

CLINTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

GOALS AND RESULTS FOR 2021

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we kept our goals for 2021 modest. Each required a huge investment of time and effort on top of our regular duties.

Complete the Peale Avenue Bridge and BEVT bridge projects. We are close to the finish line – all Peale lacks is the final epoxy coating, which must be applied in warm weather (Spring 2022). The BEVT project was fraught with expensive surprises such as micropile installation issues, the timber supply shortage for the bridge decking and railings, and workforce fulfillment for Hawbaker, our prime contractor. The project is shut down for the winter with a new completion date of June 12, 2022.

Complete the Countywide Clean Water Action Plan. This partnership between the Planning office, the Conservation District, and the public was wrapped up by September, a resounding success resulting in the December award by DEP of \$280,505 toward implementation of the recommended projects.

Continue to administer pandemic assistance funding programs. Grants Administrator Kari Kepler had her hands full all year with this task. She administered or helped administer 5 pandemic grants with a total value of \$1,558,231 to municipalities, companies, nonprofits, and individuals.

Continue to apply for grants to accomplish various goals. Due to infusions of federal cash to many programs, the Planning Office submitted applications to a number of programs as described below.

UNPLANNED 2021 EVENTS

In late June, Community Planner Gabe Caprio moved on, and we hired Matthew Croak, whose skill set is ideal for recreation planning, managing the Bald Eagle Valley Trail, and serving as Zoning Officer. As a volunteer firefighter, he is also a good liaison to our Emergency Services Department.

2022 GOALS

- Finalize the Peale Avenue Bridge and BEVT bridge projects.
- Update the Clinton County SALDO, with the help of a planning consultant. This will be a year-long project of the Planning Commission, Planning staff, professional users, and the public.

- Administer ongoing Covid-19 federal and state financial assistance programs. The relief money continues to flow from Congress to the states to the counties.
- Undertake a Hogan Boulevard safety study with Penndot, SEDA-COG, Mill Hall Boro, Bald Eagle Township, transportation planning consultant Gannett Fleming, and the public. This kicked off in 2021. The object is to identify projects that can be done by Penndot and partners to make this corridor safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Act as county liaison for the Jay Street Bridge/Riverview Park connector project slated for 2022.
- Assist the Emergency Services Department in developing the 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Work with SEDA-COG to facilitate the four-county broadband initiative. (The Clinton County project will serve all homes and businesses in Eastern Sugar Valley.)
- Apply for and administer grants to further the completion of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail.

Katie de Silva, Planning Director

January 2022

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.

Clinton County Planning Commission Attendance-2021													x = Present
													A = Absent
													E = Excused
	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Terry Murty	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		E		x	9
Reza Lotfi	x	x	x	x	x	x	E	x		E		x	8
Dave Calhoun	x	x	E	x	x	E	x	x		x		x	8
Roger Hoy	x	A	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		E	8
Larry Sheats	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		E		E	8
Ryan Graw	A	x	A	x	x	x	x	E		x		E	6
John Dotterer	A	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		E		E	7
Richard Bowman	A	x	x	x	x	x	E	x		x		x	8
Melvin Coakley	x	E	E	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	8

SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS

This year, Planning staff reviewed or approved 67 minor subdivisions, creating 61 new lots. This is the highest number in 10 years, and 24% higher than last year's total. Pandemic-motivated out of region buyers, plus the continued selloff of Woolrich, Inc. properties seemed to be driving this increase. The highest subdivision activity was seen in Chapman, Gallagher, Greene, and Pine Creek Townships.

The Planning Commission reviewed 11 commercial and/or industrial land development plans. Avery Dennison significantly modified its 2019 expansion plan, Croda planned a new facility at the Lamar Industrial Park, and a new Auto Zone replaced Pizza Hut on Hogan Boulevard. The short-term lodging boom driven by the Williams pipeline project prompted two Chapman Township landowners to propose, and then withdraw, plans for RV parks. A seven-lot RV park in Grugan was successfully developed to meet the surge. Mini storage in Mill Hall, a commercial turkey barn in Lamar Township, a landfill gas-to-energy plant in Wayne Township, and a nonprofit horseback riding facility in Pine Creek Township were also reviewed.

ZONING PERMITS AND ENFORCEMENTS

The County Zoning Ordinance is in effect in Colebrook, Gallagher, Grugan, East Keating, West Keating, Logan, and Noyes Townships. During 2021, Planning Department staff issued 39 zoning permits with a total improvement value of \$3,268,245. We felt building activity was significantly slowed by the high cost of building materials driven by pandemic supply chain issues. Katie and Matt conducted six zoning enforcements in Colebrook (1), Logan (3), Gallagher (1) and Noyes (1) Townships.

ZONING HEARINGS

In early January, the board approved a Special Exception Use permit for a 1500-2000 acre solar field in West Keating Township. There has been no word from the developer about when land development plans will be submitted to the Planning group. In July, the board approved a Special Exception Use for a Wedding Barn in Booneville, Logan Township.

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 2021, the Planning Commission reviewed six zoning amendments, and the Director assisted with the planning and review process for the Wayne Township Landfill's 2021 Solid Waste Management Plan.

TOURISM FUND PROJECTS

Hotel tax collections for 2021 were still profoundly affected by the pandemic. At the height of the Fall tourism season, receipts were nearly 50% less than in normal years. Several of the eight activities

cancelled last year due to Covid-19, however, were successful this year. The County received 24 requests totaling \$113,650 for the \$50,000 available for award in 2021, and awarded 16 projects.

