

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER
633 COURT STREET, 14TH FLOOR.
READING, PA 19601-4309

July 10, 2024

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Christopher Spohn called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, in person at the Berks County Planning Commission's Library Conference Room.

The following members were present:

Christopher Spohn, Chairman
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary
Glenn R. Knoblauch
Jodi L. Gauker
Miguel Herrera
Sarah Phillips
David Mattes

Also Attending:

David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director
Ashley J. Showers, Assistant Director
Laura Mursch, Intergovernmental Planner III
Alan D. Piper, Transportation Planner III
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III
Pam Menet, Executive Director Community and Economic Development
Shanice Ellison, Planner I
Mike Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler Planner III
Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II
Shailyn Hernandez, Office Support V
Michelle Franklin, Planner III

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hunter began his report by congratulating staff on the Joint Comprehensive Planning Program progress and the effort that has been made to make these plans more implementable.

Mr. Hunter updated on the Board about a site visit at the Richmond Township utility scale solar farm on June 20th. Mr. Hunter expressed the purpose of the visit was to review lessons learned during the solar farm development process. Mr. Hunter

indicated that through the observation and discussion there will be an amendment to the Utility Scale Solar Advice.

Additionally, Mr. Hunter discussed the eased farm visits he and Assistant Director Ashley Showers attended with Kim Fies, Deputy Director of the Ag. Department. Mr. Hunter expressed the importance these visits were to inform land use decisions during the Comprehensive Plan development as well as the completion of the Agricultural Study currently underway. Discussion ensued on the processing facilities on farms, sewage/waste management off these facilities, and the balance between land preservation and housing.

Mr. Hunter invited Board members to two events: October 3rd Building the Boroughs and October 28th SRPRA Board Meeting and Reception.

B. STAFF REPORTS

A. Amanda Timochenko

Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) Nomination for LRTP Steering Committee Member

Amanda Timochenko began the presentation by informing Board members on the background and expectations of the committee. The Steering Committee will provide regular input and feedback on the LRTP development process and will review/comment on draft work tasks. In addition, the Steering Committee will provide input and feedback on goals, objectives, and policies for the next 20 years covered by the plan. The Berks County Planning Commission transportation planning staff serves as staff to the Reading MPO. As such, MPO staff is requesting that the Berks County Planning Commission members nominate a Board member to participate on the RATS LRTP Steering Committee.

Discussion ensued on the responsibilities and meeting dates for the RATS LRTP Steering Committee.

MOTION: Jodi L. Gauker made a motion to appoint David Mattes to participate on the RATS LRTP Steering Committee. The motion was seconded by Sarah Phillips and passed unanimously.

B. Ashley Showers

Pioneer Crossing Landfill Major Permit Modification for Northern Cell Expansion – Exeter Township

Ms. Showers introduced the proposal for expansion of the Pioneer Crossing Landfill in Exeter Township. The expansion would include Cells 8-14 and provide the landfill with an additional 29.5 years of capacity.

Although the expansion is consistent with the Future Land Use plan within the County Comprehensive Plan due to its designation as Existing Development, there are concerns of consistency with Exeter Township's zoning ordinance. Additionally,

the Comprehensive Plan expresses that the current capacity of all landfills within the County can fulfill the waste needs of the County and therefore landfills do not need further expansion.

Discussion ensued regarding the impact of landfill closures and expansions within the County.

C. Shanice Ellison

Lorane Road – Exeter Township

The proposal is for a Preliminary Plan located in Exeter Township. The site is located south of Benjamin Franklin Highway (S.R. 422) and Perkiomen Avenue at the intersection of Shelbourne Road. The site is located within the Designated Growth and Environmental Hazard areas. The Environmental Hazard area is identified within the Special Flood Hazard area (100-year floodplain and floodway). The northwestern parcel and western side of parcel is located within the identified FEMA floodplain associated with Antietam Creek. The proposal to construct six apartment buildings (216 units total), a clubhouse and pool along with various amenities is consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update.

Discussion ensued on the plan details; comments were made on transportation, parking, zoning, and land use.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. June 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity
- D. Reading Transportation Study (RATS) Nomination for LRTP Steering Committee Member
- E. Pioneer Crossing Landfill – Major Permit Modification – DEP Comment Letter

MOTION: Lee C. Olsen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by David Mattes and passed unanimously.

5. **STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS**

A. Miguel Herrera – Board Member Report

Miguel Herrera began his report by presenting the top four projects that he has been working on. The projects mentioned were: Supernatural Produce 2, Park Place on Penn, Savage Rt. 61, and Bethel Romanian Pentecostal Church. Mr. Herrera went into detail about each project and the stages of completion they are in.

Discussion ensued about each project and the affect they can have on the area.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Jodi L. Gauker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:38p.m. The motion was seconded by Lee C. Olsen.

Christopher Spohn, Chairman

Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary