



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES: Regular Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 10, 2019
Approved: September 11, 2019

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

STAFF ATTENDING: Jody Holton, John Cover, Drew Shaw, Daniel Farina, Matthew Edmond, Matthew Popek, John Marlatt, Karina Caddick

GUESTS: Gail Farmer, Executive Director, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association; Susan Myerov, Watersheds Program Director, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

I. Call to Order/Board Comments

Dulcie Flaharty called the board meeting to order.

David Cohen attended the Planning Smarter event, Sustainability Summer School at Cheltenham Elementary, on June 25th. He reported that it was well attended and the speakers were very informative.

Dulcie Flaharty spoke about a chance encounter with Jon Leshner on a Saturday in Ambler. He was attending a Ready for 100 kick off meeting. She wanted to commend him and the Planning Commission staff for their continued commitment to working with our communities – even on weekends, early mornings, and evenings.

Charlie Tornetta thanked John Cover whom he invited to the Greater Norristown Corporation to speak about the Norristown State Hospital.

II. Minutes of June 12, 2019

The minutes from the June 12, 2019 regular Board meeting were approved by the Board.

Motion: To approve the June 12, 2019 Board minutes, by Mr. Tornetta, seconded by Mr. Ernst, and approved by all present.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Draft Wissahickon Water Quality Improvement Plan

Presenter: Drew Shaw, Guest: Gail Farmer, Executive Director, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association; Susan Myerov, Watersheds Program Director, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Drew Shaw introduced Gail Farmer from the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association and Susan Myerov from the PA Environmental Council (PEC) who have been instrumental in guiding the process to develop the Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP). This process began back in 2015 and included creating a Water Quality Advisory Team consisting of Temple University, Environmental Finance Center, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association and the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Susan Myerov spoke about the PA Environmental Council and their involvement in the process. She also spoke about the significant effort and collaborative investment involved to improve the water quality of the Wissahickon. Mr. Shaw provided the board with an overview of the Draft Wissahickon Water Quality Improvement Plan. The Wissahickon

Creek Watershed is 64 square miles and involves a population of approximately 160,000 residents, 2,500 residents/square miles and is 29% impervious. There is a lot of development throughout the watershed area and a lot of this development occurred before stormwater management controls were put in place. Most of the tributaries and the main stem of the Wissahickon are designated impaired for their water quality by the EPA and DEP. The conventional TMDL which is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a stream can contain and still meet standards has proven to be an unattainable figure. Therefore the EPA and DEP have allowed the group to join forces to develop a more attainable Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) or an Alternative TMDL. The William Penn Foundation has provided a \$1.3M grant to fund their efforts to develop an alternative way to meet water quality standards for the Wissahickon Creek. The municipalities formed a management committee by ordinance and have contributed a total of \$475,000 for this project. Temple University became involved in the project and is responsible for collecting the data at numerous sites, during storm events and using various parameters and methods. Temple has done extensive monitoring for over a two year period that included data on turbidity, dissolved oxygen, macroinvertebrates, periphyton and phosphorus. Mr. Shaw spoke in detail about the data and results for each of the studies. The studies highlight that overland flow and stormwater runoff are large contributors to the water quality impairment. He also spoke about the draft plan which is an adaptive management plan with a 20 year implementation period. This will include a long process of implementing, assessing, modifying efforts, and then implementing those changes. The structure of the plan is based on the EPA's nine minimum elements of a watershed plan. They hope that structuring the plan this way will improve their chances to get funding in the future. Mr. Shaw provided a detailed overview of the plan. The recommendations include stormwater management practices, riparian improvements, instream restorations, protection of open space and future wastewater treatment plan upgrades. The plan also includes sections on implementation, monitoring, a summary of projects and funding options. The next steps include a review of the draft plan by the Management Committee; a preliminary review by the EPA; and a presentation to municipal elected officials and stakeholders. Then there will be an individual adoption by the municipalities followed by a formal submittal of the Wissahickon Water Quality Improvement Plan to the EPA for approval.

