

CARBON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 15, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Carbon County Planning Commission (CCPC) was held on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 1st Floor at 44 Susquehanna Street, Jim Thorpe, PA.

The following Board Members were present: Fred Bresswein, Chairman; Dennis Demara, Secretary; Bob Miller; Timm Berger; Dwight Eisenhower; and Martin Kane. Also in attendance were: David Bodnar, Planning & Development Director; Ivan Meixell, Jr., Land Planner; and Kathy Reigel, Recording Secretary. Commissioner Chris Lukasevich attended the meeting as well. The news media was represented.

The following Board Members were absent: George Karas, Vice Chairman; and Harold Pudliner.

Visitors in attendance: Eileen Rugh, Pat McElroy & Kathy Martini from Penn Forest Township; Edward Kanick, a resident of Jim Thorpe Borough and his attorney David Berger, Esq.; and Carol Etherridge and her husband Steve Chuckra of Mahoning Township.

There being a quorum present Chairman Bresswein called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES:

On motion of Martin Kane, seconded by Bob Miller and unanimously passed, the Minutes of the October 18, 2022 regular monthly meeting were approved as mailed.

SUBDIVISION REVIEW:

The following plans were submitted for review. The official review comments were forwarded accordingly, and are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

- 1) **Eric J. Knappenberger Lot Line Revision – Jonas Mountain, Phase 2, Lots #46 & #47 – Penn Forest Township (Final) {3,843}**

RECOMMENDATION: **Conditional Plan Approval.**

MOTION: D. Demara.

SECOND: M. Kane.

VOTE: Unanimous.

TECHNCIAL DOCUMENTATION REVIEWS :

- 1) **Letters of Support** (David Bodnar):

➤ **PA DCNR** (Department of Conservation & Natural Resources) **Park Development and**

Rehabilitation Grant Application Support Letter: Jim Thorpe Borough – Memorial Park Project – Phase III, Jim Thorpe Borough, Carbon County, PA

Mr. Bodnar informed those present that the proposed project, if funded, would include new basketball courts with ADA adjustable hoops to let all abilities participate and will suit a wide age group. Also, fencing & outdoor lighting will be added, making it an arena. After a comprehensive planning review of the proposed project, it was found to be in conformance with the goals and objectives identified in the Carbon County Comprehensive Plan & Grenway Plan and therefore is supported.

2) JIM THORPE BOROUGH: Proposed Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Section 500-21(B)(3) & Section 500-21(D).

Mr. Meixell presented Jim Thorpe Borough’s proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments/Zoning Map to the CCPC Board as it was officially submitted for review and recommendation. All CCPC Board Members were emailed a copy of the proposed ordinance amendment and asked to respond with any comments. Subsequently no comments were received. Mr. Meixell informed the CCPC Board that he is waiting for comments from the Carbon County Conservation District as well as the PA Fish & Game Commission. After a brief discussion, on motion of Bob Miller, seconded by Timm Berger and unanimously passed this item was Tabled until next month’s meeting.

3) PA DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Permit Application: Beltzville Enterprises – Palmerton Garage Minor Subdivision/Land Development, Lower Towamensing Township, Carbon County, PA

The necessary land use form was completed and will be returned in the required time frame.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence received is on file in the Carbon County Office of Planning & Development, and is available for review from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Monday through Friday.

VISITORS:

The visitors from Penn Forest Township attended the meeting to get a better understanding of the proposed Penn Forest Zoning Ordinance Amendment reviewed at the CCPC 10/18/2022 meeting regarding warehouses distribution centers and trucking company terminals. Mr. Meixell reviewed the CCPC comments which pointed out that the two lots involved in the zoning change are owned by Penn Forest Township and contain wetland areas as well as an exceptional value stream, Stony Creek. His comments were sent to Penn Forest Township after last month’s meeting and the group was directed to contact the Township for a copy. The group reported that they attended the Penn Foret Township Supervisors’ meeting and were told that the amendment is being done to protect the citizens of the Township and the zoning is being changed to comply with a state rule that requires so much ground or so many acres be dedicated to allow for warehouses. Dennis Demara responded that according to the PA MPC (Municipalities Planning Code), Act 247, as amended, as long as the municipality covers all zoning categories/uses all requirements have been met. There is no size

or acreage requirement. During the ensuing discussion, the group was informed that the CCPC reviews and recommends only. The County does not issue any permits nor does it have any jurisdiction over municipalities.

At this point in the meeting Carol Etherridge read a letter she had sent to Jim Thorpe Borough Council with a copy sent to Jim Thorpe Borough Planning Commission and the Carbon County Commissioners. The letter expressed her concerns regarding the proposed Jim Thorpe Borough zoning ordinance amendment involving Lake and Stream Protection. Even though she does not reside in Jim Thorpe Borough, she and her husband own property on the other side of the Mauch Chunk Lake in Mahoning Township. The Mauch Chunk Lake is an important amenity for this region, not just for Jim Thorpe Borough. She cited the Middle Carbon County Comprehensive Plan which recognizes the regional significance of Mauch Chunk Lake and the park. She stated risks which would be posed by the intensity of development, i.e., water quality and the lake's natural, scenic and esthetic values. Her husband, Steve Chuckra, added that he is a Board Member and former President of the Lehigh River Stocking Association. The Association is a nonprofit organization which not only stocks fish in the rivers but does water quality studies & tributary surveys between Glen Onoko and Northampton to determine issues that have the potential to damage the Lehigh River as a recreational and economic resource. Discussion ensued.

Before adjourning the visitors from Penn Forest questioned the referendum which was on the 11/08/2022 election ballot - "Carbon County Water Quality, Working Farms, and Wildlife Habitat Protection". They questioned how it will be designated and used. Dennis Demara informed them that the referendum question was put on the ballot by the Carbon County Commissioners to get an idea of citizen interest. The 82.71% in favor was an amazing amount. The next step is the Carbon County Commissioners will need to decide if they are going to establish the program. Actually there are two components. An Agricultural Easement Program is already in place which the County and David Bodnar, Carbon County Planning & Development Director, manages. Guidelines for the open space portion of this would have to be written up. There will be an Advisory Board, Annual Audit and everything that is done will be made public. A brief discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, on motion of Bob Miller, seconded by Dwight Eisenhower and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

/S/ Dennis Demara
Dennis Demara, Secretary