



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES: Regular Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 12, 2019
Approved: July 10, 2019

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

STAFF ATTENDING: Jody Holton, Scott France, Daniel Farina, Eric Jarrell, Margaret Dobbs, Jamie Magaziner, Maureen Calder, Karina Caddick

GUESTS: Andrew Svekla, Associate Manager, Office of Smart Growth, DVRPC; Derek Lombardi, Planner, DVRPC; Ken Christovich, resident

I. Call to Order/Board Comments

Steve Kline called the board meeting to order.

II. Minutes of May 8, 2019

The minutes from the May 8, 2019 regular Board meeting were approved by the Board.

***Motion:** To approve the May 8, 2019 Board minutes, by Mr. Tornetta, seconded by Ms. Flaharty, and approved by all present.*

III. Public Comment

None

IV. DVRPC Community Impacts of Multifamily Development Report

Presenter: Scott France, Guest: Andrew Svekla, Associate Manager, Office of Smart Growth, DVRPC; Derek Lombardi, Planner, DVRPC

Scott France introduced Andrew Svekla and Derek Lombardi from DVRPC who will speak about the Community Impacts of Multifamily Development. Mr. France stated that there has been significant activity in multifamily housing in the county. He displayed a chart and map that highlights the increase in proposed multifamily development since 2016. The charts list preliminary land development proposals and sketch plan proposals between 2016 and 2019. The map of Montgomery County highlights that they are located all throughout the county with clusters in Lower Merion, King of Prussia and the Willow Grove area.

Andrew Svekla and Derek Lombardi from the Office of Smart Growth at the DVRPC are finalizing a report about the impacts of multifamily development. Mr. Svekla began by speaking about the development trends in single family and multifamily structures. The demand for multifamily development has risen over the years due to factors like changes in population such as age, marital status, and number of children. The fastest growing market of married and single households with no kids is driving the demand for multi-family housing. This market includes millennials and baby boomer empty nesters that see an appeal for renting. Mr. Svekla stated that the number renters is at the highest level since the 1960's, especially when compared to the number of homeowners. He also spoke about trends and forecasts in land use and how we try to focus growth where infrastructure can handle it. The existing zoning codes and opposition from the community often make it

difficult to build mixed-use and higher density development. The community believes that mixed use development could make traffic worse, affect property values, will change the neighborhood dynamics and possibly increase crime. Mr. Lombardi spoke about the organization of the project that will look at the potential impacts of development. They explored the economic infrastructure costs, local services, tax revenue and property values. The transportation impacts included looking into traffic and congestion, parking demand and supply and traffic safety. The community impacts looked into public safety and community character. In order to measure these impacts, the DVRPC used developer interviews, literature reviews, market trend reports, demographic multipliers and travel observations. The goal of the study is to look at the impacts and benefits of higher density development. Mr. Svekla would like to create a report that is easy to read and can reach a wide audience. He is also looking for suggestions on engagement and outreach opportunities. The draft report will be available at the end of July.

V. Census Update and Complete Count Committee

Presenter: Daniel Farina

Daniel Farina provided a brief summary of the Census Update and Complete Count status. Mr. Farina began by providing a summary of the demographics of Montgomery County which included population, housing units and foreign born population. He also provided an overview of the collaboration between Montgomery County and the US Census Bureau. The Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA) is a process that involves confirming that all unaccounted addresses are added to the census master list. The information is compiled using Board of Assessments information and then compared to the information provided to us by the US Census Bureau. There was a total of 1,652 addresses that were added to the master list from Montgomery County. The Census Bureau will need to approve our changes and will respond in August about whether or not our changes will be accepted. Montgomery County was also involved in the Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) which entails reviewing and editing the census geographies. DVRPC managed the PSAP response to the Census Bureau. MCPC assisted with GIS information and made recommendations to DVRPC. The next steps include work on providing new construction information once the materials are received in summer 2019. A Complete Count Committee was formed made up of leaders from county agencies, civic groups, faith based organizations and cultural institutions. The main purpose for the committee is to make sure there is an accurate census count of all Montgomery County residents. Mr. Farina provided a timeline of census operations. In March 2020 the US Post Office will begin to deliver census forms to all accounted households. The online response portal will also be open to the public. The official Census Day is April 1, 2020. Between May and August of 2020 there will be canvassing done of the households whom have not responded. December 31, 2020 is when the apportionment counts are delivered to the president and on March 31, 2021 is when Redistricting Summary Files are delivered to the States.

VI. Implementation Grant Award Summary

Presenter: Scott France

Scott France provided an update of the Montco 2040 Grant Program. The implementation program is a competitive grant that is intended to help municipalities with projects that achieve the goals of the Montco 2040 Comprehensive Plan. For 2019, the County Commissioners approved \$1.5 million in the capital budget. A grant committee was formed and is made up of select Planning Commission Board members and interdepartmental staff. There was a total of 25 applications received and a total of \$3.1 million requested. The county commissioners approved 15 applications and awarded a total of \$1,635,000. This included funds that were previously not utilized. In the focus category of Walk/Bike Montco \$614,230 was awarded; Support Downtowns & Community Destinations received \$538,030 in grant funding; the Adaptation/Resiliency category received \$362,740 and \$120,000 was awarded to a project outside of the focus categories. Mr. France provided a detail summary of each of the projects that was awarded a grant. The ten applications that did not receive funding have an opportunity to improve upon their application and apply again next year. This year there were four resubmissions that received grant funding. Mr. France provided an overall summary of the grant program since its inception in 2016. This is the fourth year of the grant program. There were a total of 93 applications received over the life of the program and a total of 56 grants were awarded for a grand total of \$5.5 million.

