

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH WHITEHALL
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

JOINT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS/PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

REGULAR SESSION

MINUTES

JANUARY 11, 2022

The Joint Board of Commissioners/Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Workshop was held on the above date in the Township Municipal Building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Members in attendance:

Diane Kelly, President Board of Commissioners, and Planning Commission
Mike Wolk, Vice-President Board of Commissioners
Monica Hodges, Board of Commissioners
David Kennedy, Board of Commissioners
Brad Osborne, Board of Commissioners
William H. MacNair, Chairman Planning Commission
Brian Hite, Vice-Chairman Planning Commission
Alan Tope, Secretary Planning Commission
Mark Leuthe, Planning Commission
David Wilson, Planning Commission

Staff members in attendance:

Gregg Adams, Planner
David Manhardt, Director of Community Development
Randy Cope, Interim Township Manager

AGENDA ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER

Chairman MacNair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He announced that all meetings are electronically monitored.

AGENDA ITEM #2 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL/MEETING RULES

Chairman MacNair led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Gregg Adams called roll and read the meeting rules.

AGENDA ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were submitted for approval.

AGENDA ITEM #4 – PROCESS REVIEW

Director Manhardt welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reviewed the agenda, noting that it will carry through the entire Planning Commission portion of the

process. He stated that the evening's goal is to review Agenda Item #4 – Process Review. He stated that the coming meetings will review the Overall Goals, Resource Protection, Community Utilities, Housing, Traffic and Community Facilities, in that order. For each topic, the goal is to review and prioritize the 2009 Comp Plan Goals and Objectives, the LVPC Recommendations, and the recommendations from the Working Groups, then to add any new items, and then create Implementable Objectives and Strategies before moving to the next topic. The mapping for each topic will be reviewed and the Land Use Map created. The draft plan will run through the economic model and traffic model and, if acceptable, the Draft Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed and recommended to the Board of Commissioners for adoption.

Commissioner Wolk inquired if the economic modelling will be included within the process during the Modeling portion.

Director Manhardt stated that it would and that it would be used to test the recommendations of the draft Plan.

Mr. Adams reported that a remote participant reported that the telephone number listed on the website is not functioning.

Director Manhardt suggested that he pose any questions through the Chat while staff attempts to resolve the issue. He moved on with his presentation. He noted that the Guiding Principles were created prior to COVID, the “Where Should We Grow” and “How Should We Grow” data sets were developed during COVID and the results delivered to the Working Groups, which delivered their findings to the Planning Commission. He noted that all of the “deliverables” were available for review on the Township website. He reviewed each of the steps in more detail. He noted that the 2009 Comp Plan, the Working Groups’ Recommendations and the LVPC’s recommendations are available to distill down to a draft Plan. He stated that the intention is to create a document that is more graphics-intensive and less wordy, with more focus on implementable actions.

Commissioner Wolk inquired as to where the document reviewing what worked and what didn't work from the 2009 Comp Plan.

Director Manhardt stated that there is not such document. He stated that the Updated Comp Plan is proposed to be more of an active document to drive policy and not simply sit on a shelf.

Commissioner Kennedy inquired as to how many current staff members from the 2009 Comp Plan are with the Township.

Director Manhardt stated that Gregg Adams and Brad Osborne participated in the 2009 Comp Plan, as did a few Planning Commission members.

Director Manhardt reviewed the Mapping process, noting that mapping from the LVPC and other sources will be combined to create mapping for each topic, which will then be combined for the Future Land Use Map, which will be run through the Modeling

to confirm the concepts. He then reviewed the MPC requirements for a Comprehensive Plan, noting that the requirements are the framework for the Working Outline.

Commissioner Wolk suggested that the Planning Commission work on the high-level Goals and Objectives first and report back to the Board of Commissioners so that the BOC can give its feedback.

Director Manhardt suggested that the BOC will be updated regularly (at each meeting) so that they are kept aware of the Planning Commission's progress and can give feedback. He also noted that anyone who feels that a vital item has been missed can contact staff and submit the item for inclusion in the following discussions. He noted that there will be overlapping goals generated and that staff will review the goals and combine them where applicable. He stated that each goal will be tracked throughout the process to ensure that all are accounted for. He noted that the MPC requires interaction of the elements, and that the Land Use Plan will be the main tool to ensure the interaction of the elements. He also stated that it will also be used to review compatibility with neighboring municipalities. He noted that this plan will have implementation plans for each element, which will then be reviewed and combined where appropriate, prioritized and designated as short-term, mid-term and long-term implementations. He noted that the Working Group workbooks are great resources for the implementation strategies. He also suggested that the Planning Commission start looking at the Overall Goals and Resource Protection to start prioritizing. He noted that ideas can always be submitted to staff for incorporation in the next set of discussions.

Commissioner Osborne inquired as to whether public comments would be shared with the Board of Commissioners as well as the Planning Commission.

Director Manhardt stated that they could. He suggested that they could be posted to the website and included in the agenda packets.

Commissioner Kelly suggested that a link could be installed in a prominent location on the website to make it easier for the public to comment.

Director Manhardt stated that he would look at setting that up.

Planning Commissioner MacNair reviewed the upcoming process, inquiring if the comments will be compiled and posted to the website for the Planning Commission and public to review before the next meeting.

Director Manhardt stated that he felt that it is important to compile all of the comments, both from the meeting and after the meeting, and review and synthesize the ideas into the working document, which will be reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting so that the Planning Commission is satisfied with the results before they are posted to the website. He stated that if the ideas are documented throughout the process, the Comp Plan will essentially be written by the time the process is complete.

Planning Commissioner MacNair inquired as to the prioritization.

Director Manhardt stated that there is a real-time prioritization application available to the Planning Commission so that priorities may be immediately determined and discussed.

Commissioner Wolk inquired as to the measurability of the goals.

Director Manhardt stated that he views the goals as more aspirational and the implementations as the yardstick. He also noted that the concept of frequent review is another method of measuring success and keeping the plan active.

Commissioner Kennedy suggested that more public involvement is preferred and any means should be explored.

Director Manhardt agreed but pointed out that the citizens elected the Commissioners to represent their interests as they work through their busy lives.

Commissioners Hodges suggested a higher presence on the website.

Commissioner Kennedy described his experiences with the residents of the Township while campaigning.

Commissioner Wolk echoed the sentiment, noting that land development concerns were why the Board members were elected. He complimented Director Manhardt on his leadership throughout the process.

Director Manhardt noted that the early engagement was gratifying, noting that the comments of the public confirmed the concept of getting the public engagement early. He then reviewed the technical issues uncovered through the evening's meeting – the volume, the telephone number issue and the camera activation issue.

There was a discussion of the agenda.

Director Manhardt noted that the agenda is for the entire process, which allows for a review of what's been covered and what's ahead. He stated that a review of the prior meeting's conclusion should always start the meeting.

Planning Commissioner Hite inquired if the meetings will be recorded and posted on the website for later review.

Director Manhardt stated that they would.

AGENDA ITEM #10 – ADJOURNMENT

Chairman MacNair requested a motion to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Commissioner Kelly made the motion, Mr. Hite seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADOPTED THIS DATE: February 8, 2022

ATTEST:

Secretary

Chairman