

MINUTES

LUZERNE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 11, 2021

PARTICIPATION IN A ZOOM MEETING:

ATTENDANCE.

Present were N. Brian Caverly, Chairperson, Cinda Hartman, Vice-Chairperson, Nancy Eckert, Secretary, Karen Fleisher, Carl Naessig, Shane Novak and Gary Swartz, and William Kane, Members, Matt Jones, Planning Commission Executive Director, Kathy Wood, Recording Secretary, Chris Chapman and Alan Brezinski, Planning Commission Staff.

MINUTES.

A motion was made by Gary Swartz, seconded by Cinda Hartman and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of January 14, 2021.

OLD BUSINESS.

Matt Jones relayed to the Commission that County Council introduced the new zoning ordinance and they had no questions. Mr. Jones stated that the fee schedule will be a separate document so it can be readily adopted in the future.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

1. Discussion with Planning Director and Planning Commission members.
Review any comments received and discuss how they might be reconciled.

Matt Jones stated that the consultants, Hannah Clark and Brian Funkhouser are also participating in the meeting.

Matt Jones stated that the plan will be introduced to County Council on February 23, March 9 and March 23.

Cinda Hartman, Commission member stated that she has reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and does not know if her concern is appropriate for this document or elsewhere but she has been thinking about the nuclear power plant in Salem Township. She commented on the spent nuclear rods and her concern is evacuation.

She stated that the power plant is located along the Susquehanna River and during the 2010 flooding Berwick and Salem Township were isolated. The Berwick-Nescopeck bridge was flooded, Route 11 going north and south were also flooded. She stated the only way out of Berwick was on rural secondary roads over the mountains. She stated she is very concerned about the adequacy of the roadways in this area because of the plant. Ms. Hartman stated she did not see this addressed anywhere in the Comprehensive Plan.

Matt Jones stated the federal government has jurisdiction over power plants and the long term solution would be for the rods to be contained and buried underground.

Matt Jones stated that he thinks it would be a good idea to include in the Comprehensive Plan a few paragraphs concerning the storing of the spent rods and also the federal government resolving this long term disposal issue for the waste and would remit a possible hazard in our communities.

Chairperson Caverly stated he thinks it's a great idea to add some verbiage into the Comprehensive Plan concerning the nuclear power plant.

Ms. Hartman stated that even in the Long-Range Transportation Plan all issues seem to be addressed for the Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton and Dallas areas and nothing in the lower valley. She also stated that Route 11 is a very dangerous highway.

Chairperson Caverly stated that Route 11 from Hunlock Township into Berwick is not properly cared for. He stated that the mountain side of the roadway trees are not cut and often fall from the onto the roadway and berm and are just left lying there.

Ms. Hartman stated that the lower Luzerne County issues are not addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and she is very disappointed.

Chris Chapman, transportation planner stated that he would relay these concerns to PennDOT.

Shane Novak feels there will be a population spike because of Covid-19 from the bordering states and then a slowing.

He also feels people will be leaving the cities and moving into the suburbs and instead of building more roads we will need more busing, trolleys or a light rail system.

Matt Jones stated that new warehouses and distribution centers are being built in Luzerne County that are paying \$18.00 to start and coordination of buss services for those businesses would be beneficial.

Carl Naessig stated that many of the bank buildings in Wilkes-Barre City have converted the upper floors into apartments and also there are a number of applications going to the zoning board in Wilkes-Barre City that are looking to change the use of the building and making apartments.

Matt Jones stated that the consultants will take the recommendations from the Commission and incorporate some language into the plans concerning the nuclear power plant, flooding and the growth potential of the southwest portion of Luzerne County.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Hartman, seconded by Ms. Fleisher and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KATHY WOOD, RECORDING SECRETARY

**LUZERNE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
FOR
NANCY ECKERT, SECRETARY.**