



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES: Regular Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 13, 2019
Approved: March 13, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING: Steven Kline, Chair; Dulcie Flaharty, V-Chair; Charles Tornetta; Robert Blue; David Cohen; Scott Exley; John Ernst

STAFF ATTENDING: Jody Holton, Eric Jarrell, John Cover, Chloe Mohr, Brian Olszak, Danielle Dobisch, Daniel Farina, John Marlatt, Karina Caddick

GUESTS: None

I. Call to Order/Board Comments

Steven Kline called the board meeting to order.

Dulcie Flaharty thanked the Planning Commission staff for organizing the change of location for this meeting. There is a power outage at One Montgomery Plaza.

John Ernst was not able to attend the board breakfast with staff, but wanted to thank the board and everyone for their efforts.

John Marlatt commented that the meeting started at 9:30am, which provided enough time for anyone who arrived at One Montgomery Plaza to reach the new destination of the meeting by the start of the meeting.

II. Minutes of January 9, 2019

The minutes from the January 9, 2019 regular Board meeting were approved by the Board.

Motion: To approve the January 9, 2019 Board minutes, by Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. Ernst, and approved by all present.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Formation of Montgomery Awards and Transportation Grant Program Committees

Steven Kline appointed members of the Montgomery Awards Committee and Transportation Grant Program Committee.

Montgomery Awards Committee - Robert Blue, Jill Blumhardt and Steven Kline
Transportation Grant Program Committee – John Ernst, David Cohen and Dulcie Flaharty

V. Community Planning Assistance Contracts

Presenter: Eric Jarrell

Eric Jarrell requested that the Board approve the planning assistance contracts for Bridgeport Borough and Marlborough Township.

The Bridgeport Borough contract is a new planning assistance contract for the Planning Commission. The contract will include writing a new Comprehensive Plan and updating the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances. The contract term is from January 1, 2019 thru December 31, 2021 for a total cost of \$74,844.00 with a municipal share of \$37,422.00.

The Marlborough Township contract is a three year renewal of their planning assistance contract. The contract work includes ordinance updates, a parking and circulation study for Sumneytown, and assistance with the implementation of the Multi-regional Greenway and Stewardship Study. The contract term is from January 1, 2019 thru December 31, 2021 for a total cost of \$62,370.00 with a municipal share of \$31,185.00.

***Motion:** To approve the Bridgeport Borough and Marlborough Township Contracts, by Mr. Ernst, seconded by Mr. Blue, and approved by all present.*

VI. Upper Salford Planning Assistance Presentation

Presenter: Chloe Mohr

Chloe Mohr provided an overview of the Upper Salford Planning Assistance Contract. Upper Salford is in the western part of the county and part of the Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission. It is a predominately rural community with limited development and open space. Since 2010, there has been no non-residential development and between 2 and 7 new residential properties that were built. This is possible through regional planning where development can be directed toward the boroughs and surrounding growth areas. Ms. Mohr described current contract work on open space acquisitions and a validity challenge to the Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance in Upper Salford. She spoke about the preservation of the Heister House, built in 1757, that will include a trailhead for future trail projects. In the upcoming contract, Upper Salford is interested in looking into implementing a Historic Preservation overlay ordinance. Recently the township explored traffic calming options for various roads. Ms. Mohr also discussed design options for a roundabout that is proposed in Upper Salford. She added that all the funding to build the roundabout is coming from the Federal Highway Administration who is encouraging the use of roundabouts to improve safety at high crash intersections. The Planning Commission will work with PennDOT, the engineers, and Upper Salford to facilitate the design and public events to share the design of the roundabout. A map from the Bike Montco plan was displayed and highlighted a primary priority bike route which runs thru Upper Salford. Finally, Ms. Mohr spoke about a new trail that is proposed for Upper Salford. The proposed trail will connect Upper Salford Park to the Perkiomen Trail, and will preserve a high value 43-acre woodland.

VII. Pottstown Borough and Keim Street Planning Assistance Presentation

Presenter: Brian Olszak and Pattie Guttenplan

Brian Olszak provided an overview of the Pottstown Borough Planning Assistance Contract. Pottstown Borough is five square miles in the far western part of the county with approximately 22,600 residents. Pottstown Borough is part of the Pottstown Metro Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Olszak displayed a map of Pottstown and provided an overview of landmarks. He spoke about the industrial areas, the former Bethlehem Steel Plant, the Keystone Economic and Employment Plan (KEEP) area, the Pottstown Municipal Airport, and the Circle of Progress Drive area where Sly Fox and Manatawny Still Works are located. The land use map shows that 38% of the Borough is residential and 16% is institutional. Pottstown has a large institutional use area that includes the Hill School, a hospital, and a cemetery. This large land area affects the tax base of the borough and they are looking for redevelopment opportunities. The previous and current work items include the Pottstown Sustainability Plan adopted in June 2018, the KEEP project, a Downtown Use Focus Study, and various zoning text amendments. Mr. Olszak spoke in detail about the Downtown District uses that are being added, defined, updated, and removed. The new contract will include continuing with comprehensive zoning revisions, a comprehensive SALDO revision and implementing the Comprehensive Plan and Sustainability Plan.

