

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

October 9, 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, October 9, 2024, in person at the Berks County Planning Commission's Library Conference Room and as a virtual meeting using the platform Microsoft Teams.

**The following members were present:**

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

**Also Attending:**

David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director  
David Peris, Berks County Solicitor  
Elizabeth Burkovich, GIS Analyst  
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III  
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III  
Shanice Ellison, Planner I  
Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II  
Shailyn Hernandez, Office Support V  
Michelle Franklin, Planner III  
Thiago Correa de Almeida, Planner II  
Devon Hain, Transportation Planner II  
Taylor Lawrence, Planner III  
Richard Royer, Design Planner I  
Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II  
Deb Millman, GRCA, President of Berks Development Fund  
Pamela Menet, Director of Economic Development  
IS Production, Berks County Department of Information Systems  
Melissa Lewis, Application Specialist & Trainer  
Heather Berger, Application Support Manager, IS  
Simon Wangolo, Planning Manager, City of Reading  
Jack Gombach, City of Reading Managing Director  
Jerome Skrincosky, Planner Consultant, City of Reading  
Carl Long, Implementation Specialist, IS  
Jonas Bealer Wayne, Reading Planning Commission, Chairman  
Chris Trachte, Reading Planning Commission, Member

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. REPORTS OF STAFF

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hunter began his report by thanking all the staff that contributed to the Building the Boroughs event on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Hunter gave an overview on what were some of the takeaways and speakers of the event. Additionally, Mr. Hunter shared dates for several upcoming events including the state planning conference in Eire, PA and the SRPRA Board meeting and reception (Oct.28<sup>th</sup>). Mr. Hunter concluded his report by announcing that perhaps there can be an evening session of Building the Boroughs in 2025.

Discussion ensued on the success of Building the Boroughs, the takeaways, and on the overall feedback of the event.

B. STAFF REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. **None**

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. September 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- B. Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report/Summary
- C. Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity

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

5. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS

A. **David Hunter – The History of Downtown Reading**

Executive Director David Hunter began his presentation by announcing that the Reading Downtown Strategic Plan has been adopted. Mr. Hunter wanted to share the history of planning in Reading and how it came to be the city we know now. The presentation focused on the center square of the City of Reading, the population at the time versus now, and the direction the city was headed into as the 20<sup>th</sup> century approached. Then came about the Nolan Plan, which took Reading into the 20<sup>th</sup> century by creating Penn Square (4<sup>th</sup> Street – 6<sup>th</sup> Street on Penn Street). Penn Square is what we know now as Downtown Reading. Around the 1970's came the Penn Square Pedestrian Plaza, which provided pedestrian access to Penn Square without vehicle traffic and allowed shoppers to walk around and enjoy the stores around the plaza, which was later deconstructed. Then came in urban renewal which demolished the theatres along Penn Street and resulted in building more parking lots and less space for open areas.

Additionally, discussion ensued on the Penn Square Pedestrian Plaza removal and how it is being reinvented today because it has proven to be a tool for economic growth.


**B. Simon Wangolo – City of Reading Downtown Strategic Plan**


Simon Wangolo began his presentation by providing an overview on why the Reading Downtown Strategic Plan was developed and why it is vital for community development and revitalization efforts. Mr. Wangolo went on to showcase and explain the various aspects of the plan and the different stages of the plan.

Discussion ensued on the projection of this plan and the new goal of the plan to take the City of Reading into its new era. The City want to have a thriving downtown area with plenty of growth to bring in diverse businesses, opportunities, and cultures.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Lee C. Olsen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:07p.m. The motion was seconded by Dave Mattes.

  
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Christopher Spohn, Chairman

  
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Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB, Secretary