

**2020**  
**CLINTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Right. Well, it was a pandemic year, so much of this planner's planning fell by the wayside. I am extremely proud, however, of our Planning staff, because we accomplished quite a bit.

### THE GOALS AND RESULTS FOR 2020

- Quality orientation and training for Kari Kepler, Grants Administrator, and Gabe Caprio, Community Planner, with continuing education for Director Katie de Silva. *We sure got an education. Learned all about Zoom, electronic file transfer, getting things done from home, and getting trained remotely. We also got almost the same amount of training as in a normal year.*
- Complete the County SALDO update. *No progress.*
- Acquire easements, bid out, launch and enter construction and inspection contracts for Phase 4 of the BEVT. *Done. This involved extensive negotiations with landowners, Norfolk Southern Railroad, municipalities, and PennDOT, with a large role for the Commissioners and County Solicitor.*
- Pursue new BEVT funding sources. *More than \$800,000 additional funding secured from PennDOT for Phase 4's significant cost overruns. We partnered with Lycoming and Tioga counties for an unsuccessful federal BUILD grant application on behalf of our mutual trail projects.*
- Participate in the seven-county Alternative Transportation Committee and forward Clinton County interests in that group. *Ongoing. Responsibility now with Gabe Caprio.*
- Continue serving on the PA Wilds Planning team. *Ongoing. I now also have a seat on the Board of Directors.*
- Continue serving on the SEDA-COG MPO. *Ongoing. Worked with the Economic Partnership to compile Clinton County's 2021-2024 TIP recommendations.*
- Assist with publicizing the 2020 Census effort across the county. *Done.*
- Assist the Local Emergency Planning Committee in mitigating impacts of the very large construction projects slated to kick off in 2020. *None of them kicked off due to Covid-19. The entire focus of the LEPC became Covid safety precautions.*
- Assist the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority with creating its 2020 Waste Management Plan. *Done.*
- Institute a demolition permit process. *Done.*
- Continue to work on flood plain issues. *Little 2020 progress.*
- Create a fillable Subdivision and Land Development Application. *Done.*
- Revamp the local procedures for the County Affordable Housing fund, to make it more flexible to meet redevelopment needs. *Little progress.*

### UNPLANNED 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Using County CARES Act Relief Block Grant Funds, purchased and implemented Amplifund, an online grants application and administration software. With this we helped the Commissioners administer \$3,488,000 in funds and we have deployed it three more times since then.
- Provided input as to Census District and Census Designated Place boundaries.
- Administered 2020 CDBG-CV emergency coronavirus business relief grant program (ongoing in 2021)

- Partnered with Union, Northumberland and Lycoming Counties on a successful federal broadband infrastructure expansion grant, with projects to take place in 2021. \$1,000,000 for Clinton County.
- Administered zoning hearings for an Amish school and a wedding barn venue in Logan Township.
- Kept all 26 municipalities informed of the County pandemic response and conditions.
- Assisted three Western Clinton water authorities with their strategy to combine into one authority. With their engineer, Pennvest and SEDA-COG, identified a funding approach for them.
- Submitted a successful \$100,000 grant application for a Chesapeake Bay Watershed Improvement Plan, in partnership with Clearfield and Cambria Counties.
- Kicked off a County Recreation board and anchored its meetings and activities.

## **2021 GOALS**

- Complete the Peale Avenue Bridge and BEVT bridge projects. (Katie)
- Work with the Conservation District and a planning consultant to produce a Chesapeake Bay Watershed Improvement Plan. (Gabe)
- Administer ongoing Covid-19 federal and state financial assistance programs (Kari)

We are keeping our goals for 2021 modest. Each of the three listed above will require a huge time and effort investment, on top of our regular duties. Our primary goal for 2021 is for all of us to survive the pandemic in good health!

Katie de Silva, Planning Director

January 2021

## 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. Normally, the group meets the third Tuesday of each month in the Piper Building. In 2020, four meetings were cancelled due to Covid, and the experimental May Zoom test meeting was sparsely attended.

Clinton County Planning Commission Attendance-2020													P = Present
													A = Absent
													E = Excused
	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Terry Murty	E	E			E	x	x		x	E		E	5
Reza Lotfi	x	x			x	x	x		x	x		x	8
Dave Calhoun	x	x			x	x	x		x	x		x	8
Roger Hoy	E	x			E	x	E		E	x		x	4
Larry Sheats	x	x			E	x	x		E	x		x	6
Ryan Graw	x	x			x	x	x		x	x		E	7
John Dotterer	E	x			E	x	x		x	x		x	6
Richard Bowman	x	x			E	x	x		x	x		x	7
Melvin Coakley	x	x			E	x	x		x	E		E	5

## SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS

This year, Planning staff reviewed or approved 52 minor subdivisions, which created a total of 41 new lots affecting 2334 acres. Greene, Porter, and Beech Creek Townships saw the most activity.

