

CONNOQUENESSING TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

4:30 PM EDT

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Connoqueenessing Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman, Brendan Linton at 4:30 P.M. on February 21, 2024, at the Connoqueenessing Township Municipal Building, 102 Township Drive, Renfrew PA 16053. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Linton stated the meeting is being recorded and asked if anyone else was recording. Laura Mason and Angela Fleeger stated they were recording the meeting.

ROLL CALL

The members present were Brendan Linton, Diane Hanchosky, Kyrie Lokhaiser, and Lee Kradel. Commissioner Robert Burr was absent. Engineer Bill Braun was excused. Roll call showed a quorum present.

Diane Hanchosky made a motion, seconded by Brendan Linton, to approve the revised agenda order allowing for the comprehensive plan presentation and special comments. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS EXCEPT PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

NONE

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Diane made a motion, seconded by Kyrie to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 regular and organizational meetings. Roll call yes unanimous.

PRE-APPLICATION QUESTIONS

NONE

PLAN REVIEWS

NONE

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Report

Brendan presented a draft of the Planning Commission's annual report to the Supervisors as required by the Municipalities Planning Code. Brendan stated this report must be submitted to the supervisors by March 1. Lee made a motion, seconded by Brendan to finalize the draft and approve the annual report and send to supervisors. Under discussion, Diane requested the Commission be sent a final version via email for final approval. Brendan agreed to do so prior to distribution to the supervisors. Motion carried unanimously.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Presentation by EADS Group

Brendan stated this presentation is the first step in the approval process and kicks off the 45-day review/comment period required by law. Written comments require name and street address. Planning Commission will make formal recommendation to supervisors. Supervisors will then hold a public hearing on the proposed revisions to the plan. They can then send it back for more revisions or approve. Brendan stated that this plan does not necessarily relate to public sewage. The MPC does require a comprehensive plan to evaluate public utilities but is not necessarily tied to them.

A presentation was provided by Mark Lazzari and Tracy Frampton from The EADS Group, Inc. Mark stated the steering committee was formed and held eight meetings. A public meeting was held to obtain comments. A community survey was made available by various methods from September 2022 to April 2023. The surveys were used for establishing goals. After the 45-day review period, the supervisors will have a public hearing and then decide whether to approve the plan or not by resolution.

Mark stated the plan has three priorities: development and congestion along the Route 68 corridor, preservation of rural areas and management of land development pressures.

Mark stated the plan establishes a vision for development in the township and ways to address access management. The plan will address development along the Route 68 corridor as well. He said it is important to plan well for development or you will have to react to it. Mark stated the township already has a decent Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) but it can be enhanced. He said this is a continually evolving process and future actions should be aligned with plan and should work with the community. Also discussion continued on taking advantage of education on a regional level such as PennDOT or Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.

(See attached presentation for more information)

Brendan thanked everyone that was involved in the Comprehensive Plan update process including the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chris Klink asked EADS how long they have been doing this. Mark stated he has been a planner and Tracy is a planner and has been in marketing for 25 years. Mrs. Klink asked if

the 193 surveys that were returned are normal? Mr. Frampton stated that is a pretty good response. Mrs. Klink asked how much the comprehensive plan has cost the township. Brendan stated that is a question for the supervisors.

Joe Huth stated progress is inevitable but how fast does it come. He feels this information needs to get to the supervisors and CTSA so that sanitary sewage needs can be sorted out and they can focus goals and respond. He said the plan states "No sanitary sewers in the township except along Route 68". However, the Route 68 corridor still needs to be identified.

Sandi Cox feels the survey response was great. The committee worked very hard to balance and consider all the parts of the township. She said the committee was very diverse. She stated the committee discussed future parks and recreation facilities.

Bill Long stated he was involved with the last comprehensive plan and Route 68 has been a problem. It is a conveyance to get through Connoquenessing Township. Generally, he thinks they are going in the right direction.

Mark Williams asked how they came up with the areas of anticipated growth. Tracy explained what factors they used to determine this. Mark said it was general information and no property owners were contacted. Mr. Williams stated the information could be misleading. Brendan stated the plan does show Ag Preservation and Ag Securities parcels.

Brendan again stated comments must be submitted to the township office and include name and address. He also stated that if there are substantial changes made to the plan this review process will have to start over. He also reminded that even when it is approved, it will not be immediately implemented.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Permit 2-24 Tim Spangler – Eagle Mill Road – carport

Building Permit 3-24 LaDonna Young – Prospect Road – garage

Building Permit 4-24 Butler Area School District – Connoquenessing School Road – shelter

ADJOURNMENT

Lee Kradel made a motion seconded by Brendan Linton to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Lee Ann Kradel, Secretary

PRIORITIES

The following section highlights the top three (3) community priorities identified by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Connoquenessing Township residents want Connoquenessing Township leaders to appropriately guide the business and transportation atmosphere along Rt. 68, to appropriately preserve the agriculture culture in the Township and to preserve the Township's rural atmosphere.



Route 68 Congestion and Commercial Development

Steering Committee members and other residents emphasized that the expansion of commercial development and increased traffic congestion on the Rt. 68 Corridor is a major problem in the Township. Specific focus areas identified as needing address include traffic safety, difficulties accessing into and out of businesses and impaired turning movements at intersections.



