

2019
CLINTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

"Busy" seems to be a fact of life for the Planning Department, and 2019 was no exception. We met most of our targeted goals for 2019. Community Planner Greg Smith retired at the end of the year.

2019 GOALS

- Open Phase 2 of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail – *done. More than 100 people attended.*
- Continue to work on flood plain issues – *minor progress.*
- Manage CDBG contract for construction of 32-unit senior housing development – *construction is underway*
- Manage PHMC contract for county courthouse restoration – *some bids exceeded available dollars, but we are on track for 2020 completion.*
- Monitor projects in the second "gas boom" in the Marcellus shale townships – *done.*
- Update Affordable Housing income levels and conduct new projects – *still to do.*
- Apply for DCNR and DCED grants to complete the Bald Eagle Valley Trail (BEVT) – *some applications failed, but full funding for Phase 4 was achieved in January 2020!*
- Manage engineering contracts for rail trail Phases 3 and 4 – *designs going well*
- Finalize recreation easements for the full length of the rail trail – *awaiting PennDOT ROW reviews*
- Redefine our municipal boundaries for the 2020 Census – *done, with all new CDPs accepted by the Census Bureau*
- Assist in extending natural gas service to more county customers – *no accomplishments yet, but partner counties in the SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative have been successful and Clinton was part of that effort.*
- Continue assisting the Western Clinton County water system joinder – *done. All three municipalities have signed onto the merger agreement, pending H2O PA grant award and construction!*

2020 GOALS

- Quality orientation and training for Kari Kepler, our new Grants Administrator, and Gabe Caprio, our new Community Planner, with continuing education for Director Katie de Silva.
- Complete the County SALDO update.
- Bid out, launch and monitor construction contracts for Phase 4 of the BEVT
- Mitigate easement issues for BEVT Phase 3 and pursue funding sources for Phases 3, 5, and 6
- Participate in the seven-county Alternative Transportation Committee and forward Clinton County interests in that group.
- Continue serving on the PA Wilds Planning team, and forward Clinton County's interests with that group.
- Continue serving on the SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization, and forward Clinton County's transportation infrastructure interests with that group.
- Assist with publicizing the 2020 Census effort across the county.
- Assist the Local Emergency Planning Committee in mitigating impacts of the very large construction projects slated to kick off in 2020.
- Assist the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority with creating its 2020 Waste Management Plan.
- Institute a demolition permit process
- Continue to work on flood plain issues.
- Create a fillable Subdivision and Land Development Application for the new SALDO
- Revamp the local procedures for the County Affordable Housing fund, to make it more flexible to meet redevelopment needs.

Katie de Silva, Planning Director

February 2020

PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Commission members represent different regions of the county and make recommendations to the Commissioners, local municipal officials, and staff on land use ordinances, policies and procedures. They also review all major subdivisions and land developments. The group meets the third Tuesday of each month in the Garden Building. 2019 Board members remained unchanged from 2018.

| Clinton County Planning Commission Attendance-2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | | P = Present |
|--|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | A = Absent |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | E = Excused |
| | Jan | Feb | March | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
| Terry Murty | P | P | P | E | | P | | P | | P | P | | 7 |
| Reza Lotfi | P | P | P | P | | E | | P | | E | P | | 6 |
| Dave Calhoun | P | P | P | P | | P | | P | | P | E | | 7 |
| Roger Hoy | P | P | E | E | | P | | P | | P | P | | 6 |
| Larry Sheats | P | P | P | E | | P | | P | | P | E | | 6 |
| Ryan Graw | P | P | P | P | | P | | P | | P | P | | 8 |
| John Dotterer | P | P | P | P | | P | | P | | P | P | | 8 |
| Richard Bowman | P | P | P | P | | P | | P | | P | E | | 7 |
| Melvin Coakley | P | P | P | P | | P | | E | | P | P | | 7 |

SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS

This year, Planning staff reviewed 45 minor subdivisions and approved 15, which created a total of 67 new lots. Lamar Township saw the most activity with nine plans. Greene had eight, and Bald Eagle had five.

The Planning Commission reviewed 11 commercial and/or industrial land development plans. These included an anaerobic digester for Nicholas Meats in Greene Township, a plant expansion for Avery Dennison in Bald Eagle Township, a 32-unit senior-only housing development for Flemington, and a new clinic in Lock Haven for Geisinger Health System.

ZONING PERMITS

The County Zoning Ordinance is in effect in Colebrook, Gallagher, Grugan, East Keating, West Keating, Logan, and Noyes Townships. During 2019, Planning Department staff issued 30 zoning permits with a total improvement value of \$2,621,300. Larger projects included five new homes and four veal barns. Due to market forces, Amish dairy and poultry farmers of Logan Township have been moving from milk and chickens to veal production. (This trend has also been seen in Bald Eagle, Lamar and Porter Townships.) The majority of permit activity was in Gallagher (7) and Logan (15) Townships.

SALDO UPDATE

The update of our 1972 Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance continued sporadically, as meeting agendas permitted.

MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE REVIEWS

For all 29 County municipalities, the Planning Commission reviews proposals for updates and amendments to zoning and flood plain ordinances and comprehensive plans. In 2019, the Planning Commission reviewed eight amendments and a full replacement for Pine Creek Township.

TOURISM/RECREATION FUND PROJECTS

The County received 22 requests totaling \$91,015 for the \$60,000 available for award in 2019, and awarded 18 projects. Activities chosen for funding by the selection committee seemed most likely to have a major impact on County tourism as follows:

| Applicant | Project Summary | Funds Awarded |
|--|--|---------------|
| Chestnut Grove Authority | Website Development | \$1,450.00 |
| City of Lock Haven | Summer concert series | \$3,500.00 |
| Cleanscapes | First annual 5k fundraising race on BEVT | \$3,000.00 |
| Clinton County Arts Council | Harvest Days, LH JAMS costs | \$5,000.00 |
| Clinton County Fair Association | Install new campground capacity for 20 full-size RV hookups | \$5,000.00 |
| Clinton County Historical Society | Castanea Train Station exterior preservation/restoration Phase II | \$6,700.00 |
| Downtown Lock Haven | Cost of marketing 2019 events; new audio equipment and portable stage; website for water trail map | \$4,000.00 |
| Flaming Foliage Festival Committee (via WCCRA) | Upgrade electrical panel; promotional publications | \$3,000.00 |
| Flemington Borough | Dog park costs | \$5,000.00 |
| Greater Renovo Area Heritage Park | Renovo Railroad Mural | \$2,500.00 |
| Kettle Creek Music Festival | Advertising and licensing costs | \$3,000.00 |
| Lock Haven Jaycees | Regatta marketing | \$3,200.00 |
| Lock Haven University Foundation | LHU advertising banners in downtown LH | \$750.00 |

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|---|--|------------|
| Mill Hall Community Pool | PH control system | \$3,000.00 |
| Millbrook Playhouse | Print, radio, direct mail, internet, and banner and poster advertising for the 2019 season | \$3,000.00 |
| Sugar Valley Historical Society | Costs of Good Old Days heritage event | \$500.00 |
| Western Clinton County Recreation Authority | Air conditioning unit and fans for weight room | \$2,400.00 |
| Woodward Township Rec Committee | Removable fishing dock | \$5,000.00 |

GREENWAY & OPEN SPACE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Clinton County Rail Trail

Again this year, the department’s main Greenway Plan focus was on the fast-moving rail trail project. Progress was significant, as follows:

- Opened 3.5 miles of new trail (Phase 2) and completed the Castanea trailhead project. Pine Creek Township road crews participated in this work supervised by Greg Smith.
- Conducted a \$70,000 flood repair project on Phase 2, performed by Bowman Excavating, Paving and Concrete and supervised by Greg Smith.
- Secured \$871,259 in additional grants for Phase 4, the river crossing, from Penndot and DCNR, and continued coordinating with Penndot and the design engineer, Stiffler-McGraw, all year.
- Retained McTish-Kunkel for Phase 2 repair and Phase 3 design, and provided departmental coordination.
- Conducted multiple outreach sessions with the public, the media, and the host municipalities.

Volunteer efforts were considerable in 2019. The Friends of the BEVT group, in partnership with Cleanscapes, conducted a major trail grooming project in October, and volunteer Steve Stevenson and members of the Avis Rescue service conducted a free photographic inspection (above and underwater) of the river bridge. Both of these efforts saved the County considerable cost.

MIDDLE SUSQUEHANNA BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Planning Office participated in this seven-county effort to enhance alternative transportation infrastructure in the region. The plan was published and adopted by SEDA-COG, the Greenway Partnership and all Counties by June 2019. The group re-formed as the Middle Susquehanna Active Transportation committee, and Gabe Caprio was named as Clinton County’s anchor representative.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES

The Affordable Housing Fund earns fees at a rate of roughly \$30,000 per year for use as matching funds for housing-related grant projects; for closing cost assistance to first time homebuyers; and for unforeseen emergency needs of agencies and organizations that provide housing services around the County. This year, revenues were \$33,080, including \$5000 in satisfied liens. Interest was \$1034.84. The fund was used for:

- Administrative costs for STEP’s federally funded home rehab construction activity: \$36,367
- Acquisition of land for SEDA-COG’s senior-only housing complex: \$17,141
- Assistance to one first-time homebuyer \$2,500

In May, we did a fiscal analysis of the entire Affordable Housing program. The total liens owed to the County were \$186,018 and the total liens satisfied were \$73,823, with \$47,500 in defaults (a risk with any first time homebuyer program).

HOMELESS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

All homelessness grants are written and managed by the Grants Administrator from the following funding sources:

DCED/ESG Funding: The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) is a competitive biannual grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. Through our shelter provider, the Clinton County Housing Coalition, the County has used these funds to address homelessness in our area. In 2019, ESG funds were used to support shelter operations at the County’s homeless shelters (The Life Center and Merit House), and to provide short-term financial assistance and rental assistance to those experiencing, or at-risk of experiencing, homelessness.