Mr. Olszak and Pattie Guttenplan provided an overview of the Keim Street Planning Assistance Contract. This is a short term, one-year contract with Pottstown that is being funded through a TCDI grant from DVRPC. This project involves looking at the Pottstown Industrial Complex area with a focus on revitalization, connectivity to the neighborhood and connection to the Schuylkill River Trail. This area was the former location of the Bethlehem Steel plant and is in need of revitalization. A task force was formed that includes property owners and businesses from the industrial complex, Borough officials, and residents of the area. The project goals include creating a walkable mixed-use development area; providing

safe access to the Schuylkill River Trail; infrastructure and streetscape design improvements to create a pedestrian and bike friendly environment.

VIII. Farmland Preservation Program Annual Report

Presenter: Danielle Dobisch

Danielle Dobisch provided the board with a summary of the Farmland Preservation Program. The program was established in 1990 in Montgomery County. The program allows for the purchase of agricultural easements. This guarantees that the farm must be used for agriculture and could never be developed for another use. The state and county provide funding for the Farmland Preservation Program, and some municipalities contribute to the preservation of farms in their municipality. There are currently 165 permanently preserved farms in Montgomery County with over 9,660 acres. Ms. Dobisch displayed a county map using an ARCGIS story map system that highlights the permanently preserved farms; those that accepted offers and are in the process of preservation; those that are enrolled in a local agricultural security area; and those that applied for the program for 2019. Also highlighted on the map are the five farms that were preserved in 2018, which total 257 acres. The preserved farms are located in Upper Hanover Township, Lower Salford Township, and Worcester Township. In 2018, the Farmland Preservation Program received nine applications and made six offers that total approximately 350 acres. Ms. Dobisch stated that the board updated the Farmland Preservation Program Guidebook, which was approved by the State Farm Board. In addition to preserving farmland, Ms. Dobisch described other initiatives of the Farmland Preservation Board, including the recently published *Eat Local Montco* to support local businesses and farmers by DVRPC. This publication and all the other documents described in the presentation are available on the website. In 2018, staff planned and held two *AgBrewCulture* events to bring farmers and beer brewers together. These events were supported in part by a state grant that the county was awarded.

IX. Annual Summary of Development Activity

Presenter: Daniel Farina

Daniel Farina presented a summary of the 2018 Annual Summary of Development Activity. The report lists the new proposals activity for subdivision, land development, and zoning activity that were submitted to the Planning Commission. The total number of proposal submissions for 2018 was 434, which was slightly lower than the 455 received in 2017. Of the 434 proposals received in the county, 177 were for new development. Mr. Farina displayed a map of Montgomery County that shows the geographic distribution of proposals by municipality. The largest development proposals were in Lower Merion and Horsham. The activity is spread across the county, but concentrated along major transportation arteries like I-476, I-276, and US 422. The proposed acreage for the proposals dropped significantly from the previous year from 1649 acres to 848 acres. The 848 acreage in 2018 had more non-residential development proposed than residential development. Mr. Farina also spoke about residential development in detail and stated that 1,501 units were proposed, which is lower than the 3,594 units in the previous year. He also spoke about the types of development, single-family detached, attached, and multifamily housing types. The number of single family detached units has decreased to 217 units, and single family attached also decreased to 463 units. Multifamily proposals continue to lead in development in Montgomery County with 821 units proposed in 2018. The largest proposals include Hanover King of Prussia with 390 multi-family units in Upper Merion Township, the Philmont Country Club with 176 single family attached units in Lower Moreland Township, and Everleigh at Limerick Pointe with 156 single family attached units in Limerick Township. Mr. Farina spoke about nonresidential development proposals (commercial, industrial, institutional, and office), which is tracked by square footage. Nonresidential proposals have decreased from 2017 and are lower than what was proposed over the last three years. However, the 2,795,810 square feet of development proposed is still well-above the numbers during the Recession. The largest square footage was Mancill Mill in Upper Merion and next up was the Colonial Middle School in Plymouth. Mr. Farina also discussed the 142 proposed amendments, which consisted of local zoning code ordinances and zoning maps. In summary, the 2018 proposal activity was slightly down from the previous year but does continue to reflect a strong economy.

X. County Recycling Program Update

Presenter: Veronica Harris

Deferred

XI. Director's Report

1. Ms. Holton wanted to thank the staff for accommodating the new location and for being available yesterday evening while we were organizing the move.
2. Ms. Holton shared that we are next to the Ivy Rock Quarry that the county owns and in the next year or so the quarry should be finished being filled and ready for reuse and redevelopment. The County will be exploring options for the property.
3. We have already received interest and phone calls from municipalities interested in the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant program. The application deadline is March 1st. We will be sending a final email blast to municipal managers after President's Day weekend.
4. Ms. Holton shared that the Planning Commission has begun accepting nominations for the Montgomery Awards. The nominations include the Planning Advocate Award.
5. Ms. Holton announced that the Commissioners officially committed \$1 million to the Farmland Preservation program in 2019.
6. The Calendar of Events from February 12, 2019 to March 13, 2019 was distributed for board review. Ms. Holton highlighted the MCATO event in East Norriton. The Planning Commission will participate as an exhibitor and Matthew Edmond and Henry Stroud will be presenting on the county's trail system and Bike Montco. On March 12th we will host a workshop on solar permitting and inspection for municipalities at the Montgomery Township Community and Recreation Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

The next Board meeting will be on March 13, 2019 at 9:00 AM in the Planning Commission's Office.