

Steering Committee Meeting #11

Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan

Summary

Thursday, December 1, 2011

6pm at South Lebanon Township Municipal Building

Steering Committee Attendees

Planned Absence Robert (Rob) Koehler	Councilman, Cornwall Borough	✓	Curtis (Curt) Kulp	Manager, South Lebanon Twp
Planned Absence Joe Lescisko	Planning Commission And Zoning, Cornwall Borough		Planned Absence David Eggert	Supervisor, South Lebanon Twp
✓ Robert Simmermon	Planning Commission And Zoning, Cornwall Borough		Jonathan (Jon) Beers	Planning Commission Chairman, South Lebanon Twp
✓ Robin Getz	Manager, North Cornwall Twp	✓	Frank Dombrowski	Supervisor, West Cornwall Twp
✓ Kip Kelly	Supervisor, North Cornwall Twp			Planning Commission, West Cornwall Twp
✓ Robert (Bob) Gearhart	Planning Commission Member, North Cornwall Twp		Jeff Steckbeck	Municipal Engineer, Cornwall Borough, West Cornwall Twp
Planned Absence Cheri Grumbine	Manager, North Lebanon Twp		Bob Sentz	Lebanon County Planning
✓ Dawn Hawkins	Former Supervisor, North Lebanon Twp	✓	Julie Cheney	Lebanon County Planning
✓ Charles (Chuck) Allwein	Planning Commission Member, North Lebanon Twp		Planned Absence Kurt Phillips	Cedar Crest School District

Consultants

✓ Michelle Brummer	Gannett Fleming			
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Public Attendees

✓ Sheila Wartluft	North Lebanon Twp Asst Mgr	✓	Marla Pitt	Mt. Gretna
✓ Earl Roberts	North Lebanon Twp resident	✓	Pat Allwein	West Cornwall
✓ John Feather	West Cornwall (Mt. Gretna)	✓	Sid Hostetter	South Londonderry

1. Welcome and Sign-In

Michelle Brummer welcomed Steering Committee members and public attendees to the meeting that would focus on the natural and historic resource element and housing, as time allows.

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2. Natural and Historic Resources Plan

Prior to the meeting, Michelle distributed a Regional Resources Conservation Plan handout to the Steering Committee members. This document briefly characterized resources in the region, then identified the following potential issues and opportunities:

1. Farmland (soils) preservation
2. Groundwater recharge
3. Surface water impairments
4. Revised floodplain delineation, effective June 2012
5. Forest conservation on South Mountain
6. Revitalization of villages and neighborhoods
7. Historic site, building, or district preservation
8. Sustaining historic character in new development
9. Heritage tourism

The final section of the document was an initial draft of goals, objectives and recommendations that would be further developed after feedback from the committee on the most important issues.

Kip Kelly started discussion by asking if the recommendations can address having an opportunity to document historic resources before demolition. Michelle responded, saying that this is the federal government's approach to properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places: if demolition is found to be necessary, documentation of the property is required before demolition occurs. The Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan recommended that this approach be incorporated into its subdivision and land development ordinance. She indicated that if historic resources are specified in an ordinance, their preservation can be encouraged.

The committee expressed that stormwater management was the most important issue among natural resources. This issue relates to items 2, 3 (including stream restoration and riparian buffers), and 4 above. Committee members commented on varying degrees of flooding and water damage from this year's Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

Robert (Boo) Simmermon said that property owners along streams still have not cleaned up storm debris (limbs, leaves, etc. left by high water). He asked that the plan include ways to encourage landowners to take action. Others asked about landowner incentives for riparian buffers.

Curt Kulp noted that the recent flooding occurred only within the designated floodplain. Water seepage did occur in residents' basements but this resulted from groundwater rising, not surface water flooding. North Cornwall, North Lebanon, and South Lebanon may submit applications to PEMA and FEMA for acquisition of properties affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee from willing landowners.

The discussion moved on to stormwater infiltration. Bob Gearhart stated that on some sites, perc(olation) test are successful prior to development but saturation and flooding occur after

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construction on the same soils. He added that the Soil Conservation Service is requiring more aggressive perc testing techniques

Noting that development will continue, Kip mentioned green roofs as a means to minimize storm water ; they absorb rainwater (and later release it back into the air). Bob Gearhart mentioned greater use of rain gardens as any technique.

While exact techniques and performance measures are still undefined by PA DEP, committee members are anticipating enforcement of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL by 2013, including measured and measurable improvement in water quality.

While on the topic of environmental quality, Kip asked if farmers seem to be lagging in the use of best practices, e.g. crop rotation, integrated pest management, etc. Earl Roberts and Curt Kulp both cited various farm management and nutrient management plans required by other agencies that manage farm operations. Local government has no regulatory power over these practices and at most can encourage best practices.

Kip Kelly asked how bed and breakfast uses can be incorporated into the villages. Discussion followed about zoning (already allowed in if not all villages), desire of the property owner, and market demand. It was noted that the Schoolhouse Inn along Route 419 is for sale. Michelle stated that bed and breakfast uses maybe one of several examples of uses that create a destination, a reason to visit, in a village. Kip added that the Heritage Trail would ideally be marketed with bed and breakfasts throughout the county to support multi-day visits.

Michelle stated that historic preservation in the Mount Gretna area that could generate visitation, i.e. heritage tourism and scenic byways, raises concern for traffic along the area's only major roadway. John Feather noted that Route 117 was considered for a scenic byway nomination several years ago and declined for this reason. Michelle added that the Route 419 scenic byway from Quentin to Newmanstown could be viewed as an example of how such designation affects traffic volumes. Others added that some who visit Mount Gretna arrive or pass through on bicycle.

Toytown and Karinchville were added to the list of villages for potential revitalization. Michelle emphasized that attention to these places now, such as street trees or other improvements, may help strengthen identity and pride in the villages, and prevent property neglect.

When asked if there were any specific properties that should be noted as candidates for historic preservation, Curt Kulp mentioned the redstone Royer Farmhouse on Prescott Road and Robin Getz, the Inn 422. Incentives for housing rehabilitation were also requested.

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3. Regional Housing Plan

Michelle introduced the housing handout as a discussion piece, not yet a draft plan. She briefly summarized the four issues and opportunities identified and asked for levels of interest in each topic:

- Age-restricted Housing – supply trends, demand trends, and what if demand falls/can restriction be removed; *important to this Region*
- Fair Share of Housing - *important to this Region*
 - i. By type: figures reviewed show that housing stock and policies are not exclusionary at this time, however, the gap between single family and multi-family homes will increase as anticipated and proposed residential developments are completed
 - ii. By cost: housing costs appear to be in line with area (county) averages; the United Way is currently updating its Community Needs Assessment which found affordability and lack of a public emergency shelter as issues in 2005.
- Universal Design – residential design that enables use by all people, able and disabled; *good information but not an area of strong interest for the Region*
- Energy Saving Housing Approaches – site design principles (building orientation, landscaping, etc.) introduced into ordinances in the 1970s (post energy crisis) still apply; the UCC now includes the International Energy Conservation Code 2009 (was required to be eligible for ARRA funding); *good information, add information on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and alternative energy (heating)*

4. Public Comment – None

5. Next Meetings – tentative schedule; all meetings at South Lebanon Township at 6pm

- January 5, 2012 – Completed draft recommendations, part 1
- February 2 – Completed draft recommendations, part 2
- February 16 – Public Milestone Meeting #2, Cedar Crest High School Cafeteria (Snow date February 23)
- March 1 – Draft plan review