

MINUTES
MIFFLIN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008
LEWISTOWN COUNTRY CLUB – 6:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE:

Members

James Spendiff, Chairman
Dan Dunmire, Vice Chairman
John Pannizzo, Secretary
Donald Kauffman
Neal Shawver

Staff

William Gomes, Director
Melody Bratton, Community Development Administrator
Douglas Marks, Rehabilitation Specialist/Construction Manager
Mark Colussy, Associate Planner
Jodie Barger, Community Development Bookkeeper/Secretary
Donna Baer, Fiscal Assistant
Millie Sunderland, Office Manager/Grants Manager

Guests

Neil Aumiller, United Way Of Mifflin-Juniata Counties; Virginia Aumiller; Donna Baer, Mifflin County Planning And Development Department; Brittany Barger; Jodie Barger, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; William Barnett, The Juniata Valley Bank; Representative Kerry Benninghoff; Melody Bratton, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; John Breneman, Senator Jake Corman's Office; Michelle Brummer, Gannett Fleming, Inc.; Craig Bubb, Municipal Authority of the Borough of Lewistown; Jodi Bubb; Ryan Casner, Oliver Township; Frank Chlebnikow, Rettew Associates, Inc.; Mark Colussy, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; Thomas Cox, Burnham Borough Planning Commission; Larry Craig, Glace Associates, Inc.; Dan Dunmire, Mifflin County Planning Commission; Sue Dunmire; Leonard Eby, Mifflin County Savings Bank; Greg Elliott, EADS Architects, Inc.; Fran Evanitsky, The Juniata Valley Bank; Linus Fenicle, Reager & Adler, P.C.; Kenneth Fisher, Mifflin County Savings Bank; Representative Mike Fleck; Thomas Garver, Burnham Borough Council; John Geibel, Burnham Borough Planning Commission; Nancy Jo Gibbons, Juniata Terrace Borough Council; Bill Gomes, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; Sandy Gomes; Evelyn Henry, Kistler Borough Council; Barbara Hobbs, Kistler Borough Council; Donna Holmes, Penn State Small Business Development Center; Donald Howell, Mifflin County GIS Department; Gerald Hummel, Greater Lewistown Corporation; Ann Kanagy, Belleville Mennonite School; Aquilla Kanagy, Mifflin County Airport; Donald Kauffman, Mifflin County Planning Commission; Richard Koch, Gannett Fleming, Inc.; Russell Krug, Oliver Township Planning Commission; Tom Landis, Omega Bank; Nick Malawskey, The Sentinel; Doug Marks, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; Diana McClure, Keller Engineers, Inc.; David McNitt, CENPA Development, LLC; John Mertz, Burnham Borough Planning Commission; Brent Miller, Mifflin County Planning Commission; Don Mulvihill; Marie Mulvihill, United Way of Mifflin-Juniata Counties; R. Dennis Noble, Juniata Terrace Borough Council; Teresa O'Neal, Juniata County Commissioner; Kelly O'Donnell, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; Myra Ordanoff, Kistler Borough Council; Carla Pannizzo; John Pannizzo, Mifflin County Planning Commission; Rob Postal, Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation; Eric Powell, Mount Union Borough; Robert Reck, Mifflin County Commissioner; Otis Riden, Jr., Mifflin County Commissioner; Steve Roselle, Commonwealth Engineering & Technology, Inc.; Michael Ryan, Penn State Small Business Development Center; Pam Sechrist, PA Cleanways; Roy Sechrist, Wayne Township Board of Supervisors; Kevin Shannon, Commonwealth Engineering & Technology, Inc.; Neal Shawver, Mifflin County Planning Commission; Jim Shilling, Kish Bank; Patti Shilling; John Shirk, Omega Bank; Dayton Shugarts; Janet Shugarts, Kistler Borough Council; Amy Smith, Kistler Borough Council; Matt Snyder; Carol Ann Spendiff; James Spendiff, Mifflin County Planning Commission; David Spicher, Union Township Planning Commission; Tim Staub, Rettew Associates, Inc.; Max Stoner, Glace Associates, Inc.; Kenton Stuck, CENPA Development, LLC; Mark Sunderland, Mifflin County Commissioner; Millie Sunderland, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; Ann Toole, Toole Recreation Planning; Troy Truax, Delta Development Group, Inc.; James Tunall, Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce; Judy Tunall; Chuck Walls, Buchar Horn, Inc.; Deb Warntz; Donald R. Warntz, II, Derry Township Board of Supervisors; JoAnn White, Burnham Borough Planning Commission; Judge Rick Williams; Mindy Williams; Anne Wimsatt, Lewistown Borough Planning Commission; Noah Wise, Burnham Borough; Secretary Dennis Wolff, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; J. Lester Yoder, Union Township Planning Commission; Jon Zimmerman, Downtown Lewistown, Inc.; and Jim Zubler, Downtown Lewistown, Inc.

Dinner

Melody Bratton offered the invocation before dinner.

Introduction of Guests/Opening Comments/2007 Annual Report

James Spendiff, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Annual Dinner Meeting and recognized Mifflin County Commissioners Mark Sunderland, Otis Riden, Jr. and Robert Reck. Jim expressed appreciation to the Commissioners' for supporting the Planning Commission's efforts during the past year. Jim also recognized some of the guests who attended the meeting.

