

Planning Developments

◆ Planning Developments is published quarterly by the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department ◆ 20 North Wayne Street, Lewistown, PA 17044 ◆
◆ Phone (717) 242-0887 ◆ Fax (717) 242-5460 ◆ mcplanning@co.mifflin.pa.us ◆ www.co.mifflin.pa.us ◆

No. 43

April 2007



Secretary Michael DiBerardinis of DCNR, keynote speaker at the Planning Commission's Annual Meeting.

Mifflin County Planning Commission Holds Annual Meeting

The Mifflin County Planning Commission held its Annual Dinner Meeting on March 28 at the Lewistown Recreation Park Community Center. Approximately 110 people attended the meeting. Among the attendees were Commissioners from Mifflin and Juniata Counties, municipal officials, local planning commission and committee members, representatives from state legislative offices, state and county agencies, local businesses and organizations, and various consulting and engineering firms. Bill Gomes presented the Planning Commission's 2006 Annual Report, and the Planning Commission adopted the report.

Secretary Michael DiBerardinis of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) was the keynote speaker, who presented the *Value of Natural Resources in Community Revitalization and Sustainability*. Secretary DiBerardinis discussed the value that parks and open space have on the health of our community. He spoke of the benefits that natural resources have in attracting visitors to an area and that businesses consider quality of life issues in their location decisions. Secretary DiBerardinis recog-

nized the hardships facing Mifflin County with the loss of industrial-based jobs over the past few years. He stressed the importance of good planning, taking into consideration conservation and natural resources. The Secretary also spoke of the value of natural resources in relation to economic development, indicating that community development and the environment should not always be clashing, but instead should build upon each other.

Secretary DiBerardinis recognized the proposed Juniata-Mifflin Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan that DCNR approved for funding in August 2006. He was impressed by the collaborative efforts between the two counties. The Secretary said that he was heartened by the efforts being made in Mifflin County and by the Planning Commission and stated that there is evidence of good planning taking place in this area and it will be rewarded by the state.

As part of the program, Bill Gomes presented the Community Planning Award to Habitat for Humanity of Mifflin County for the Lewistown West Third Street Habitat for Humanity project. The

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Director Bill Gomes presents the 2006 Annual Report.

Planning Commission's Annual Meeting (cont.)



Wanda McCullough accepts the Community Planning Award for Habitat for Humanity.

Community Planning Award is presented to an individual, community, or organization that has demonstrated leadership in community planning. The Lewistown West Third Street Habitat for Humanity project is part of an effort to revitalize a neighborhood in Lewistown Borough by creating two owner-occupied townhouses. The project represents a unique partnership between Mifflin County, Lewistown Borough, Downtown Lewistown, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity of Mifflin County. Wanda McCullough, Habitat for Humanity Board member, accepted the award on behalf of Habitat for Humanity of Mifflin County.

presented the Special Award to John McCullough, Jr. The Special Award is a joint award from the Mifflin County Commissioners and the Planning Commission given to an individual for contributions in planning related activities in Mifflin County. Mr. McCullough received the award for his years of service to the community in a variety of organizations including Derry Township and the Mifflin County Council of Governments (COG), but particularly for his role in expanding the Mifflin County Regional Police Department's service area.

The Planning Commission's 2006 Annual Report is available at the Planning and Development Department's office and website at www.co.mifflin.pa.us/planning.

Jim Spendiff, Chairman of the Planning Commission, pre-



John McCullough, Jr., Special Award recipient.

Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan to be Developed

When Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, the Federal government mandated that local governments have in place a hazard mitigation plan. Counties without a hazard mitigation plan could be affected in terms of the availability of future disaster assistance funds to address natural or manmade disasters. Therefore, Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry Counties have partnered to develop a Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan.

Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and PEMA. FEMA and PEMA will fund 97 percent of the costs with a 3 percent match from the three counties.

The emergency management and planning departments of Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry Counties formed an advisory committee to work on the project, which included the hiring of a consultant to prepare the plan. A request for proposals was sent to various firms in March, the advisory committee reviewed the proposals in April, and three firms were interviewed. Delta Development Group was recommended to the Commissioners of the three counties, and the recommendation was accepted. The plan should be completed in 2008.

