



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES: Regular Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Approved: February 9, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING: Steven Kline, Chair; Dulcie Flaharty, V-Chair; Charles Tornetta; Robert Blue; Jill Blumhardt; John Ernst; Obed Arango; Jonathan Rinde; Nicole Kline-Elsier

STAFF ATTENDING: Scott France, Matthew Edmond, Pattie Guttenplan, Drew Shaw, Eric Jarrell, Bill Hartman, Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, Rita McKelvey, Dan Farina, Jon Leshner, John Marlatt, Karina Caddick

GUESTS: Liz Compitello, Manager of Local Initiatives DVRPC; Joy Bergey, vice-chair Springfield Township Environmental Advisory Commission; Ron Celentano, Solar PV Industry Consultant; Nancy Winkler, chair Lower Merion Environmental Advisory Council; Tamara Holt, Executive Brand Ambassador, AVE by Korman Communities

I. Call to Order

Scott France called the Board meeting to order. This is the first meeting of 2022 and includes the reorganization of the board.

II. Reorganization of the Board – Election of Officers

Scott France opened the nomination for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The nominations and elections are as follows.

- John Ernst nominated Steve Kline for Chair, seconded by Obed Arango and approved by all.
- Jill Blumhardt nominated Dulcie Flaharty for Vice-Chair, seconded by John Ernst and approved by all.
- Steve Kline nominated Scott France for Secretary, seconded by Dulcie Flaharty and approved by all.

III. Public Comments

None

IV. Board Comments

Dulcie Flaharty thanked Scott France and the staff for sharing the interesting articles with the board packet. She shared that without access to local press this is a great way to learn more about what is happening around the county.

V. Minutes of December 8, 2021

The board approved the minutes from the December 8, 2021 regular Board meeting.

***Motion:** To approve the December 8, 2021 Board minutes, by Mr. Kline, seconded by Mr. Tornetta, and approved by all present.*

VI. Formation of the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Committee, Montgomery Awards Committee and the Transportation Grant Program Committee

Steven Kline appointed board members to serve on the following committees:

Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Committee: Steven Kline, Robert Blue, Obed Arango, Nicole Kline-Elsier

Montgomery Awards Committee: Dulcie Flaharty, Charlie Tornetta, Jill Blumhardt

Transportation Grant Program Committee: Dulcie Flaharty, John Ernst, Jonathan Rinde

VII. School District Contracts – Action

Presenter: Daniel Farina

Dan Farina requested that the board approve the school district planning assistance contracts for Upper Moreland School District and Hatboro Horsham School District.

The Upper Moreland School District contract is a ten-year enrollment study. The school district has four schools two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The current enrollment is 3,197 students. The contract term is from February 1, 2022 through May 9, 2022 for a total cost of \$11,648 with a school district share of \$8,736.

The Hatboro-Horsham School District contract is a follow up study from 2017. The school district has six schools four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school with a current enrollment of 4,349 students. The contract term is from March 1, 2022 through June 6, 2022 for a total cost of \$10,920 with a school district share of \$8,190.

VIII. Lansdale Borough Planning Assistance Contract – Action

Presenter: Eric Jarrell

Eric Jarrell requested that the Board approve the community planning assistance contract for Lansdale Borough. The main contract work for Lansdale will include implementation of their recently adopted Comprehensive Plan. Other work will include a Railroad plaza concept design, parking study, circulation study as well as other design work and studies. The contract is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024 for a total cost of \$141,372, with a municipal share of \$70,686.

***Motion:** To approve the Lansdale Borough Planning Assistance Contract, by Mr. Kline, seconded by Ms. Flaharty, and approved by all except John Ernst who abstained.*

IX. Community Planning Assistance Contracts – Action

Presenter: Eric Jarrell

Eric Jarrell requested that the Board approve the community planning assistance contracts for Upper Gwynedd Township, Marlborough Township, Lower Frederick Township, and Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission.

The Upper Gwynedd Township contract is a three-year contract renewal. The main contract work will include implementation of their recently completed Comprehensive Plan and ongoing flexible assistance. The contract term is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024 for a total cost of \$68,544 with a municipal share of \$34,272.

