workshop are:
   a) Road Bonding
   b) Water Systems
   c) Emergency Services

Representatives from PennDOT, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC), and emergency services will be represented at this workshop.

Two animated video clips were presented regarding the horizontal drilling technique and the process of “Hydrofracing” – both procedures developed by the gas industry to reach natural gas that lies in the shale layers between 7,000 and 10,000 feet beneath the ground.

Commissioner Eich stated that he has received inquiries from two drilling companies and met with three representatives from Anadarko during Grange Fair. The Planning office, Conservation District and Cooperative Extension staff were represented at that meeting. In addition, an invitation from EXCO, a parent company of North Coast, was received with a request to attend a meeting in Snow Shoe Township concerning their proposed seismic testing. Commissioner Eich could not attend that meeting but mentioned that previous drilling in the Mountaintop Region impacted the public water supply. Pine Glen’s well located 4,000 feet away from a gas well site showed some cloudiness during the drilling process. The Snow Shoe Borough Authority has two wells that supply three water authorities and production was reduced by half at one of them as a result of the gas drilling that was being done 1,000 feet away. The companies were asked to be aware of this issue. Other wells were affected by the drilling for the Devonian shale.
Ms. Hannegan stated that neither of the two Marcellus gas wells have been hydrofraced at this time. The wells have been drilled; the core samples have been tested to determine if the yield is there in order to continue drilling and the results have been very pleasing. North Coast is currently in the process of conducting seismic testing to locate underground faults which would impact the success of future drilling efforts.

Mr. Burwell questioned if after reviewing the information did she feel that they used the 800,000 gallons of water at one fracing. Ms. Hannegan stated yes and in fact upwards of 2 - 3 million gallons of water can be used to frac a Marcellus well.

Mr. Shannon said that an application for a treatment plant is in the works in the northern section of the county. The intent is to recycle the frac water for reuse – recovering it after it is treated and reuse it at another well site.

Mr. Abbey questioned if there were any community discussions going on about getting together with regards to the drilling as compared to simply individual property owners being involved with separate leases that tend to be very divisive to communities? Is there any talk about the communities coming together to look at some benefit to the community other than to just individual property owners?

Mr. Jacobs stated that this has been discussed at staff level. Right now the Oil & Gas Act does not accomplish that. Staff has discussed possibly requesting a fee-in-lieu contribution by these Natural Gas Companies; to give back to the communities.

Mr. Abbey stated that he would look at those potential fees for community development as well as for the provision of municipal services.

Commissioner Eich noted that this was happening through Cooperative Extension, where adjoining property owners are being encouraged to enter into a single lease that covers a fairly large area and then they split the future royalties based on percentage of ownership.

Mr. Shannon noted that this is now being advertised in the Clearfield Progress.

Mr. Abbey stated that it is feast or famine that goes on with individual property owners striking it rich while their neighbors are not.

Mr. Jacobs stated that staff is just starting to get geared up with regards to the gas well drilling companies that are coming into town to do some explorations. Lycoming County is 6 months ahead of us. Even from the standpoint of Emergency Services, it may take special training and equipment to take care of any accidents that may happen at these sites. There was talk of combining this with the fire training site and with CPI as a possibility for Central Pennsylvania?

Ms. Hannegan stated that many of the Marcellus gas well sites are not located on established township roads, so they don’t have 911 addresses. It is an emergency preparedness issue at this point.

Mr. Shannon stated that this is not a new phenomenon; they have been drilling gas wells in Clearfield County for fifty years.

Mr. Jacobs stated that the intensity of the well drilling is a whole new ball game compared to drilling
the Devonian, because of all the impacts with water consumption and waste water.

Commissioner Eich stated that regarding who gets rich and who doesn’t, if you own just the surface rights, you are at a very weak position and the drillers have the authority to come in onto your surface and take that 4 acre parcel and drill down through it with very little if any compensation including restoring it to the way they found it.

Mr. Corman asked staff if it were possible to map the leased parcels. Mr. Burwell stated that “If” the leases are recorded it would be done at the Recorder of Deeds office. You can have a legitimate lease without recording the document. Recording the leases may be a necessity for a lot of reasons including change of title if nothing else. Furthermore, the drilling company may be required to provide proof of leasehold for permitting processes.

Commissioner Eich stated that perhaps the actual DEP Permit locations could be mapped. Ms. Hannegan stated that the staff has the GPS coordinates for the well sites that have requested consumptive water permits and yes, they can be mapped.

Mr. Burwell stated that the Assessment Office has been very busy with many “landmen” who come in from the gas well drilling outfits and starting the necessary research. Commissioner Eich stated that there were between 20-50 people working in the Recorder of Deeds Office all summer.