The Planning Commission reviewed nine commercial and/or industrial land development plans. Natural gas developments included a new compressor station and wells at the Sturgis site in Gallagher and Grugan Townships, and the National Fuel Gas Tamarack compressor station and transmission lines in Leidy Township. Recreational projects were the 13-lot Camp Coyote subdivision in Gallagher Township and the Big Woods Campground in Wayne Township. In Pine Creek Township, a five-lot residential subdivision created 10 new semi-detached housing units, and a subdivision near the 220 interchange created six new commercial lots. An agricultural land development in Logan Township and a gymnasium expansion of the Sugar Valley Rural Charter School in Loganton rounded out the work.

## ZONING PERMITS

The County Zoning Ordinance is in effect in Colebrook, Gallagher, Grugan, East Keating, West Keating, Logan, and Noyes Townships. During 2020, Planning Department staff issued 38 zoning permits with a total improvement value of \$2,224,228. Six were new homes, but two of those involved demolition and replacement of structures lost to fire. 2020 saw slowed activity due to pandemic materials shortages, but the usual interest in recreational cabins and agricultural outbuildings was sustained.

## 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 2020, the Planning Commission reviewed three zoning amendments and an entire new SALDO for Pine Creek Township.

## TOURISM/RECREATION FUND PROJECTS

The County received 23 requests totaling \$124,266.19 for the \$60,000 available for award in 2020, and awarded 16 projects. Unfortunately, eight of the activities chosen for funding had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.

Applicant	Project Summary	Funds Awarded
ReVibe Outdoors	Little Loggers Trail Fest	\$3,000
Kettle Creek Music Festival	Kettle Creek Music Festival Advertising and licensing costs	\$3,000
Central Mountains ATV Association	CMATVA Parking Area	\$10,000
Greater Renovo Area Heritage Park	Portable Video/Photo Studio	\$1,500
Sugar Valley Historical Society	Good Old Days	\$250
Northcentral PA Conservancy	Avis Canoe Launch	\$4,300
Sentimental Journey	Fly-In and Spirit of Freedom Static Display	\$1,650
Clinton County Council of the Arts	LH Jam Festival advertising and marketing	\$4,500
Millbrook Playhouse	Bands for the Barn branding and marketing	\$5,000
Downtown Lock Haven	Branding and promotion	\$2,300
Flaming Foliage Fest Committee (WCCRA)	Flaming Foliage promotion	\$5,000
Clinton County Historical Society	Wines in the Wilds marketing	\$3,500
Clinton County Historical Society	Castanea Train Station – Phase 3	\$5,000
Mill Hall Borough	Community Pool revitalization	\$1,000
City of Lock Haven	Summer Concert Series marketing	\$5,000

## **GREENWAY & OPEN SPACE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The Clinton County Rail Trail (Bald Eagle Valley Trail) saw increased usership during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Multiple trail counts were taken by hand during both peak and non-peak hours over the spring and summer, with the hope to compare 2020 numbers to 2021. Clinton County received a total funding of \$2,755,795 through amended contracts from DCNR and PennDOT for the Susquehanna River Crossing portion of the trail. The project went to bid through PennDOT ECMS and was awarded on 10/22/2020 to Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc. for \$2,862,862. Construction will start in spring 2021 and wrap up in late summer 2021.

Clinton County was also able to start the work of the Clinton County Recreation Advisory Committee in 2020. The Committee is made up of 9 volunteer members from across the County. The goals of the Committee are to advise individuals and municipalities with matters relating to recreation. The Committee has so far compiled lists of municipal recreational organizations, helped with the routing of trail systems, has done outreach and research in regards to the Mill Hall Pool revitalization, and is developing surveys and questionnaires to help better understand and serve Clinton County's recreational needs.

## **MIDDLE SUSQUEHANNA BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

The plan was published and adopted by SEDA-COG, the Greenway Partnership and all member counties in 2019. The group re-formed as the Middle Susquehanna Active Transportation Committee (MSATC), and Gabe Caprio was named as Clinton County's anchor representative. MSATC meets quarterly as a full committee and has three sub-committees: Connections, Community Engagement and Outreach, and Safety.