Marlborough Township renewed their planning assistance contract for an additional three years. This is a flexible assistance contract and will include ordinance updates and village planning for Sumneytown. The contract term is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024 for a total cost of \$62,118 with a municipal share of \$31,059.

The Lower Frederick Township contract is a three-year contract renewal. The main contract work will include implementation of their recently adopted Comprehensive Plan and ongoing flexible assistance. The contract term is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024 for a total cost of \$57,834 with a municipal share of \$28,917.

The Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission contract is a three-year contract renewal of their planning assistance contract. The contract work will include a locational analysis for the Indian Valley library. Other work will include a story map for tree planting and beginning the process of updating the regional Comprehensive Plan. The contract term is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024 for a total cost of \$96,390 with a municipal share of \$48,195.

***Motion:** To approve the Upper Gwynedd Township, Marlborough Township, Lower Frederick Township, and Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission Planning Assistance Contracts, by Mr. Kline, seconded by Ms. Flaharty, and approved by all present.*

X. Regional Solar Purchase Plan

Presenter: Jon Leshner; Guest: Liz Compitello, Manager of Local Initiatives DVRPC

Jon Leshner introduced Liz Compitello from DVRPC and together they provided an overview of the SEPA RPPA Partnership, which stands for Southeastern PA Regional Power Purchase Agreement Partnership. The SEPA RPPA Partnership is exploring a cooperative effort to purchase electricity and renewable energy for county operations. The counties involved in the partnership are Chester, Bucks, Delaware and Montgomery County. The project will be managed by DVRPC who will work closely with a Steering Committee. The goal of this partnership is to achieve low, transparent and stable electricity prices. They also hope to gain access to large-scale renewables that will help them achieve their renewable energy goals. Additionally, the counties hope to have the ability to include municipalities, authorities and schools. Mr. Leshner spoke in length about Montgomery County's energy efforts, sustainability strategies, and the future commitments to county residents. In April 2021, the Partnership and DVRPC signed a Letter of Intent to formalize the partnership members and their shared commitment to explore renewable energy procurement. Montgomery County also entered into a memorandum of understanding, MOU with the surrounding counties for a cost share of \$30,000 each to hire an energy services consultant. Enel X North America, the top ranked firm, was awarded the consultant contract in December 2021. The consultant scope of work will include a feasibility phase to evaluate education and propose a strategy. Once the strategy is decided, Enel X North America may assist the counties with implementation.

Liz Compitello from DVRPC provided a summary of the counties current electricity usage, cost and purchasing provider. Ms. Compitello spoke about the benefits and opportunities of aggregation like economies of scale, shared expenses and standardization. She also spoke about the three types of products to purchase renewable energy. The first is to purchase unbundled or voluntary renewable energy certificates (REC's). The second is to produce renewable energy on-site on rooftops, parking lots or land where the electricity would be consumed. The third way type of renewable energy is to purchase off site large-scale renewable energy from the market. This is done through a power purchase agreement (PPA). Lastly, Ms. Compitello spoke about the difference between a physical and virtual PPA agreement.

XI. Final Work Program - Action

Presenter: Scott France and Section Managers

Scott France requested that the board adopt the final version of the MCPC 2022 Work Program. Mr. France along with the section managers spoke about the final version of the program. Mr. France discussed the new structure of the Work Program. He said that the goal for the update was to create a Work Program that encourages collaboration and establishes longer-term commitments to projects. The report has four categories: Focus Topics, Signature Initiatives, Core Functions and Community Planning Contract. The senior staff spoke about some of the challenges that could affect the timeline of these projects. The delays can include staff shortages, natural disasters like Hurricane Ida, delays with municipal partners, and federal programs like ARPA or IJA. The staff felt realistic that the short-term projects would be completed during 2022. However, the medium and long time-frame projects by design are complex and often include outside partners. The board thanked the staff for the report and are looking forward to a productive year.

