

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER
633 COURT STREET, 14TH FLOOR
READING, PA 19601-4309

DECEMBER 8, 2021

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Tom McKeon called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 as a virtual meeting using the platform Microsoft Teams.

The following members were present:

Thomas C. McKeon, Chair
Jodi L. Gauker, Vice-Chair
James A. Adams, Secretary
Glenn R. Knoblauch
James C. McCarthy
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB
Douglas P. Rauch, Esq.
Christopher J. Spohn
David H. Turner

Also Attending:

Heidi B. Masano, Solicitor
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Shanice E. Ellison, Planner I
Michelle D. Franklin, Subdivision Planner III
Michael D. Golembiewski, Trans. Modeler
Devon B. Hain, Transportation Planner II
David N. Hunter, Sr., AICP, Executive Director
Matthew F. McGough, Intergovernmental Planner
Laura F. Mursch, Planner II
Alan D. Piper, Transportation Planner III
Rick L. Royer, Design Planner
Ashley J. Showers, Assistant Director
Amanda M. Timochenko, Planner II
Pauline R. Klopp, Office Support IV
Pam Shupp Menet, Berks County Asst. CAO
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator
Heather Berger, IS
Information System Production
Deb Millman, GRCA
David Myers, Berks Alliance
Jess Blauser, Asst. to Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
Jeremy Zaborowski, Exec. Dir, BCIDA

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

A. Executive Director's Report

David Hunter mentioned that the next Smart Growth Alliance meeting is being held next Wednesday, December 15th at 2:00 p.m. Rodney Ridley from Alvernia University will be speaking about the Cultural Coalition he is involved with. Leah Eppinger, Dauphin Co. Housing Authority Director will also be speaking at this meeting about a non-profit she helped form that is building houses.

David Hunter informed the Commission that he and Laura Mursch hiked the John Bartram Trail last Friday with board members from Schuylkill River Greenways Assoc.

Ashley Showers introduced Rick Royer, who is the Planning Commission's newly hired Design Planner.

Mrs. Showers then informed the Commission about a meeting that was held with a constituent and business property owner about some flooding issues. The property is the former Blue Falls Grove which is now known as Quinta Las Cabanos. Those in attendance were NRCS, Berks Nature, Berks County Conservation District and Reading Area Water Authority, who all stepped up to help and offer guidance.

B. Elect Nominating Committee

Mr. McKeon appointed Lee Olsen, Jim McCarthy and Glenn Knoblauch as chair of the Nominating Committee. They were asked to nominate a slate of officers for next year.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of November 10, 2021

B. Reports for Approval

- Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report & Summary
- Endorsed Land Development & Subdivision Activity Report

MOTION: Lee Olsen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Doug Rauch and passed unanimously.

5. Staff and Stakeholder Reports

A. Imagine Berks Plan

Pam Shupp Menet updated the Commission on the Imagine Berks Plan. Ms. Shupp mentioned that it is the goal of the County to take the strategies, tactics and prioritizations that come of the Downtown Plus Plan and incorporate them into the County's Imagine Berks Plan.

Ms. Shupp mentioned that the timeline has been pushed back but it is hopeful that there will be an unveiling of a plan in April 2022.

Tom McKeon suggested that the Planning Commission be kept updated on the process of the Imagine Berks Plan at each monthly meeting throughout the unveiling of the plan.

B. Downtown Plus Plan Discussion

Lee Olsen gave a presentation on his review of the Draft Downtown Plus Plan. He stated that we need to offer our help and talent to the City. Mr. McKeon agreed that we need to tell the City that the County Planning Commission is here to help.

David Hunter was under the impression that it was the City's goal to get the report to Council before the end of the year. He said that he would contact Jamal Abodalo on the next steps.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chris Spohn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Thomas C. McKeon, Chairman

James A. Adams, Secretary