In 2006, an application was submitted to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) for funding to develop the plan. In September 2006, the counties were notified of the grant award of \$155,402. The plan is being prepared with assistance from the U.S. Department of Homeland



FEMA and PEMA will fund 97% of the costs of the Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan.

Mifflin County Commissioners Approve 2007 CDBG Application

On March 29, the Mifflin County Board of Commissioners reviewed and approved the submission of the FFY 2007 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. The grant application deadline was March 30. Federally funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the CDBG program provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs, such as water and sewer system improvements, housing rehabilitation for qualified homeowners, road resurfacing, public facility ADA modifications, playground improvements, new public services, and public services improvements.

HUD distributes CDBG funds to the states and other Federal entitlement communities based on a statutory formula using objective measures of community needs, including the extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag in relationship to other metropolitan areas. Mifflin County receives an annual allocation from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the regulatory and administrating agency. Mifflin County uses the funds for countywide projects or distributes

the funds to municipalities, authorities, and non-profit organizations on a competitive basis.

The FFY 2007 allocation of \$254,933 will fund a variety of projects, including but not limited to, street and road improvements, sanitary sewer systems, public services, and housing rehabilitation. The funds have been allocated among the following projects, and 17.8 percent of the grant will be allocated for administration:

Borough of Juniata Terrace—*Repair of Intersections*, \$100

Menno Township—*School House Road*, \$100

Mifflin-Juniata Dental Clinic—*Dental Technician Salary and Fringe Benefits (fair share)*, \$13,300

Mount Union Municipal Authority—*Ferguson Valley Road and Valimont Drive Water Main Replacement*, \$100

Newton/Wayne Joint Municipal Authority—*Wastewater Collection and Pumping Station*, \$100,000

Wayne Township—*Ryde Road*, \$70,313

Mifflin County—*Housing Rehabilitation Program*, \$25,642



School House Road in Menno Township.



Mifflin-Juniata Dental Clinic.



Ryde Road in Wayne Township.

Growing Greener II Projects Recommended for Funding

Under Act 45 of 2005, the Mifflin County Commissioners received an earmark of \$1,000,000 in Growing Greener II funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In

order to obligate the funds, known as the Growing Greener County Environmental Initiative Program, the Mifflin County Commissioners

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Growing Greener II Projects Recommended for Funding (cont.)



Mifflin County received \$1,000,000 in Growing Greener II funds.

appointed an advisory committee of representatives from the Planning and Development Department, Mifflin County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Mifflin County COG, and Agricultural Preservation Board to develop a strategy for the disbursement of funds and to outline Mifflin County's process for choosing proposed projects.

Act 45 guidelines deem capital projects eligible for funding. Examples of eligible projects are farmland preservation easements, recreational facilities, alternative energy facility development, public water and sewer treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, dam rehabilitation or removal, floodplain and watershed protection, and community revitalization. Specific principles guided Mifflin County's implementation of the County Environmental Initiative Program. Projects must be eligible under Act 45 of 2005, be consistent with the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan, be reviewed by the Mifflin County Conservation District, and leverage other private or public dollars.

Application packages were sent to the municipalities and many non-profit organizations in the county to develop a list of potential projects. Applications were due February 9, and the advisory committee met on February 21 to review 11 applications that were received and rank the proposals. Following the review, the committee recommended to the Mifflin County Commissioners the following projects for submission to the state as priority projects:

Newton-Wayne Wastewater Collection and Pumping Project, \$200,000.00

Brown Township Wastewater Treatment Plant Digester Upgrade, \$175,000.00

Union Township Wastewater Treatment Facility Nitrogen/Phosphorus Reduction, \$175,000.00

Mifflin County Agricultural Preservation Board, \$140,000.00

Granville Township Industrial Park Stormwater Infrastructure Project, \$123,935.54

Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation Solar Heating Energy Efficiency Project, \$75,000.00

Mifflin County Skate Park, \$59,893.46

Bratton Township Wastewater Treatment Plant Drying Bed Covers, \$26,676.00

Armagh Township Naginey Sinkhole Debris Removal Project, \$20,995.00

Monument Square Streetscape Project, \$3,500.00

On March 1, the Commissioners approved the projects that the committee recommended. The proposed projects have been sent to the state for review. Once projects are accepted, an application for each project would need to be submitted to the respective state agency to obtain funding.