V. 2018 Residential and Nonresidential Construction Reports

Presenter: Daniel Farina

Daniel Farina presented a summary of the 2018 Residential and Nonresidential Construction Reports. The data for the report is derived from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment. In 2018, there were a total of 2,637 residential housing units built in Montgomery County which is a 31% increase from the prior year. This figure is the highest total of new units built over the last ten years. The report also provides a breakdown of the types of residential construction in the categories of Single-Family Detached, Single-Family Attached, Multifamily and Manufactured (mobile) Homes. Single-Family Attached and Multifamily grew in 2018 while Single-Family Detached and Manufactured Homes decreased from the previous year. Single-Family Attached and Multifamily accounted for 80% of the total new units built in the county. Multifamily saw the highest growth with a 72% increase from 2017 which was primarily in Upper Merion at the Village of Valley Forge. Mr. Farina displayed a county map that showed the distribution across the county. The townships of Upper Merion, Lower Providence and Upper Providence saw large numbers of development as well as in and around major transportation arteries.

Mr. Farina also spoke about 2018 Non-Residential Construction Report, which is also derived from Montgomery County Board of Assessment data. The data shows that 1,165,760 square feet of non-residential construction was built in 2018. The nonresidential data is measured by square feet and is further broken down into the categories of Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Institutional Elderly, Municipal, Office, Recreation and Utility. The overall non-residential construction figure has been declining over the past few years. There was a drop in commercial and office construction. Over half of the non-residential construction, or 601,383 square feet was in the institutional sector, and mainly in the townships of Lower Merion, Upper Merion and Upper Moreland. The largest development was the Bryn Mawr Hospital addition in Lower Merion. The Commercial category constructed 357,068 square feet where the largest construction project was a self-storage facility in Upper Merion.

During 2018, residential and non-residential construction was consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Montgomery County 2040 Comprehensive Plan in that the development occurred predominantly within developed or developable growth areas. Residential construction was mainly in growth areas with 70% in developed land and 25% in developable land. The remaining 5% was in rural resource and conservation opportunity areas. Non-residential construction was also mainly in growth areas with 81% in developed land and 15.5% in developable land. There was a minimal amount in rural and preserved open space. In summary, the construction report is a good indication of steady growth for Montgomery

County into the future. Mr. Farina displayed a new software tool, Dashboard, which is now available on our website. It allows the user to view construction reports that are produced by the Planning Commission.

VI. Draft County Complete Street Policy Update

Presenter: Matthew Edmond

Matthew Edmond presented a summary of the draft Complete Streets Policy. The Planning Commission received a grant from WalkWorks for \$5,000 to work on the policy. Mr. Edmond said that the Complete Streets policy provides safe access to all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders for county-owned roads. Typical Complete Streets design can include sidewalks, marked bike lanes, transit shelters, mid-block crosswalks, and highly visible signage. This policy is consistent with our Comprehensive Plan and is an action item under our Bike Montco plan where we committed to adopt a Complete Streets Policy for county-owned infrastructure. Montgomery County owns a total of 75 miles of roads and some of them are major arterials. The process included working with a broad range of individuals in a steering committee. Mr. Edmond discussed the vision statement and stated that the policy will guide decision-making during the planning and design of county-owned facilities and will also include the initiatives of our partners and external stakeholders. The Complete Streets policy includes a section on the principles, implementation of the policy, performance measures and any exceptions to the policy. There are clear procedures for approving any exceptions. The draft policy was distributed to the board and is available for review on our website. There is a comment period which ends on Friday, July 19th. The next steps include a revision in July or August based on the internal and external feedback received, and then an adoption by the County Commissioners at their September 19th Board meeting.

