

UPPER PERKIOMEN VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
July 22, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was held in the Upper Hanover Township Building and was called to order by Chairman Bill Ritting at 7:00 PM.

Municipal representatives present:

East Greenville – Josiah Pierson
Marlborough – Bill Ritting, Brian Doremus
Pennsburg – Michael Mensch
Red Hill – Faith Diascro, Larry Leister
Upper Hanover – Richard Fain

Also present this evening: Brian Olszak and Matt Edmond from the Montgomery County Planning Commission; Margie Gehlhaus, Upper Perkiomen School District; Luanne Stauffer, Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes, with corrections, of the March 25, 2015 was made by Michael Mensch, seconded by Josiah Pierson, and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

No Treasurer's Report.

Special Presentation

Matt Edmond, the Transportation Section Chief of MCPC, was present to introduce himself as Leo Bagley's replacement, as well as give a general update of the Section's role in transportation planning and implementation in the County. Edmond explained that the Section acts as the conduit between county government and constituents, through policy work and project implementation, while explaining that the Section intends to expand more into "multimodal" transportation planning, including walking and biking. He also went into some depth giving updates and answered commission members' questions on a number specific planned transportation improvement projects in the region:

- Knight Road Bridge
 - The official start date is February 2016, but this could change
 - There are nearby Bald Eagle nests which could complicate the project
 - A question was asked about whether there could be bike lanes on Route 663: However, the design will not include bike lanes, as there isn't enough width on the isthmus to accommodate them without major earthwork. There will be two 11 foot lanes with 2 foot shoulders (26' wide total).
- Pennsburg Railroad Bridge
 - Potential bog/wetlands issue present, which can delay the project, but is scheduled for Spring 2016. Additional proposal to bring trail underneath bridge.
- Fruitville Road Bridge
 - County to rebuild, and then will be handed over to Upper Hanover township
 - The current let date is in early 2019.
- McLean Road Bridge
 - Still planned to be demolished, but currently seems to be stalled.

One commission member stated, and others agreed, that sometimes there is an apparent disparity between different parts of the County and the respective attention each is paid when it comes to proposed transportation improvements. Edmond related that he hoped that that would not continue, and he'd be sure to keep that in mind, but that that condition was a result of metropolitan-regional transportation policy, which tends to favor more-populated areas. Conversation also steered toward bike planning, and the conclusion that a county trail and

bike plan would need to be more focused on functionality and practicality (i.e. how bicyclists use roads and which they might prefer), and not just based on road service-level classification formulas applied in areas in the past. One last thread of conversation focused on potential Route 422 and Turnpike projects in the future.

Old Business

Greenway and Stewardship Study

Brian Olszak gave a brief update on the status of the contract with DCNR, stating that MCPC has just received the “notice to proceed,” which permits work to begin with the Natural Lands Trust on the Stewardship Assessments. For this region the first area to be studied will be the Green Lane Reservoir. MCPC will create a preliminary list of other parks to commission stewardship studies for, so that the UPVRPC may review and finalize the selections going forward. MCPC will also create a preliminary list of villages to include in the Main Street Greenways portion of the Study, with UPVRPC to finalize—all boroughs will already be included.

New Business

Wayfinding Signage DCED Grant Application Support Letter

Luanne Stauffer gave a brief update on the status of the Wayfinding Signage, stating that they were “crossing their t’s and dotting their i’s” on funding requests. She presented a grant support letter from the UPVRPC for the commission’s approval to include in her grant requests. Since last year the cost of producing all the signs had risen, and she was petitioning the County Commissioners to make up the difference in the price quote from last year and this year. Their support will be looked on positively on the state level, to where she was applying for these grants. Also discussed were some of the initial sign prototype installation logistics.

Regional Updates

East Greenville – The Borough received results from the Main Street Market Survey it implemented last month, receiving over 200 responses online. Businesses such as the Grande and Java Good Time Café received special recognition in responses in the survey, and represented the kinds of businesses that the community desires as a whole.

Green Lane – None.

Marlborough – It is a big month in the township: advertisements are out for Ordinance repeals and adoptions, as well as for the overall Codification of all the township’s ordinances.

Pennsburg – Second Street project will be starting next month, from Main Street to Cherry Street. The State will be working on 663 in the borough, with milling and repairs. Also, the gas station at the Weis is almost complete, and the Weis should have their liquor license by Labor Day.

Red Hill – None.

Upper Hanover – Reserve at Macoby Run Phase 4A was approved for 23 single family homes. Glenwood Chase development of 42 single-family homes will be starting next Spring. Lastly, in the Northgate development, 435 building permits have been issued out of a total of 736.

School District – None

PerkUp Update – Luanne Stauffer discussed the creation of a magazine which also acted as a directory, as well as the production of “UPV” stickers which would be produced in the same font and style as the Wayfinding Signage. A version of stickers will also be used by the Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber as well.

County Updates – Brian Olszak handed out MCPC reports on Residential and Nonresidential Development throughout the County in 2014, for the Planning Commission's information. While residential construction saw a modest increase in 2014, nonresidential development saw a significant drop in that year. This drop could have been the result of nonresidential tenants choosing to lease pre-existing vacancies instead of investing in new construction, since MCPC has observed nonresidential vacancy rates at significantly lower rates than in recent years.

Inter-regional Planning Cooperative – The first meeting of the Greenway and Stewardship Study Steering Committee is still planned for October, but no date has been set yet.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Olszak
For
Eric Jarrell, Acting Secretary