***Motion:** To approve the Planning Commission Work Program, by Mr. Kline, seconded by Ms. Flaharty, and approved by all present.*

XII. Montco 2040 Grant Program Update and 2022 Kickoff

Presenter: Anne Leavitt-Gruberger

Anne Leavitt-Gruberger presented an update of the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant program. She announced the kickoff of the 2022 application cycle with an application deadline of March 1. The Montco 2040 Implementation Grant program is a competitive grant intended to help implement the goals and objectives of the Montco 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The County Commissioners approved \$2.5M in the 2022 capital budget to help fund these projects. Only municipalities can apply for a grant, but they can partner with a private or non-profit organization. The grant-funding maximum is \$200,000 with a minimum local match of 20% of the total grant amount. The changes to the 2022 cycle includes an enhanced focus on social equity and inclusion, clarification on grant

extension guidelines for up to one year, and the addition of a close-out form and site visit at the conclusion of a grant project. Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger provided a summary of the grant program since its inception in 2016. This will be the seventh round of this program. During the six cycles, we received 115 applications and awarded 95 grants for a total of \$10.3M. The \$10.3M awarded since the start of this program helped municipalities complete projects with a total cost of \$40.3M. In 2021, 23 projects were awarded funding. Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger provided a detailed summary and displayed photographs of the grant projects completed to date.

XIII. Montco 2040 Implementation Report

Presenter: Anne Leavitt-Gruberger

Anne Leavitt-Gruberger presented a summary for the board of the Montco 2040 Implementation Report. The Montco 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County was adopted in 2016. The Implementation report lists the projects and achievements of Montgomery County departments, as well as outside partners during 2021 that accomplish the goals and vision of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger shared that this is great exercise as we start preparations for the next comprehensive plan process. The report has three themes: Connected Communities, Sustainable Places, and Vibrant Economy.

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger provided a detailed overview of the implementation report. It included the Montco 2040 Grant program, which helped to fund 23 new projects in 2021. The county implemented a GIS Plan for data sharing that makes accurate information easily available to the public. In transportation, there are 21 county-owned bridges in various stages of design and reconstruction. Unfortunately, during Hurricane Ida an additional 44 bridges were damaged and some still need major repairs. The County Transportation Grant Program allocated \$1 million to eight local transportation projects. The major transportation projects in Montgomery County included the Route 309 Connector Phase 2 project. For trails in 2021 there were construction moved ahead on the Chester Valley Trail and Pennypack Trail. For our environment, we worked to address water quality through the Wissahickon Creek Water Quality Improvement Plan process and implementation efforts were made for the county's MS4 permit program. During 2021, the county commissioners preserved five farms and began restoration of the Peter Wentz Barn. In the area of public health, significant efforts were made to navigate through the COVID 19 pandemic. The county and their partners organized COVID-19 testing and vaccine sites, conducted contact tracing and provided funding to support childcare providers. The overall response to Hurricane Ida was a major effort for the county's administration, Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Department of Public Safety. The Your Way Home program continues to address the challenges of homelessness and we continue to work on the Homes For All project. In recycling, seven socially distanced Household Hazardous waste events were held safely throughout the county. The county also continues with its commitment to sustainability to purchase renewable energy for county-owned buildings and vehicles. There was also significant investment for county businesses and workers through the Montco Strong grant program and workforce training initiatives. Finally, Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger spoke about in detail about what we can look forward to in 2022.

XIV. Director's Report

1. Scott France welcomed two interns who are joining MCPC. Samantha Zrillo is a graduate student at Temple University and Olivia Pierce is a senior majoring in Community Development also at Temple University.
2. Mr. France acknowledge staff involvement in the APA PA local and state Chapters. Mathew Popek is an at large member of the SE Section and the Chair of the events committee. Matt Edmond is a new at large member of the South East Chapter. Pattie Guttenplan is secretary of the section council and the liaison and member of the state chapter. Finally, our board member Obed Arango is a new citizen planner member of the APA PA South East section.
3. Scott France shared that he will be emailing the board a list of the local and state grants recently awarded.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

The next Board meeting will be on February 9, 2022 at 9:00 AM