

# ELK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

## ELK COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

January 24, 2024

Carl Gamarino called the regular meeting of the Elk County Planning Commission to order at 4:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following were present:

Members: Dale Anderson, Cheryl Ruffner (phone), Jim McClain, John Schatz, Brandi Hanes, Ron Minnick and Carl Gamarino

Planning Department: Tracy Gerber, Becki Taylor and Kathy McClelland

Excused:

Absent: Fred Swanson

Guests: None

### INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were conducted at this time.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jim McClain made a motion to approve of the minutes of the October 25, 2023 meeting; Brandi Hanes seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

### SUBDIVISION REVIEW & APPROVAL

Tracy Gerber stated that she sent out a report in the Boards packet of the subdivisions done since the last meeting. All the subdivisions done in that time period were Minor subdivisions.

Ron Minnick questioned if all the subdivisions in the County have to come through the Planning Commission.

Tracy Gerber answered that there are 5 municipalities that fall under the County's SALDO, those come through the Planning Commission; the others, come to the County for comment only. Those that come to the County for approval are Millstone, Spring Creek, Horton, Benezette and Highland. The Board had given the previous Planning Director permission to approve the Minor subdivisions so that they are not held up, Major subdivisions or Land Development come through the Planning Commission.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### **Small Communities Entitlement Program (CDBG) Report**

Becki Taylor stated that project solicitation for this year's CDBG entitlement will begin in February of 2024. A memorandum and public hearing notice will be mailed out to all eligible municipalities followed by an advertised "Request for Proposals" in March. The first public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2024 and then a second reminder notice is mailed out in June. Applications will be due to the Planning Office on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The Brockway Borough Municipal Authority is applying for a competitive CDBG funding for a waterline project located in Horton Township. A competitive program means they will be competing for funding among other municipalities throughout PA. The competitive application is due to DCED on or by February 2, 2024.

If the project is approved and funded through DCED, BBMA plans to replace approximately 4,340 linear feet of the existing & antiquated waterline located on Keystone Road & a portion of Coder Road in Brockport, PA. The current water line is extremely old, undersized and deteriorating. The water main consists of 4" asbestos cement pipes. Over the last 2 years, the extensions broke seven times, causing major disruptions to drinking water & fire protection services as well as introducing asbestos fiber into the water supply. The age of the line, combined with tuberculation, beaks & the continued

release of asbestos fibers, has created significant challenges & risks for BBMA, including health risks from asbestos exposure, service disruptions, growing maintenance costs & accelerated structural degradation.

New piping will result in an 8" waterline loop to facilitate continuous water circulation within the system which minimizes the potential for stagnation & reduce the need for flushing which can potentially release asbestos into the water. More efficient infrastructure will reduce water loss & leakage in a system that is experiencing 1,000,000 gallons of water loss annually. Three fire hydrants will be installed to improve fire protection capabilities.

Project Updates:

- FY 2020 Johnsonburg West End Storm Sewer Project was completed in October of 2023.
- FY 2021 & FY 2022 Former Johnsonburg Hotel Demo Clean-Up Project was completed in November of 2023.
- FY 2022 Office of Aging Accessible Entrance Project – Bucktail Excavators, Inc. and subcontractors began working on this project on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The ADA accessible ramp located at 118 Center St. is complete but the contractor is now waiting on the ADA accessible Doors to come in and then the door installation will begin.

Ron Minnick questioned what the guidelines are for the CDBG funding.

Becki Taylor answered that 70% of the funding has to go towards a project in areas where residents qualify as low to moderate income, presumed clientele (ex. disabled, elderly or abused).

Tracy Gerber added that water, stormwater and sewer rank high with the County and DCED. All other projects will rank lower.

Carl Gamarino questioned if there is any difference between the Competitive grant and CDBG grant.

Tracy Gerber answered that they share the same guidelines and requirements. CDBG is an entitlement, the Competitive grant applications are ranked through the state; an applicant competes with other applicants across the state.

