

UPPER PERKIOMEN VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
October 28, 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 7:02 PM

Municipal representatives present:

East Greenville – Josiah Pierson, Bob Gery

Marlborough – Bill Ritting, Brian Doremus

Pennsburg – Fred Schutte

Red Hill – Larry Leister

Upper Hanover – Steven Rothenberger

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2015 meeting was made by Josiah Pierson, seconded by Brian Doremus, and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Reports

Treasurer Brian Carpenter was not present, but last payment invoice should have been received.

Old Business

Greenway and Stewardship Study

Eric Jarrell reiterated report from last meeting that showed the progress we're making last month. MCPC picked 300 acres of public space in Green Lane Park to begin stewardship assessment process. Sumneytown would be interested in added to Main Street Greenways, which will include stormwater management, walkability, and regreening. Lastly, study will look at *connections* to Resource Greenways from the Main Street Greenways, and will have to be tailored to each individual municipality.

New Business

Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan

Kim Licata, chair of task force for Strategic Plan of the UPVCoC, attended the UPVRPC meeting to take commission members through a "visioning" focus group process as outreach for the Chamber's new Strategic Plan. She discussed the previous Strat Planning process, and explained how this would be different. This focus group targeted three key goals, "connect," "promote," and "advocate," and asked about what kind of tasks or strategies can flush out or accomplish these three main goal areas.

Connect: Have a presence at "Community Day," at least in East Greenville, or at least literally "opening the door" to welcome newcomers who might not know what the Chamber does. Grants could be given to businesses to improve their facades? (Could also fall under "advocate"). Chamber can connect businesses to resources, educational training and fulfilling niches that the municipalities

have needs in, like grant-writing, and otherwise create the framework for municipalities to be successful.

Promote: “How do you recruit”? Largely word of mouth: through PerkUP, the Chamber got a better understanding of what works and what doesn’t in terms of recruitment and retention. What about Job Fairs? Chamber has been involved with workforce development connecting high schools to local employers. Chamber can connect inquiring businesses with questions to other business members to provide technical assistance. They could advertise local job listings and local available properties listings.

Advocate: Legislative affairs meetings with state senators or representatives, or alerts if there is a bill that will affect the membership are examples of how the Chamber can and will advocate for business members. Chamber does not take sides on a political issue. Discussion also ensued about whether group/cooperative purchase of healthcare through the Chamber could be facilitated, but as a conduit, and whether it was feasible that any other cooperative buying could happen?

A discussion also ensued about how the Chamber or the region might attract back factories, the likes of which used to employ several thousand people in the region, and that community has to want to let them come in if it wants to see more economic activity.

2016 Budget and Meeting Dates – The Dates were acceptable, and Upper Hanover is amenable to still hosting the meetings. Motion to approve budget for 2016 was put forward, contingent on getting the affirmative vote from Green Lane borough, a representative for which was not present: Steve Rothenberger made the motion, with Brian Doremus seconded, and passed unanimously.

Updates:

East Greenville – None

Green Lane – None

Marlborough – Township business has been slower; Marlborough accepted public dedication of streets from Marlborough Office Park and is currently working on budget.

Pennsbury – Roadwork is still being done on the roads at the Prep school and at 663. The Borough is getting a backhoe again; this year the borough is looking at renovations to several public buildings, including the Police Station and Roads building. Contacted the 7-11 on maintenance issues, and they expressed there is interest in building—someone should be occupying it soon, and actually has gone to settlement.

Red Hill – None

Upper Hanover – Residential subdivisions are moving along, seen nothing from Kirchener tract or the tract across from Walmart. Approved relay for life in their park. YMCA still doing well, and has recently corrected some light pollution issues.

School District – SD is in final interviews for high-level positions, including Assistant to the Superintendent.

PerkUp Update – Have been to almost every municipality, having asked for dollars for the Wayfinding Program. Discussion followed as to whether there was anything the Chamber needed to respond to or clear up for municipalities to ensure buy-in for the Program.

County – Montgomery Awards will be held on November 18th, and recently had last Planning Smarter event for the season.

Inter-regional Planning Cooperative – Saw Bob Mensch, will try to get him to the December meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Olszak
For
Eric Jarrell, Acting Secretary