VII. Abington School District Contract, Action

Presenter: Scott France

Scott France requested that the Board approve the Abington School District Enrollment Study Contract. The district is comprised of 7 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 senior high school. There are approximately 8,337 students enrolled in the Abington School District which encompasses Abington Township and Rockledge Borough. The study will include an analysis of demographic trends, birth patterns, housing construction, housing sales activity, and other associated trends. The study will create a model that projects enrollments at each grade level and school building for each of the next ten years. The contract term is from August 1, 2019 thru November 31, 2019 for a total cost of \$7,070 with a school district share of \$5,303.

Motion: To approve the Abington School District Contract, by Mr. Ernst, seconded by Ms. Blumhardt, and approved by all present.

VIII. Community Planning Assistance Contracts, Action

Presenter: Eric Jarrell

Eric Jarrell requested that the Board approve the planning assistance contracts for North Wales Borough and Red Hill Borough. The Red Hill Borough contract has a contract term of June 1, 2019 thru May 31, 2022 for a total cost of \$45,738 with a municipal share of \$22,869. The North Wales Borough contract is also a three-year renewal with a contract term of June 1, 2019 thru May 31, 2022. The total cost of the contract is \$74,844 with a municipal share of \$37,422.

Motion: To approve the North Hills and Red Hill Contracts, by Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. Blue, and approved by all present.

IX. North Wales Borough Planning Assistance Presentation

Presenter: Margaret Dobbs

Margaret Dobbs presented an overview of the planning assistance contract for North Wales Borough. North Wales is centrally located in Montgomery County and currently celebrating their 150th anniversary. Ms. Dobbs reviewed the current land use and stated that the borough is primarily residential. North Wales recently adopted an update to their Comprehensive Plan and is working to implement some of the recommendations. Ms. Dobbs spoke in detail about recent land development reviews within the borough. During the current contract North Wales would like to work on an update to their transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning update. This would include aligning the zoning standards requirements to support the borough's planning goals fit the borough and to expand the district boundaries. North Wales would also like to work on general ordinance text amendments. This includes updates to the sign ordinance, lighting standards, as well as updates to their subdivision and land development ordinances. Ms. Dobbs spoke about the Center Street Project which is a pedestrian connection to Parkside Place Park. The path is overgrown with no clear signage or lighting. Center Street was identified as a priority project in the Comprehensive Plan that could provide a great resource for the community. North Wales plans to re-apply for a Montco 2040 Implementation Grant in 2020 for the Center Street Project. They did receive funding from the PECO Green Region for engineering services. Additional contract work includes improvements to municipal parks and exploring other grant opportunities.

X. Red Hill Borough Planning Assistance Presentation

Presenter: Jamie Magaziner

Jamie Magaziner provided a summary of the planning assistance contract for Red Hill Borough. Red Hill is .67 square miles and located in the northwestern part of Montgomery County. It is part of the Upper Perkiomen Valley Region. Ms. Magaziner displayed and spoke about the land use and zoning maps which are predominantly residential. She spoke about the demographic data, local government and previous contract work. The previous contract included work on a Revitalization Plan and adoption of a Village Residential Overlay District. Ms. Magaziner spoke in detail about the Kerschner Tract which is a large land development project review with 160 units as of the last design. During the new current contract Red Hill would like to focus on the Revitalization Plan Update. They plan to collaborate with the Commerce Department in the planning process. Red Hill would also like to work on implementation of the Main Street Greenway Study

recommendations, once it is finalized adopted. This will include pedestrian connections and bike amenities, gateway signage, stormwater management and green parking. Also included in the contract is flexible planning assistance, in-depth 247 reviews, redesign recommendations, zoning and SALDO amendments and other council-directed services.

XI. Director's Report

1. Ms. Holton announced that Chloe Mohr was recently recognized by the Greater Valley Forge TMA as a Distinguished Transportation Demand Management Professional for all the work she has been doing for our communities.
2. Ms. Holton introduced our new intern Kaitlin Patterson who is a student at West Chester majoring in Urban and Environmental Planning with a minor in Business GIS. She is also pursuing a master's degree in an accelerated program.
3. Ms. Holton spoke about a Planning Smarter event about residential agriculture at the 4-H Center in Creamery. Dan Farina and Maggie Dobbs presented a summary of the Suburban Homestead guidebook and composting. Other presenters included talks on community gardens, bee keeping, residential chickens and about mosaic gardens.
4. Jody Holton requested that everyone mark their calendars for our next Planning Smarter event on June 25th at Cheltenham Elementary. The event is called Sustainability Summer School and they will present how schools and municipalities can partner together for sustainability.
5. Ms. Holton distributed an update on the Bike Montco Plan. It highlights the achievements that have been completed or are in the process of being completed. The municipalities include Pottstown, Hatboro, Horsham, Lower Merion, Upper Dublin, Abington and Upper Moreland.
6. The Community Planning section will be having a retreat at the new Mill Grove property.
7. The Calendar of Events from June 12, 2019 to July 10, 2019 was distributed for board review.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20.

The next Board meeting will be on July 10, 2019 at 9:00 AM in the Planning Commission's Office.