### **Elk County Housing Report**

Kathy McClelland stated that accessibility in homes, whether it be a stairlift, ramp or an accessible bathroom, continues to be a leading need. There are currently 3 Accessible Modification projects open, 2 in the City of St. Marys and 1 in Ridgway. Referrals come from word of mouth and many from the Office of Aging.

Still waiting on the release of funds for the Whole Home Program. This was to be funded in the 2023-2024 budget. Northern Tier, who administers this grant for Elk County, has a waiting list for home repairs.

### **Directors Report**

#### **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Tracy Gerber stated that she is continuing to work with Michael Baker International and Clearfield County for the Comprehensive Plan update through Strategies and actions for each of the 8 focus categories (transportation, energy, housing, infrastructure, economy, land use, resources and social services.) The consultant had conducted one on one interviews with professions in each category. A draft plan was submitted to us which was sent back with comments. Once the draft plan is closer, to being finalized, a public survey will be conducted. Tracy hopes to have a draft plan for the Board at the April meeting.

#### **PA Transportation Advisory Committee Conducted a local Match Study**

Tracy Gerber stated that a study was conducted to examine how municipalities are at a disadvantage when competing for grant funding because they cannot afford matching funds. The objectives are to identify state constraints, understand municipal challenges, capacity, best practices for PA, and develop recommendations to assist municipalities meet match requirements, Benazette Township was used as one of the Case Studies. Results of the study are not completed yet available, if anyone is interested in the study, please let Tracy know.

## **Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The plan received final “pending” approval on October 30, 2023. The approval is pending until the County and all municipalities adopted a resolution accepting the plan. To date, all 12 municipalities and the county have adopted a resolution. I am waiting on final FEMA approvals to be received for 2 municipalities resolutions. The final plan has been forwarded to every municipality for their records.

John Schatz questioned if Tracy had an update on the Route 120 by-pass.

Tracy Gerber didn't have an update but will ask Amy for any information on this and will email John what she sends.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of Officers**

Tracy Gerber stated that at this time, we have Carl Gamarino, Jr. as Chairperson, Dale Anderson as Vice Chairperson and John Schatz as Secretary/Treas. of the Planning Commission. Dale Anderson made a motion for the current officers to stay at their current positions on the Board until December 31, 2024; Brandi Hanes seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

### **Board Member Attendance**

Tracy Gerber led the Board in a discussion regarding the attendance of the representative for Jones Township. Tracy explained that from 2018 – 2023 there was 18 meetings held. Mr. Swanson attended 8 of those, was absent for 7 and excused for 3. The Board reviewed the Resolution adopted in September 1999 Elk County Planning Meeting and posted in the meeting minutes. Tracy said that if the Board is in agreement, she will take the next steps in calling the Jones Township Supervisors

### **ELK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION** **RESOLUTION**

AMENDING THE BY-LAWS OF THE COMMISSION TO REQUIRE THE ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Article III of the By-Laws of the Elk County Planning Commission is hereby amended by adding the following additional provision:

“Any member who misses more than two regular meetings consecutively, or more than three regular meetings per year, except for just cause, may be determined to be guilty of nonfeasance in office. Under such circumstances, a majority of the members of the Commission may recommend removal of the member pursuant to Section 206 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, 53 P.S. Section 10205.”

ADOPTED this 29<sup>th</sup> day of September 1999.

Motion to approve this resolution was made by Russ Braun, seconded by Bob Mohr. All were in favor.

\*Resolution adopted at the September 1999 Elk County Planning Meeting and posted in the meeting's Minutes.

## **COMMENTS FROM GUESTS**

At this time, Tracy Gerber told the Board that the Planning Department will always hold public meetings, but gave the option to the Board that if they would want to participate via Zoom, the County can make that happen. The Board chose that they would rather come to the meetings. In the event something changes, the County has that option.

## **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 4:30 PM in Conference Room #2 in the Elk County Courthouse Annex.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Brandi Hanes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 PM; Jim McClain seconded the meeting and carried unanimously.