VII. MCPC 2019 Board Tour Overview: King of Prussia

Presenter: John Cover, Matthew Popek

John Cover provided the board with an overview of next board tour in King of Prussia and Bridgeport. The tour group will meet at One Montgomery Plaza in the Montgomery Room on Wednesday, September 11th. The bus will depart from Norristown at 9am and travel to King Manor in Bridgeport where Claire Warner will speak about a proposed transit oriented development opportunity. Matt Edmond and Henry Stroud will highlight the Lafayette Street Extension construction project and the Trail Junction/Chester Valley Trail right-of-way. The bus will then travel to the Hansen Access Road in Upper Merion where Mr. Edmond and Mr. Stroud will speak about the Chester Valley Trail alignment and the potential PA Turnpike interchange. This will also allow the board to view the future alignment of the King of Prussia Rail extension. The group will then travel to the King of Prussia Mall and the group will highlight the proposed Dekalb Pike streetscape improvements and the KOP Rail alignment near the KOP mall. At the KOP mall, we will hear about the future mixed use development plans for the former JCPenney site. After the mall, we will view the Village of Valley Forge, US Route 422 construction site and will hear about the current and future improvements in the area. Other sites that will be visited or highlighted during the tour will include Moore Park, Park Square Apartments, Vandenburg Road, Bridgeport Borough Hall and the Bridgeport Industrial Park. The final stop will be at Reach Climbing and Fitness Gym in Bridgeport where we will tour the facility. The bus tour will conclude at One Montgomery Plaza at approximately noon where we will have a light lunch, followed by a 30 minute board meeting.

VIII. Overview of Planning Commission Budget

Presenter: Jody Holton

Jody Holton provided a summary of the Planning Commission budget for 2019 and the proposed budget request for 2020. She stated that not much is expected to change for 2020. She provided the board with an in-depth detailed summary of the revenue items. She spoke about the Act 247 Land Development review fees which we expect to decrease approximately \$35,000 for 2019 and 2020. This is due to a slight decline in the amount of proposals and the number of units and square footage that are being proposed. Ms. Holton spoke about the contracts for DVRPC which will be \$228,800 in 2020. The CPA contract revenue is budgeted at \$506,000 for 2020, which is an increase over 2019 due to new contracts in Upper Gwynedd, Bridgeport and New Hanover. We will continue to work on school district enrollment projections and walk audits in 2020. Ms. Holton also spoke about the Recycling program which has experienced a large increase in costs in 2019 and will carry over to 2020. This is due to an increase in the cost by the household hazardous waste vendor and an increase in the volume that is being collected at the recycling events. Ms. Holton spoke about grants that were awarded in 2019 which

include the Wissahickon Water Quality Improvement Plan grant and a DVRPC Trail Equity Study grant. In 2019 we received approval to add a new Community Planning position due to the new community planning assistance contracts that have been added. Overall, expenses are anticipated to remain in the same range in 2020 as they were in 2019 with the exception of the recycling program. In summary, we will have revenue of \$1.5 million in 2019 and have budgeted \$1.6 million for next year. For expenses, we budgeted \$4.5 million in 2019 and have budgeted approximately \$4.6 million for 2020.

IX. Director's Report

1. Ms. Holton spoke about the Planning Smarter event in Cheltenham on sustainability planning. Cheltenham is the first community to have a sustainability plan. Jon Leshner presented at this event.
2. Ms. Holton spoke about an impressive tour that Pottstown Area Industrial Development Corporation gave to members of the planning commission staff. We visited a variety of new businesses along High Street and toured development opportunities along the Keystone Boulevard. We also visited the Colebrookdale Railroad Station, which is under construction in Memorial Park. The tour was well attended and included John Cover, Pattie Guttenplan and Brian Olszak from our offices.
3. Jody Holton announced that there will be no Board Meeting in August. The next board meeting will be on September 11th when we will have our board tour of the King of Prussia area.
4. The Calendar of Events from July 12, 2019 to September 11, 2019 was distributed for board review. There will be a bus tour of the Fort Washington Office Park on July 16th and they will focus on the ongoing revitalization of the area.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

The next Board meeting will be on September 11, 2019 at 12:00 PM in the Planning Commission's Office.