7. Review of Subdivision and Land Development Plans – Anson Burwell & Chris Schnure

Subdivisions:

1. Willow Pond Subdivision, Phase 1 -- Two Lot Subdivision and Two Lot Addition / Replots of lands of Robert A. & Donna L. Reese
   Final Plan
   2-Lots (Residential) and 2-Lot Additions / Replots (Residential)
   Walker Township

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

Land Developments:

2. Randall S. Moyer (Land Disposition) Land Development
   Final Plan
   1-Unit (Commercial)
   Boggs Township

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

- The Woods at Sand Ridge Subdivision, Phase 6R (CFA) File No. 172-07 Walker & Marion Townships ........................................... 2nd Request (No Fee Required)
- 24/7 Self Storage Building Land Development (CFA) File No. 158-07 Benner Township ................................................... 2nd Request (No Fee Required)
- Teamsters Local Union No. 8 Land Development (CFA) File No. 24-08 Benner Township ................................................... 3rd Request (No Fee Required)
- Sports Management Group, Inc. Land Development, Phase VI (CFA) File No. 253-07 Haines Township ................................................... 3rd Request (No Fee Required)
- Eagle Point Subdivision, Phase 3 (CPA) File No. 299-06 Benner Township ................................................... 6th Request ($150.00 Fee Required)
- Mountainview Estates Subdivision, Phase 1 (CFA) File No. 158-06 Potter Township ................................................... 8th Request ($250.00 Fee Required)
- Nittany Building Specialties, Inc. Land Development (CFA) File No. 186-06 Huston & Worth Townships ........................................ 8th Request ($250.00 Fee Required)
- The Village of Nittany Glen Land Development, Phase IIA (CFA) File No. 95-06 Benner Township ................................................... 8th Request ($250.00 Fee Required)
- Freestone Golf Course Land Development for PennGolf Corporation (CFA) File No. 162-05 Huston Township ................................................... 8th Request ($250.00 Fee Required)
- Gary G. Wilt Subdivision (CFA) File No. 307-05 Howard Borough ................................................... 11th Request ($400.00 Fee Required)
- Snow Shoe Travel Plaza Land Development (CFA) File No. 235-05 Snow Shoe Township ................................................... 12th Request ($450.00 Fee Required)

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

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

The September 25, 2008 Major Subdivision and Land Development Plan Sub-Committee meeting will be attended by Mr. Corman, Ms. Persic and possibly Mr. Abbey.

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

- Spring Creek Canyon Technical Committee
Staff has been involved with the Spring Creek Canyon Technical Committee and will be meeting with their Coordinating Committee on September 17, 2008. Information has been provided to the consulting group that was hired to develop the master plan for the Spring Creek Canyon; impressing on that group that a huge body of work was already completed on the Canyon and that it needed to be reviewed and incorporated into any recommendations and findings that they may have. Some of the preliminary information that was received from the consultants was very weak, in terms of resources within the canyon. We do hope this information would give them the information that they need to make an unbiased study and review and make recommendations to Benner Township and the elected officials. In a discussion with the sub-consultant, they are just starting to realize that the Spring Creek Canyon is a pretty contentious project at the local level and politically all the way to the Governor. Planning Commission members will be informed as this project moves forward.

- **Potter Township 537 Plan Review**

The review of Potter Township’s Act 537 Plan was completed. They are looking at rehabilitating the Country Club Park sewage facilities and incorporating that with the Meadows Psychiatric Clinic. Staff concurs with the recommendation that the Meadows should be connected to that system via force main and then there will be an entirely new sewage facility plant developed at Country Club Park to handle waste treatment from both of those facilities. One of the key things that plant will do is handle nitrogen and phosphorous since the discharge is going into Cedar Run. A letter will be drafted and sent to Potter Township and staff will provide any support that is needed for funding issues to see this project through. This project may be eligible for future CDBG allocations. The size of the plant will limit development activity and there may be a tap-on fee in the future.

- **Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission**

There was a proposal by a Wind Farm Company to develop on Shriner Mountain but they are no longer interested, due to feasibility. However another company has a meteorological tower nearby and staff will need to follow up for more information.

- **Walker – Zion Manor Plan**

On September 17th, Mr. Jacobs will be in Walker Township to discuss the Zion Manor plan, based on last month’s Planning Commission meeting. The outcome of that meeting will be reported at the next planning commission meeting.

Mr. Abbey questioned if there was any guidance available for individual residents because with new technologies there is an increased interest among individual property owners for wind power.

Mr. Jacobs stated the staff is developing energy information for the Update of the Comprehensive Plan and will look at alternate energy sources. Susy Krosunger is heading up this effort and is reviewing this very closely.

**With no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Ms. Persic and seconded by Mr. Irvin to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

rbj     Robert B. Jacobs