Farmland preservation easements are among the eligible projects for Growing Greener II funds.



On March 1, Growing Greener II projects were approved for submission to the state.

Director Attends 2007 APA National Conference

The American Planning Association (APA) held its annual National Conference in Pennsylvania for the first time in over 20 years. The conference was held in Philadelphia from April 14–18. Over 6,000 professional planners attended the conference.

The keynote speaker was Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Mr. Kennedy discussed how environmental regulations have positively transformed our country over the past 35 years and how poor enforcement policies are affecting community health.

Bill Gomes, Director of the Planning and Development Department,

attended sessions on the following topics: the rise of retirement communities, preparation of downtown revitalization plans, sidewalk maintenance policies, development and use of a guidebook to improve site design practices, strategies for planning in communities that are in decline, evacuation considerations for people with special needs, performance zoning, techniques for developing an economic development strategy, and master planning for parking design and management.

Information from the conference sessions will be shared with the Mifflin County Planning Commission.

Staff Attend Community Development and Housing Practitioners Conference

On April 16 and 17, Melody Bratton, Doug Marks, and Jodie Barger attended the annual Pennsylvania Community Development and Housing Practitioners Conference in State College. The conference was held by the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA). John Blake, Executive Deputy Secretary of DCED made a presentation on the importance of energy conservation and new ways that CDBG practitioners can incorporate energy saving measures into their grants. Other topics covered at the conference were: Federal and DCED updates; Home program best practices and how to incorporate targeting, leveraging, and impact into housing rehabilitation programs; dealing with spot blight and vacant property rehabilitation and demolition; and Lead Hazard

Control Programs (dealing with blood testing, lead abatement, and lead poisoning prevention).

Congratulations to Maureen Safko of the Huntingdon County Planning and Development Department, who was presented at the conference with the annual C. Riley Stoy Award for her excellent work in community development!

In addition, since Scott Dunwoody, who was the former Division Chief of DCED, retired last year, Donna Enrico, our former Grants Manager, has been the Acting Division Chief. Our new Grants Manager is Kimberly Weigand from the Harrisburg office. The Planning and Development Department wishes Donna the best and looks forward to working with Kimberly.



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., keynote speaker at the APA National Conference in Philadelphia.



For more information about APA's National Conference, visit www.planning.org.



The PAHRA held the Community Development and Housing Practitioners Conference in April.

William Gomes, AICP,
Director

Melody Bratton,
*Community Development
Administrator*

Doug Marks,
*Housing Rehabilitation
Specialist*

Andrew Hartwell,
Associate Planner

Jodie Barger,
*Community Development
Secretary*

Donna Baer,
Fiscal Assistant

Millie Sunderland,
Planning Secretary

Upcoming Events

- **The next Watershed Plan Advisory Committee (WPAC) meeting will be held Thursday, May 3 at 4:00 p.m. in Meeting Room A at the Mifflin County Courthouse. The WPAC will discuss the Juniata River Watershed Stormwater Management Plan.**
- **The first Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan Advisory Committee meeting will be held in May. Details will be provided to the committee at a later time.**
- **Dr. Tim Kelsey, Professor of Agricultural Economics and Extension Specialist at Penn State will present *Understanding the Cost and Revenue Impacts of Residential Development* at the Mifflin County Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, May 24 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B at the Mifflin County Courthouse. Contact the Planning and Development Department for more information.**

Developing a Better Community



MIFFLIN COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

20 North Wayne Street
Lewistown, PA 17044

Phone: (717) 242-0887

Fax: (717) 242-5460

Email: mcplanning@co.mifflin.pa.us

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