In 2020, much of the work was put on hold due to Covid-19. MSATC completed projects that created bike decals for vehicles showing that it is PA State law to allow 4 feet when passing bikes. Stickers are available upon request. The Committee also planned to launch a social media campaign to showcase the various active transportation projects in the Middle Susquehanna region. The Committee hopes to hold more community outreach initiatives in 2021 to promote active transportation and develop more partnerships.

## **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 \$35,273.57, including \$5000.00 in satisfied liens. Interest was \$402.61. Only one first time homebuyer was awarded this year, due to Covid slowing the housing market. The Commissioners have pledged \$25,000 to STEP to leverage a PHARE grant for housing rehabilitation – this potential project is pending PHFA approval.

## HOMELESS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Homelessness grants are written and managed by the Planning Director and Grants Administrator from the following funding sources:

**DCED/ESG Funding:** The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) is a competitive grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. Our shelter provider, the Clinton County Housing Coalition, uses these funds to support shelter operations at their two homeless shelters, and to provide short-term financial assistance and rental assistance to those either experiencing, or at risk of homelessness. Due to the pandemic, most of the ESG grants went to hotel vouchers to keep homeless clients socially distant. A special ESG-CARES pandemic allocation went direct to the Housing Coalition.

**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 shelter operations. This year, additional CARES Act funding was awarded.

**PHARE Funding:** 2020 was intended as the sixth year of a 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. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the \$70,000 awarded by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency in 2019 has not been received.

Funding Source	Project Name	Funded Amount	Project Status
2018 ESG	Emergency Solutions Grant – Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$99,639	Completed
2019 ESG	Emergency Solutions Grant – Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$177,601	Underway
2018 PHARE	Rental Assistance and Education Project	\$50,000	Completed
2019 PHARE	Rental Assistance and Education Project	\$70,000	Await receipt of funds
2019/2020 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Completed
2020 HAP CARES	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$13,000	Completed
2020/2021 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Underway

## 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. Program goals drive the funds to the neediest areas of the County or to projects that benefit handicapped or elderly residents. CDBG monies are often used as match for very large grant and loan-financed infrastructure upgrades. We had extra funding this year, because 2020 was the year of the CARES funds, and the Commissioners used our CDBG-CV funds for grants to small businesses.

<b>Fund Year</b>	<b>Project Names</b>	<b>Funded Amount</b>	<b>Project Status</b>
2017	Susquehannock Heights Senior Housing	\$182,859	Completed
2018	Countywide Owner Occupied Home Rehabs, Part 3 (STEP)	\$52,530	
	Bucktail Medical Center – Accessibility Doors	\$66,257	
	Booneville Water Main Replacement	\$75,473	Completed
2019	Renovo Borough Water Authority, 4 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> St. water main replacement	\$195,226	
CDBG-CV	Allocated for business grants: \$165,000 14 Awarded to date: \$84,000	\$165,000	Underway
	Mann’s Garage      Bear Mountain Taxidermy Off the Beaten Path      Cluckey Trucking MOR Car Rentals      Twisted Whisk Catering Caruso Golf Shop      Skeleton Key Boutique Kettle Creek Inn      The Hair Refinery Haven Spa      Brown’s Hill Tavern Take a Peek Inn      Linda’s Country Treasures		
<b>Total CDBG</b>		<b>\$572,510</b>	



## COUNTY RELIEF BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Deploying pandemic CARES funding in the amount of \$3,488,812 was a heavy lift for the Planning and Commissioners’ offices, but it was well worth the effort and had a large impact in keeping county entities on financial track.

Funding Category	Amount Granted	For
County Response, Planning and Outreach	\$966,527.12	Covid Operations
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	10,959.52	County EMS
Assistance to Municipalities	457,006.98	8 municipalities
Grants to Small Businesses	488,450.00	35 businesses
Tourism Business Grants	217,807.92	13 businesses
Behavioral Health and Substance Disorder Services	158,200.00	2 organizations
Grants to 12 nonprofits, including \$285,000 for first responders	576,334.14	12 nonprofits, 15 fire companies, 2 ambulance companies

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor lobby areas and stairs.

The project start date was delayed due to Covid-19 until March 2020 and work was completed in Courtroom 1 and the Lobby in October 2020. General contracting services were provided by Wheary, Inc of Jersey Shore, PA and electrical services were provided by TurnKey Electrical, Inc of Williamsport, PA. They included painting and finishing in Courtroom 1 and the lobby, replacement and rewiring of electrical systems. The project was completed for total cost of \$351,296.75.

## 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 Committee; Middle Susquehanna Active Transportation Committee, and Clinton County Local Emergency Planning Committee.