

MINUTES
MIFFLIN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 22, 2021
MIFFLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE, HYBRID MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Members

Thomas Lake, Chair
Cyle Vogt, Vice Chair
Dan Dunmire
Dave Pennebaker
Kay Semler
Michele Bair
Neal Shawver

Other

Trevor Weaver, Mifflin County Conservation District
Rob Postal, Mifflin County Commissioner

Staff

Mark Colussy, Director
Candace Rager, Secretary

Call to Order

Thomas Lake called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. via hybrid meeting.

Record of Public Attendance

Candace Rager recorded public attendance, the meeting was held via hybrid/zoom meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Thomas Lake entertained a motion to approve the revised minutes from the March meeting. A motion was made by Kay Semler. Dan Dunmire seconded the motion. All members voted aye. Thomas turned meeting over to Mark Colussy.

DEP's Phase III WIP: County Wide Action Plan (CAP)

Mark presented some background information and content for Pennsylvania's Watershed Implementation Plan. Presently it is in its third phase and Mifflin County is participating in this phase by developing a Countywide Action Plan (CAP). HRG, Inc. is the consulting firm assisting with the plan. Erin Letavic from HRG, Inc. is project manager and will be working closely with the MC Conservation District to implement the CAP. In addition, there is a specific group named 'Water for AG' who are acting as a steering committee to help organize and move the project along. Mark further explained reasons why this plan is so important, not only to our area but as far reaching as the Chesapeake Bay Area. Working on this plan can open up many avenues such as funding other projects, best management practices, improving soil and water quality, better health, outdoor activities, and cleaning up waterways. The DEP has developed a program called CAST (Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool) to allow modeling to be done to know what kind of water quality the county has. Using the CAST, the state has assigned key numbers to the county in regards to the amount of nutrients and loads we have in our waterways and what we are doing about it. This gives a forecast to how we can potentially clean up our waterways in the next five (5) years. The state also has developed a TOOLBOX (part of CAST) which measures the pounds of phosphorous/nitrogen loads in the waterways. What the state is expecting Mifflin County to reduce this load by is a very aggressive goal. The Mifflin County CAP has a completion target for September.

Mark introduced Mifflin County Conservation Director, Trevor Weaver. Trevor presented more detailed information to get everyone up to speed before any stakeholders are approached to get involved. He feels an important area to concentrate on is the timeline. He suggested stakeholder meetings would begin in May and

that there will not be a lot of time to waste getting started. He went over the table/timeline and explained the steps of where the plan is headed and additional needs they have. Trevor explained about BMP (Best Management Practices) reporting and feels it is important that credit is being given for all the work that has already been done. Mifflin County is a Tier 3 county. Some of the larger counties that HRG, Inc. has worked with have completed this process and MC is following their models. Trevor stated the MCC District and Mifflin County have been working on various plans (Watershed plans, Comprehensive plans, Water Management plans, etc.) since the early 2000's. They are all cyclical in the same ways – funding, implementation, reporting and tracking, and then back to planning. He believes Mifflin County is positioned well due to the active work that has been going on. At present, they are working on the BMP scenario and will take the draft to the identified stakeholders. During June and July there will be a review to determine if the BMP's are implementable within a 4-year period. Trevor mentioned there are goals beyond the nutrient sediment reductions such as recreation, preservation, water quality, economics, and other goals that the county wants to see achieved. He sees good opportunities to partner different projects together to benefit the county overall. Mark then stated there are two major phases going forward with this project. The first phase will require planning and expertise in equitable analysis to develop the vision as to where we need to go. The second phase will require key stakeholders to participate and have a joint effort between those so we can develop funding mechanisms to align those two needs. It is important to bring this before the MCPC to give a general awareness, to develop an idea of where we are going, and if we are hitting the right mark. Mark plans to have Erin Letavic (HRG, Inc.) give a presentation at the June meeting to review the CAST analysis. He would also like to have other key stakeholders invited to the meeting to have better awareness of where we are going. Trevor had information about the technical writing/planning team and stakeholders listing that has been compiled. Trevor offered for anyone having questions to reach out to him. Kay Semler ask what the biggest obstacle is in the AG setting and what is planned for that. Trevor replied that the biggest hurdle would be in staff and resources due to the amount of projects they have ongoing. Trevor stated they want this plan to be the best it can be so when it is implemented it can be a good success. Rob Postal alluded to an article in Borough News regarding litigation taking place with Chesapeake, suggesting if nothing is done the courts will take action and congress will have to do something with the money to make the required improvements. Rob made a suggestion that part of the review process for land development plans, subdivision plans, etc. would include a comment about the BMP for the purpose of possible integration with other plans already being implemented. Mark and Trevor agreed with putting programmatic ideas into reviews or placing comments into existing processes listed as an activity within the plans. These actions would potentially be a help with meeting their goals. Mark stated he is working with the consultant to develop some of the plans and developing the CAP. He is also looking at the stakeholders and will share this information by email with the Planning Commission.