Jim gave the opening comments and explained the reasons for holding the Planning Commission's Annual Meeting: 1) it provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to tell how hard they (the Planning Commission and Planning and Development Department) have worked this past year; 2) the meeting is also a forum for municipalities, community organizations and residents of the County to learn about programs and issues that may affect the County's growth and development; and 3) the meeting is also a way of thanking the members of the County Planning Commission. All members are volunteers who spend many hours on a variety of issues including assisting municipalities in the County review of subdivisions and land development activities, and, when requested, providing advice to the Mifflin County Commissioners on a variety of issues that affect our County.

Jim recognized the Planning Commission members present. He called the meeting to order for the purpose of reviewing the 2007 Annual Report. Jim turned the meeting over to Director, Bill Gomes, who introduced the Planning and Development Department staff. Bill reviewed the 2007 Annual Report. Neal Shawver made a motion to adopt the 2007 Annual Report. Dan Dunmire seconded the motion. All members voted aye.

Awards Presentation

The Community Planning Award is presented by the Mifflin County Planning Commission to individuals, organizations or communities that have demonstrated leadership in community planning. The award is given annually as a way to recognize the efforts and talents of individuals, organizations or communities to improve the area. One of the reasons for this award is a way for municipalities to have an opportunity to recognize positive planning efforts. Downtown Lewistown, Inc. was presented with the Community Planning Award in recognition of their initiation of the Kish River Walk.

Bill gave an overview of the Kish River Walk project: The Kish River Walk began with a feasibility study that involved a \$13,500 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources matched with: a \$2,500 cash contribution; in-kind material and time resources from the Mifflin County GIS and Planning and Development Departments providing GIS mapping and development services, plan review, etc.; in-kind staff time contributed by the Allegheny Ridge Corporation in coordination of the River Walk with the work to promote the PA Mainline Canal Greenway Corridor in the Juniata River Valley; Downtown Lewistown, Inc. contributed staff time to the overall coordination and management of the Study Project and consultant, the SEDA-COG Community Resource Center.

The feasibility study laid out the three primary "legs" to connect community assets through a system of non-motorized trails. A southern branch is planned to eventually link the recently restored Stone Arch Bridge and points south, a western leg continuing past Victory Park upstream along the Juniata River, and the Kish River Walk linking Victory and Rec. Parks.

Concurrent to the feasibility study, the Lewistown Borough was awarded funds from DCNR to develop a key portion of the Kish River Walk from South Main Street to Rec. Park utilizing the vacated railroad bridge over Kish Creek. This portion of the project was made possible by matching the federal TEA-21 enhancement project for Montgomery Avenue utilizing the dollars allocated to the construction of the River Walk trailhead and parking area at the corner of Montgomery Avenue and South Dorcas Street.

In addition, contributions of other partners made development possible: Omega Bank contribution of over two acres of land; Kish Bank contribution of land along the River Walk; Easement from Tim Havice for the trail; Transfer of the vacated railroad bridge from SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority to Borough of Lewistown; Borough of Lewistown for securing the easements and transfers of property, overseeing the overall construction project and contributions of labor and materials in the refurbishment of the vacated railroad bridge.

The project is far from being finished, but will be systematically developed based upon the interests and needs of the community. The project overall represents a great deal of coordination, collaboration and leveraging of scarce resources resulting in a positive community asset. Therefore, the Mifflin County Planning Commission believes this

local effort by Downtown Lewistown, Inc. and its partnerships is truly worthy of receiving this year's Community Planning Award.

The Special Award program was initiated to recognize an individual for his or her contribution to planning related activities in the County. This is a joint award presented by the Mifflin County Planning Commission and the Mifflin County Commissioners.

This year's recipient, John Pannizzo, has been actively involved in the community for many years as a current member of the Mifflin County Planning Commission, a current member of the Planning Commission's CDBG Advisory Committee, the originator of the Lewistown Festival of Ice, a past Board Member of the YMCA and a past Board Member of Downtown Lewistown, Inc. The individual has been active in fundraising and supporting the Monument Square Streetscape Project, leading the march to procure additional parking spaces on East Market Street in downtown Lewistown and making significant improvements in downtown Lewistown.

Staff awards were presented to Bill Gomes for 10 years of service to the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department in 2007, Doug Marks for 15 years of service to the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department in 2008 and Jodie Barger for 5 years of service to the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department and a total of 10 years of service to Mifflin County in 2008.

Featured Speaker

The featured speaker for the evening was Secretary Dennis Wolff, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Secretary Wolff spoke on *Planning for Pennsylvania's Agricultural Future*. Secretary Wolff spoke about the diversity of the agricultural industry and the importance of agri-business and the food processing industry. He said there was more than \$45 billion in gross revenue made each year through the agricultural industry. The Department of Agriculture has launched a program called PA Preferred, which is designed to encourage consumers to purchase agricultural products from Pennsylvania. Secretary Wolff mentioned a local business, the Waterfront Tavern and Restaurant, as being one of the first businesses in the Commonwealth to participate in the program. The Secretary also discussed the Farmland Preservation Program, which encourages farmers to sell their development rights as a way of promoting farm preservation. Approximately 15 farms participate in this program in Mifflin County. Secretary Wolff mentioned other programs to assist the agricultural community including Clean and Green, which provides a lower assessed value in terms of property tax for 10 acres or more of agricultural or forestland, and the ACRE program to help farmers challenge local ordinances that could have negative impacts on the farming community. The Secretary discussed the importance of local planning in rural areas in promoting farmland preservation. Secretary Wolff concluded by saying that just because a farm operation is large does not mean it is bad in comparison to small farming operations.

Adjournment

Jim closed the meeting by thanking the speakers, the staff and all those who attended. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. upon a motion by Neal Shawver that was seconded by Dan Dunmire.

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