DHS/HAP Funding: The County’s Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), an annual county entitlement from the state Department of Human Services, is used for cash assistance to homeless persons for rent and utility payments, and also to support operations at The Life Center and Merit House.

PHARE Funding: The year 2019 marked the fifth year of a successful rental assistance and education partnership involving the Housing Coalition, the Clinton County Women’s Center, the Clinton County Housing Authority, the Clinton County MH/ID Department, and the Clinton County Re-Entry Board. The funding provides rental assistance to eligible clients at the above mentioned agencies.

| Funding Source | Project Name | Funded Amount | Project Status |
|----------------|---|---------------|----------------|
| 2018 ESG | Emergency Solutions Grant – Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance | \$117,802 | Underway |
| 2019 ESG | Emergency Solutions Grant – Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance | \$177,601 | Underway |
| 2018 PHARE | Rental Assistance and Education Project – Year 4 | \$50,000 | Underway |
| 2019 PHARE | Rental Assistance and Education Project – Year 5 | \$50,000 | Underway |
| 2018/2019 HAP | Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance | \$23,818 | Completed |
| 2019/2020 HAP | Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance | \$23,818 | Underway |

BASELINE WATER QUALITY DATA PROGRAM

In 2016, Clinton County was awarded a \$247,912 grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to undertake in a study with the U.S. Geological Survey to test the quality of baseline groundwater throughout the county. In 2017, sampling and testing of 62 wells determined the current health and safety status of non-public drinking water sources. The final report was published and provided to the Commissioners in early 2019.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a federally funded entitlement program intended to benefit low to moderate income residents. Federal regulations and program goals drive the funds to the neediest areas of the County or to projects that benefit handicapped or elderly residents. Street rehabilitation projects and water and sewer system repairs receive most of these funds. Often CDBG monies will be used as County match for very large grant and loan-financed infrastructure upgrades. In 2019, County CDBG funded projects were as follows:

| FY | Project Name | Funded Amount | Project Status |
|-----------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2014-C | Renovo Borough – Ontario Avenue Reconstruction/Blight Demolition | \$750,000 | Completed |
| Total | | \$936,455 | |
| 2015 | Renovo Water Authority – 9 th St. Water Main Replacement | \$54,580 | Completed |
| | CC Housing Coalition – Shelter Renovation | \$67,000 | Completed |
| | STEP, Inc. – Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitations (Part I) | \$63,370 | Completed |
| Total | | \$184,950 | |
| 2016 | Western Clinton County Municipal Authority – Disinfection System | \$70,193 | Underway |
| | Renovo Borough – 11 th St. Rehabilitation | \$80,000 | Completed |
| | STEP, Inc. Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitations (Part II) | \$34,100 | Completed |
| Total | | \$184,293 | |
| 2017 | Susquehannock Heights – Senior Housing Facility | \$182,859 | Underway |
| Total | | \$182,859 | |
| 2018 | Bucktail Medical Facility Accessibility Upgrades | \$75,473 | Underway |

| | | | |
|-------|--|-----------|-----------------------|
| | Booneville Water Line Replacement | \$66,257 | Underway |
| | STEP, Inc. Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitations (Part III) | \$52,530 | Underway |
| Total | | \$194,260 | |
| 2019 | Renovo Borough Water Authority 4 th and 9 th St Water Line Replacement | \$195,226 | Pending DCED Approval |
| Total | | \$195,226 | |

HOME GRANT ACTIVITY

In 2015, Clinton County was awarded a \$500,000 HOME (Home Investment Partnerships Program) grant on behalf of STEP, Inc., the County’s home rehabilitation contractor. The project has currently expended all but \$688.13 in the rehabilitation effort on 20 single-family homes throughout Clinton County. CDBG and Affordable Housing funds were also pledged towards this effort.

PHMC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROJECT

In 2019, Clinton County was awarded an \$80,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission as part of the funding for the Clinton County Courthouse Preservation and Restoration project in partnership with the Courts. The PHMC grant is to work in tandem with Court bond issues as part of a larger Courthouse renovation project. The work being done in 2020 funded in part by the grant, is to restore the Main Courtroom ceiling and walls, as well the 1st and 2nd floor lobby areas and stairs. The project is scheduled to begin construction in early spring of 2020 with a completion date of late summer 2020.

REPRESENTING THE COUNTY

Planning staff represents the County on various boards and committees including: Clinton County Economic Partnership Operating Committee, Tourism Committee, and Transportation Committee; Clinton County Enterprise Zone; SEDA-COG Transportation MPO; PA Wilds Planning Team; Clinton County Sewer Authority; SEDA-COG Natural Gas Coop; North Central PA Regional Housing Advisory Board, Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care, Public Transportation Bus Committee; Middle Susquehanna Transportation Alternatives Committee, and Clinton County Local Emergency Planning Committee.