Applicant	Project/Event	AMOUNT AWARDED
Chestnut Grove Recreation Authority	Promotional support for Chestnut Grove Recreation Park	\$1,000
City of Lock Haven	Summer Concert Series	\$5,000
Clinton County Arts Council	LH JAMS Festival	\$4,500
Clinton County Fair & Speedway	Promotional support for weekly Speedway Races	\$6,000
Clinton County Historical Society	Wine in the Wilds Festival support	\$3,500
Downtown Lock Haven, Inc	Promotional support for events promoting the downtown	\$2,000
Lock Haven Area Jaycees	Promotional support for 50th Labor Day Regatta	\$5,000
Kettle Creek Music Festival	Promotional support for the Festival	\$3,000
Mill Hall Borough	Support for Community Pool	\$2,900
Millbrook Playhouse	Support for Bands in the Barn event	\$5,000
Piper Aviation Museum	Promotional materials support	\$1,500
ReVibe Outdoors	Support for the Little Loggers Trail Festival	\$4,000
Sentimental Journey	Support for the Fly-In	\$2,000
USCA/Tiadaghton Elm Canoe Race Committee	Support for the U.S. Canoe Association National Race Series	\$3,000
Wayne Township Recreation Committee	Purchase of an informational Kiosk along the Bald Eagle Valley Trail	\$1,000
Western Clinton County Sportsmen Association	Support for purchase of a promotional canopy	\$600

RECREATION PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Bald Eagle Valley Trail. Significant progress was made on construction of Phase 4, the river crossing between Wayne and Pine Creek Townships. The Planning Department applied to DCNR for a \$55,000 grant toward engineering cost for Phase 5, and this grant was successful. We also applied to Penndot's

Transportation Alternatives Program for \$947,224 in construction cost for this trail phase, and await the results. The Friends of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail were very active with bench purchases, cleanups, and work days.



The Clinton County Recreation Advisory Committee has compiled lists of municipal recreational organizations, helped with the routing of trail systems, and developed surveys and questionnaires to better understand and serve Clinton County’s recreational needs. Their top project for 2021 was to assist with the preservation and upgrade of the Mill Hall public swimming pool.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES

The Affordable Housing Fund earns fees of around \$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 \$41,940, including \$7,500 in satisfied liens. Interest was \$113.15. STEP, Inc. was paid \$50,000 of the Commissioners’ \$100,000 commitment for owner-occupied home rehabilitation projects.

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 them 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. We are happy to say that as of the 2021 grant cycle, the Coalition is now a direct applicant for ESG funds.

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. The County passes this through to the Coalition.

PHARE Funding: This funding provides rental assistance and education to eligible homeless clients of the Housing Coalition, as well as Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitation funding to income eligible households via our rehab contractor, STEP, Inc. The 2021 PHARE request on behalf of the Coalition, was for construction funding on a 4-unit residence for “returning citizens” i.e., those emerging from incarceration.

Funding Source	Project Name	Funded Amount	Project Status
2019 ESG	Emergency Solutions Grant – Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$177,601	Completed
2018 PHARE	Rental Assistance and Education Project	\$50,000	Completed
2019 PHARE	Rental Assistance and Education Project	\$70,000	Underway
2020 PHARE	Housing Rehabilitation - countywide	\$250,000	Underway
2021 PHARE	Shelter Operations and Forensic Housing	\$89,350	Awaiting award
2020/2021 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Completed
2021/2022 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.

Fund Year	Project Names	Funded Amount	Project Status
2018	Countywide Owner Occupied Home Rehabs, Part 3 (STEP)	\$52,530	Completed
	Bucktail Medical Center – Accessibility Doors	\$66,257	Underway

	Booneville Water Main Replacement	\$75,473	Completed
2019	Renovo Borough Water Authority, 4 th and 9 th St. water main replacement	\$195,226	Construction completed; closeout pending
2020 CDBG-CV	Allocated for business grants: \$165,000 14 Awarded in 2020; 12 awarded 2021:	\$165,000	Completed
2020	Western Clinton Recreation Authority Roof Replacement	\$43,875	Under way
	Clinton County Housing Coalition Reentry Housing	\$25,602	Under way
	Renovo Borough – 9 th Street Road Rehab	\$129,964	Completed
CDBG- 2021	Bucktail Medical Center/HVAC upgrade	\$71,400	Applied for
	Greater Renovo Area Heritage Park – Maxwell Building roof	\$55,000	Applied for
	Western Clinton Municipal Authority – Grinder pump purchase	\$74,127	Applied for

PANDEMIC RELIEF PROGRAMS

Through the CARES and American Rescue Plan Acts passed by Congress in late 2020 and early 2021, PA agencies were awarded billions in funding to be deployed for all kinds of emergency needs. Some of these programs were passed on to the counties to administer or subcontract. Clinton County subcontracted with SEDA-COG to administer the CHIRP program, and the Housing Coalition to administer the ERAP Program. The others were or are being done in house.

Program Name	Program Purpose	Received by County in 2021 or left over from 2020	Funding Distributed by the County in 2021	Number of Recipient Entities: businesses, nonprofits, municipalities, households, and County Government
ERAP Part 1 – From DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$2,540,838	\$1,131,439	289
ERAP Part 2 – from DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$805,264.16	0	0

CHIRP – From DCED	Pandemic relief for hospitality industry businesses	\$437,560	\$426,792	20
ARPA – From DCED	Various, emphasis on county operations, water, sewer, and outdoor recreation infrastructure.	\$3,	0	Awards to be made January 2022
USDA Emergency Rural Health Care	Department of Emergency Services – radio tower project	\$750,000 toward \$1,000,000 request	0	All users and beneficiaries of our 911 system in Western Clinton County
CDBG-CV Competitive	Department of Emergency Services radio tower project – applied for	\$510,962	0	All users and beneficiaries of our 911 system in Western Clinton County

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; PA Wilds Board of Directors; 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, Downtown Lock Haven, and Clinton County Local Emergency Planning Committee.