Subdivision and Land Development Review Committee Report

Twelve (12) plans were submitted to the committee for review all under municipal ordinance. There were eight (8) Minor Subdivisions, one (1) Lot Addition, and three (3) Land Development plans. These plans are for John B. Tate & Pamela McCarter (Decatur Township), Mifflin County High School Solar Panels (Derry Township), Henry S. Yoder, Jonathan S. Yoder, et al (Derry/Granville Township), Logan GL Holdings, LLC (Derry Township/Burnham Borough), Christie R. Gisewhite (Granville Township), John E. & Linda S. Price (Granville Township), Carl C. & Danna C. Smith (Lewistown Borough), Allensville Planing Mill – Truss Manufacturing Building (Menno Township), Melvin T. & Ruth A. Harshbarger (Oliver Township), Dryhouse Stoneworks (Union Township), L. Harold Lantz Estate (Wayne Township).

Municipal Subdivision Plan

Mark discussed three (3) of the submitted plans. The first project discussed was for Allensville Planing Mill. They are proposing to construct a new building and gravel parking lot located off E. Main Street in Menno Township. The building will be a 350'x150' building for truss manufacturing. A new access driveway will be installed off E. Main Street to serve the proposed site. The parking lot will be gravel and contains 2 ADA parking spaces and 44 standard parking spaces.

Storm water management for the new improvements will be achieved with the construction of an infiltration basin. The infiltration basin will collect overland flow from the building and parking lot. The infiltration basin will not act to detain the additional runoff from the parking lot and promote infiltration. It will also require some blasting for leveling off the large lot. The abutting lot has an existing building which will share an easement but the easement will need to be widened. There will be a required new subdivision plan because the new access for trucks is not wide enough for turns off of Rt. 655. They will be acquiring property from the abutting church property to have enough width for the needed easement. Bill Wright is planning to have the subdivision plan ready for review by the next MCPC meeting. Mark stated Swarey Lane does not meet cart way ordinance requirements for Menno Township. There will be HOP requirements for site distance and a water line needs bored under Rt. 655. Mark has suggested to Lucas Parkes to have site circulation diagrams due to having large trucks and forklifts moving lumber around, and to include any kind of screening/landscaping plans and a demolition plan. There will also need to be a NPDES permit.

The next plan Mark presented was the Mifflin County Solar Panel Project. The purpose of this plan is to show the solar array panel at the Mifflin County School District. The intent of the MCSD is to cover the entire parcel with solar panels. There will not be any new buildings and will have a simple access drive. It is proposed as a land development plan. There are a lot of concerns about this plan for a variety of reasons. There is a concern in regards to the steep slopes, storm water drain off, erosion and the expensive retaining wall around the back of the high school. The consultant for this project proposed this land as accessory use for the principal land use, which is the high school. The zoning is key in determining if this is a workable project and will be a decision of the township. There is a large amount of vegetation that will be eliminated for clear site lines around the property, including the access drive, and for the solar panels to receive solar light. There are no measures being installed for storm water on this plan. There are a few small berms indicated but with a significant amount of water they would potentially overflow and the excess would run down the hillside. There are some basic drainage measures indicated at the access drive. There are a number of other things to consider such as reflections, angle of runoff, wildlife impact, and tree loss. There was a comment made to address how vegetative controls will be handled and a decommissioning plan for the future. Cyle Vogt shared his experience with a solar panel project installed in the State College area. He stated storm water drainage was an important part and the selected vegetation for under the panels as well. Cyle has concerns regarding the fast tracking of this project and feels there needs to be due diligence as to what the ramifications will be with this solar array. Rob Postal added a comment questioning how the neighborhood is going to react to this project. Kay Semler commented that there is a smaller project in Brown Township, which had been turned down, but is now being re-engineered for a second round. Kay made the point that this needs to be handled well because of it being presented again in Brown Township. There was continued discussion about how these plans are proposed by the power companies, legacy costs, storm water drainage, and what the long term plans from start to finish are.

Mark presented the Harold Lance Estate. This plan proposes to create Lots 2 & 3. Lot 2 has an existing residence served by an on-lot septic and a private well. Lot 3 is for a proposed single-family residence to be served by on-lot sewage disposal and private well. The residual tract, Lot 1, is to be consolidated with other vacant land owned by Harold L. Lantz Estate with no new development proposed. This is a complicated plan and has a number of obscurities in it. There is uncertainty as to whether Harold Lantz is the sole executor of the property and has authority to sign on behalf of all the parties related to the executed estate. The ordinance states property lines need to be substantially parallel or perpendicular to one another. This plan does not show that. Bill Wright has submitted a waiver for the deed so the property does not have to be re-surveyed. There is a proposal for access to Lot 3 via an appropriate fifty (50) foot right of way but the cart way is less than what the ordinance requires. Bill has ask for a reduction in the width requirement so the cart way does not have to be expanded. There are three (3) sections of the ordinance that this plan does not meet. There was continued discussion about the concerns with this particular plan. Neal Shawver made a motion to table this plan for another month to allow the property owners to work on the issues and consider

the review comments. Kay Semler seconded the motion including the comments that Mark will give to Bill Wright. All voted aye.

Kay Semler made a motion to accept the municipal plans as submitted. Dan Dunmire seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Public Comment

Thomas Lake acknowledged there were no public comments to add.

Project Updates

Mark suggested because of the extended discussion today, he will provide a written project update by email.

Other Business

Thomas Lake ask if there was any other business to report. Mark announced he would most likely not be attending next month's meeting because their baby is due to deliver. He has worked out with staff to get as much done as possible before he leaves.

Adjournment

Thomas Lake adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.