Agricultural and Natural Resource Preservation

Results of the community engagement process show that there is a strong desire for the Township to maintain its agricultural culture and its rural characteristics. Residents want agricultural and farming activities to be preserved and for there to be agricultural and farming opportunities for future generations of residents. Residents understand that some growth and development will naturally occur in the Township. However, they agree that development should occur where utilities and roadways are located so that wooded lands, natural areas and open spaces can remain



Land Development Pressures

Results of the community engagement process show a strong desire for the Township to be prepared to manage growth and development while maintaining the rural community setting associated with Connoquenessing Township.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A combination of in-person Steering Committee meetings, Public Meetings and a Community Survey were used to educate residents on the planning process and to get meaningful feedback from residents, local officials, and other stakeholders.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meetings – regular Steering Committee meetings were used to obtain input and guidance on the Plan’s development. Committee members helped with critical sharing of information related to developing the list of Priorities included in the Plan.

- Kick-off meeting with the Planning Commission on May 18, 2022
- Steering Committee (SC) meeting 1 – June 15, 2022
- SC meeting 2 – Aug. 17, 2022
- SC meeting 3 – Oct. 19, 2022
- SC meeting 4 – Jan. 25, 2023
- SC meeting 5 – April 19, 2023
- SC meeting 6 – June 21, 2023
- SC meeting 7 – Sept. 20, 2023
- SC meeting 8 – Jan. 17, 2024

Public Meeting - September 21, 2022, in the Connoquenessing Township Building. Community members discussed their personal reflections of the Township, issues and opportunities, and future goals as it relates to the Township.

Community Survey – An online survey was prepared to gather local input on Township issues and opportunities. Hard copy paper versions of the Survey were also available. A total of 193 responses were received. The Survey was open generally between September 2022 and April 2023.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Connoquenessing>.

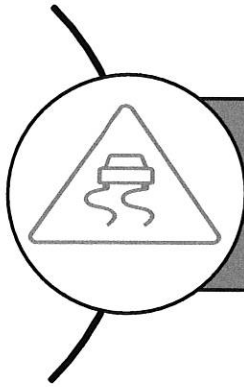
Draft Plan Presentation – Public Meeting – The draft Plan is presented to residents during a Township Planning Commission meeting on February 21, 2024.

Draft Plan Public Review – The draft Plan was made available for public review on the Township’s website and at the Township office.

Final Plan Public Hearing – A public Hearing will be held prior to the Township adopting the Plan. Date to be determined. Approximately in two (2) months.

Plan Adoption – The Connoquenessing Township Board of Supervisors will adopt the Comprehensive Plan during a regular Supervisors meeting. Date to be determined. Approximately in three (3) months.

ACTION STRATEGY



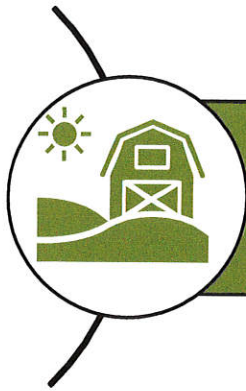
Manage the Commercial Development and Transportation Congestion along Route 68

Rt. 68 is aligned through the southeastern corner of the Township. It connects the Township to Interstate 79 in Harmony/Zelienople and to the Pittsburgh and Butler metropolitan areas. There is a growing mix of strip retail, professional services and other types of commercial development including car dealerships, food sales and a gas station along Rt. 68.

Pockets of residential uses are also intermixed along Rt. 68. The Township is experiencing increased traffic volumes and congestion from commuter thru-traffic and residents accessing business along Rt. 68. Impacts from increasing commercial development and increasing traffic congestion along Rt. 68 are detracting from the Township's rural and natural atmosphere and appeal.

- 📍 **Access Management Tools**
- 📍 **New ordinance - Official Map –**
- 📍 **Impact Fees – Developers to Pay for Infrastructure Improvements**
- 📍 **Route 68 Corridor Improvements**
- 📍 **Coordination with PennDOT and the Southwestern Planning Commission (SPC)**

ACTION STRATEGY



Preserve the Township's Rural Conditions and the Agriculture/Farming Culture

Farmland is a significant part of land use in the Township, particularly in the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the Township. Agricultural land makes up over half of the total land area of the Township. There are several farmland areas that have granted conservation easements that protect their farms from development under the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. However, large contiguous areas of agricultural land are being fragmented and converted to residential, commercial and other non-agricultural uses. This is removing elements of the Township's rural and natural atmosphere and appeal.

📍 **Balanced and Well-Planned Development**

📍 **Manage Development Along Route 68**

📍 **Agriculture Culture Preservation**

ACTION STRATEGY



Provide Stronger Land Use Control Tools

Land development pressures are being experienced from all sides of the Township. Commercial development southward from US Rt. 422 through the northeastern corner of the Township. Residential and potential commercial development in the northwest area of the Township around Rt. 528. Residential development on the western side of the Township extending out of Lancaster Township. Residential and commercial development in the eastern side of the Township extending out from the Butler metropolitan area.

📍 **Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance – Supplemental Land Use Planning and Regulations:**

- 1. Conservation Subdivision Options**
- 2. Conservation by Design**
- 3. Traditional Neighborhood Developments**
- 4. Lot Averaging**
- 5. Density Incentives**

FUTURE ACTIONS

Connoquenessing Township will complete the following actions as additional implementation items

Continually evaluate actions focused on the Community Priorities described in this Plan

Maintain Community Engagement by conducting annual progress meetings with Township residents

Conduct a three (3) year 'Check-In' to gauge implementation progress

Revise the Township's Subdivision and Land Development to reflect the recommendations in the Plan

Continue to meet/coordinate with PennDOT and the SPC regarding Route 68 improvements