



COUNTY OF ERIE

Erie County Planning Commission

Erie County Courthouse
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Gerry Dahl
Chairman

Jan Cornwell
Vice-Chairman

**ERIE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

May 12, 2011

A meeting of the Erie County Planning Commission was held at 6:30 PM on Thursday, May 12, 2011 at the Fairview Township Municipal Building, 7471 McCray Road, Fairview, PA.

Those in attendance were:

ECPC members:	Representing:
Gerry Dahl	Corry City (Chair, Exec. Board)
Charles Casey	Erie City (Exec. Board)
Paul Pangratz	Girard Twp (Exec. Board)
Jan Cornwell	County of Erie (Vice Chair, Exec. Board)
Joe Legnasky	Lake City Boro (Exec. Board)
Darrell Kimmy	Amity Twp
William Taylor	Elk Creek Twp
Jim Cardman	Fairview Twp
Kenneth Neuburger	McKean Twp
Flory Kondzielski	Waterford Twp
Peter Nye	Wesleyville Borough
Planning Department Staff:	
Jake Welsh	
Matthew Puz	
John McGranor	
Guests:	

Executive Board members present – 5 of 9; quorum attained

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Gerry Dahl called the meeting to order and the pledge of allegiance was given.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

None.

APPROVAL OF April 14, 2011 MINUTES

A motion was made by Charles Casey and seconded by Joe Legnasky to approve the minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

ECDP Monthly Activity Report

Gerry Dahl indicated that the Erie County Department of Planning's Monthly Activity Report was attached to the meeting agenda, and asked if anyone had any additional information to add.

Jake Welsh provided an update on the status of the Natural Heritage Inventory. WPC continues to work on the inventory. However, due to the large number of rare and endangered species that have been discovered, the tentative date for completion has been extended to the end of 2011.

Jake also indicated that the Federal budget has now been finalized, and CDBG program funding was cut by 16%. Therefore, it is assumed that CDBG funding available to the County will be reduced by a similar amount. Jake added that a deadline for applications has not yet been established.

Charles Casey suggested that the County should consider reducing the number of projects funded, as opposed to reducing funding for individual projects. His concern is that funding amounts awarded need to be adequate to ensure that worthwhile projects can be effectively pursued. Jan Cornwell agreed, and added that perhaps four projects could be fully funded. A fifth project could be added, if sufficient funding is available.

Jake indicated that funding requests are currently capped at \$100,000. This cap could be adjusted, if necessary, once the actual amount of program funding is known.

Joe Legnasky asked about the status of CZM funding. Jake responded that he is not aware of any apparent funding cuts to CZM.

Jim Cardman commented that LUPTAP funding is no longer available. Jake added that it will be necessary to search for alternative funding sources. The Keystone Communities Program is one possibility.

Jake provided an update on the Act 137 program. Eight eligible applications were received. The non-voting committee reviewed the applications, and has recommended four of the projects for funding. Due to limits in funding availability, it is not possible to fund all projects. In addition, a \$50,000 cap has been placed on funding requests for this year. The non-voting committee's recommendations will be forwarded to the voting committee for its consideration. The voting committee will consider these recommendations, and award funding.

Erie County Comprehensive Plan Update

John McGranor announced ECDP's proposal to update the County's comprehensive plan. The MPC requires all counties to update their comprehensive plans every 10 years. Since some elements of the current plan were last updated in 2003, it is necessary to begin the planning process at this time so that a final plan will be ready by 2013.

ECDP has 5 basic goals for the update:

1. Compliance with the MPC
2. Achieve Public & Political Support & Consensus
3. Consistency between plan elements, with municipal comp plans, and with the State's Keystone Principles
4. User Friendly, Concise and "Usable"
5. Realistic & Feasible Implementation Strategies

John stressed the importance of obtaining public and political input and support for the plan. Emphasis will also be placed on establishing realistic and feasible implementation strategies. An attempt will be made to keep the plan concise, with much of the detailed information being contained in backup studies, as opposed to being included within the plan itself.

The proposed planning process will have 5 stages as follows:

1. Pre-Planning & Organization – During the remainder of 2011, ECDP will assemble background information necessary for completion of the plan.
2. Formal "Kick-Off" of Planning Process – Early in 2012, a public announcement will be made. Collection of public input will begin.
3. Goals will be established by the Planning Advisory Committee (Mid 2012)
4. Plan Development – ECDP will prepare a plan to achieve the goals established by the PAC (Mid to Late 2012)
5. Adoption Process – As outlined in MPC (Complete by Mid 2013)

Following John's presentation, questions and comments were addressed.

Jim Cardman suggested the use of the media and school districts to help gain public awareness of the plan, and to help distributed citizen surveys. John added that he is hopeful that municipalities will also help by providing information to their residents in their newsletters.

