

**MINUTES OF THE POTTSTOWN METROPOLITAN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

MARCH 23, 2022

(Approved April 27, 2022)

The Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee (PMRPC) held a meeting via teleconference and in-person at Pottstown Borough Hall on March 23, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Attendees: Douglass Township- Peter Hiryak
East Coventry Township- Larry Tietjen, Michael Moyer
Lower Pottsgrove Township – Tom Troutman
North Coventry Township –Bill Soumis, Jim Marks
New Hanover Township – Not represented
Pottstown Borough – Ryan Procsal, Dan Weand
Upper Pottsgrove Township – Gregory Churach
West Pottsgrove Township – Not represented
Montgomery County Planning Commission – Marley Bice

Recording Secretary – Bonnie L. Frisco

Visitor(s): Evan Brandt, Peggy Lee-Clark

1. Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Troutman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Troutman did a roll call and all municipalities were represented except for West Pottsgrove Township and New Hanover Township.

3. Review of the February 2022 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Soumis moved to approve the February 23, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Procsal seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Treasurer’s Reports

Mr. Weand moved to approve the March Treasurer Report. Mr. Soumis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Update: Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority

Guest Presenters: Scott France, AICP, MCPC Executive Director
Matthew Edmond, AICP, MCPC, Assistant Director of Transportation
and Long-Range Planning

The Tri-County Passenger Rail Committee held their first meeting in March of 2021. It included elected officials and staff from Berks, Chester, and Montgomery Counties and the goal was to work together to find a way to restore passenger rail service in the Schuylkill River valley. The group agreed that the service should serve potential station sites in Reading, Pottstown, Phoenixville, Norristown and Philadelphia. The committee communicated with Amtrak and SEPTA about being possible operators but the logical choice is Amtrak as they have a presence in the region and the existing rail line is privately owned by Norfolk Southern, whom Amtrak has a relationship with. Benefits of the passenger rail service are direct rail connection to Philadelphia and Amtrak stations in the northeast corridor, alternate mode of transportation choices for commuters in the area, provide relief for highway corridors such as US 422 and helps meet the needs of households without vehicles. Passenger rail service helps in economic ways such as focusing continued development and growth along the corridor in our established boroughs, encouraging transit-oriented development which generates new jobs and tax revenue, as well as increases the value of properties near train

stations. Next steps are determining technical feasibility through a capacity study, examining potential funding sources, working with Amtrak, the Federal government, and regional and local governments, and creating the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA) so that the three counties have a formal mechanism to work together.

Amtrak has expressed interest in the proposed rail service and the local communities are favorable toward the rail service. The three counties will each hold separate hearings on the creation of the SRPRA starting with Montgomery County on April 20. The Authority's incorporation rules include a sunset clause of three years that allow the counties to end the SRPRA if no progress is being made. Matthew Edmond noted that a capacity study could take up to a year to complete and also noted that Senator Casey secured a federal earmark in the congressional appropriations budget to fund the capacity study in the amount of \$750,000.

6. Review: Resolution to Submit DCNR C2P2 Grant Application to Continue the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Partnership for Park Improvements Mini-Grant Program

Mr. Weand moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the Resolution to Submit DCNR C2P2 Grant Application to Continue the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Partnership for Park Improvements Mini-Grant Program. Mr. Procsal seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Review: Memorandum of Understanding with Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) to Co-Administer the Pottstown Regional Partnership for Park Improvements Mini-Grant Program.

Mr. Soumis moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) to Co-Administer the Pottstown Regional Partnership for Park Improvements Mini-Grant Program. Mr. Moyer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Zoning Ordinance Consistency Reviews

Upper Pottsgrove Township – Ordinance Repealing the Age Qualified Overlay District

Mr. Moyer moved that the proposed Upper Pottsgrove Township ordinance repealing the age qualified overly district is generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Weand seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Lower Pottsgrove Township – Gateway Interchange District Amendments

Mr. Troutman moved that the proposed Lower Pottsgrove Township ordinance amending the gateway interchange district regulations is generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Procsal seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Municipal Updates

Douglass Township

Mr. Hiryak noted the EMS building is nearing completion and they are planning on moving the first week in April. There is a potential for a proposal for a Lehigh Valley Health medical facility at Route 100 and Grosser Road.

East Coventry Township

Mr. Tietjen noted the 113-townhome project has been approved by the Planning Commission and they have recommended approval to the Board of Supervisors.

Lower Pottsgrove Township

Mr. Troutman noted that all the bids for the township building project have been rejected. Mr. Troutman also suggested the event calendar be worked on again.

New Hanover Township

Not represented.

North Coventry Township

Mr. Soumis noted there nothing additional to report for North Coventry Township.

Pottstown Borough

Mr. Procsal noted there nothing additional to report for Pottstown Borough.

Upper Pottsgrove Township

Mr. Churach noted there is nothing additional to report for Upper Pottsgrove Township.

West Pottsgrove Township

Not represented.

10. School District Updates: No representatives present

11. MCPC Update

Ms. Bice noted the request for a support letter from the PMRPC for the grant application for the Pottstown/West Pottsgrove implementation of the Keystone Boulevard connection. Mr. Soumis moved to have a support letter from the PMRPC written for the grant application for the Pottstown/West Pottsgrove implementation of the Keystone Boulevard connection. Mr. Churach seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Public Comment: There was no public comment

13. Adjournment

Mr. Troutman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Mr. Procsal seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie L. Frisco
Recording Secretary