Jake and John suggested that ECPC form a steering committee to provide guidance to ECDP throughout the planning process. It was recommended that the committee consist of 6 to 8 members, and include at least one member of County Council, if possible. Jim Cardman, Joe Legnasky, and Gerry Dahl volunteered for the committee. Jake added that anyone else who is interested should contact the ECDP. This should not be a significant time commitment for steering committee members. There will probably be quarterly meetings held just prior to regular meetings of the ECPC.

OLD BUSINESS

Erie County Stormwater Management Plan

John McGranor provided an update on the Stormwater Management Plan. Erie County is working with Crawford, Warren and Venango Counties in order to hold two regional implementation workshops. The target audiences for these regional workshops will be builders and developers. The times and locations of these workshops have not yet been finalized. However, they will tentatively be held on June 10th and June 17th, in the Corry and Titusville areas. The Builder's Association of NW PA has agreed to help announce the workshops. (Note – the workshops have been scheduled for June 17 & 24 in Edinboro and Titusville, respectively)

Planning Commission members briefly discussed efforts to adopt municipal ordinances to implement the plan. Gerry Dahl reminded everyone that these ordinances must be adopted by September 21, 2011.

Jake suggested that municipalities may want to consider, or at least investigate, the possibility of working together, perhaps through a COG, in order to implement the ordinances. This may be more efficient than for each municipality to adopt and administer their ordinances individually. Jake mentioned the Erie Area COG is interested in obtaining input from the municipalities to explore any feasible options for multi-municipal collaboration, and that future meetings will be scheduled to discuss.

Erie County Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Jake Welsh provided an update on the status of the Long Range Transportation Plan. The plan was originally intended to be completed by June 30th. However, since 2010 Census data is not yet available, a six month extension was requested. It is now anticipated that a draft of the plan will be available by mid-August, and that the plan will be completed in September of 2011.

Erie County Hazard Mitigation Plan – 5 Year Update

John McGranor reiterated the importance that all municipalities participate in the planning process so that they will be eligible for disaster relief funding from FEMA. In order to meet the participation requirement, municipalities need to participate in at least one meeting and complete some documentation.

At the time of the last ECPC meeting, April 14, 2011, eleven municipalities had not yet met their participation requirement. For that reason, a teleconference meeting was held on April 29th. All eleven municipalities were invited to participate, but only one took

advantage of the opportunity. Fortunately, many of these municipalities met their attendance requirement by participating in the public meeting, held on May 5th.

The public meeting, held on May 5th, was the last scheduled meeting for the plan.

The anticipated schedule for completion of the plan is as follows:

May 16th – Completion of Final Draft. The plan will be posted, for review, at www.ErieHMP.com.

May 16th – June 16th – Public Review Period. All comments should be submitted in writing no later than June 16th to Taryn Murray, at tmurray@mbakercorp.com, or Michael Baker Jr., Inc., 1818 Market Street, Suite 3110, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

June 17th – Plan Submission to PEMA and FEMA for review

September 2011 (approx.) – Receive FEMA approval & proceed with adoption

A question was asked regarding the adoption process and adoption requirements for municipalities. It is believed that additional information will be made available by the consultant regarding plan adoption, potentially including boiler-plate adoption resolutions. It is unknown if all municipalities are required to adopt the plan or if only a certain percentage of municipalities are required to adopt the plan. ECDP will follow-up on this question.

According to the consultant, following the May 5th meeting, there are only 3 municipalities that have not participated in at least one meeting. There are 3 other municipalities that have participated in a meeting, but have not yet submitted the required documents and/or surveys. The consultant has requested that these municipalities submit their required paperwork by May 16th. However, these documents will be accepted through the end of the public comment period, June 16th.

The consultant has agreed to hold a second teleconference for the 3 municipalities that have not yet attended a meeting. This teleconference will be their last opportunity to fulfill the meeting attendance requirement.

OTHER BUSINESS

Local bridge inspections and closures were again topics of discussion.

Flory Kondzielski indicated that the covered bridge in Waterford will be replaced. The new bridge will be covered bridge, but will be constructed to modern specifications. There are two bridges on Reichart Road in McKean that are in need of replacement. One bridge will be replaced this year. The second bridge is scheduled for replacement next year.

It is anticipated that local bridge inspections will occur in the fall this year, as opposed to during the winter months. ECPC members expressed support for the change. The consensus was that the effectiveness of the winter inspections was hindered by winter

weather conditions. Jake indicated that the County has been working with PennDOT for several months to have them approve the new timing schedule, and ensure that the inspections are performed and submitted in a timely manner to the municipalities.

The Planning Commission expressed its thanks and appreciation to Fairview Township for the use of its facility, and for providing refreshments for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.