

# CLINTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2022



#### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

##### GOALS AND RESULTS FROM 2022

The Year 2022 saw a significant change in the Clinton County Planning Department. Long time Grants Administrator and then Director of Planning, Katie de Silva, retired at the end of October. The new Director of Planning began work at the end of 2022, and worked to complete some of the hard work initiated under Katie's direction.

The Planning Staff consisting of the Community Planner/Zoning Officer, Grants Administrator and Grants Project Coordinator remained with the County through 2022. The salaries of the Grants Administrator and Grants Project Coordinator were 100% reimbursed through various grant programs, lessening the burden on the County's finances.

The new Planning Director is also a licensed Professional Engineer, and will be fulfilling the position of County Engineer. The County Engineer will be providing internal consultation to the County Government and Municipalities/Authorities, as well as executing capital projects.

Prior to Katie's retirement, or just after retirement, the following projects were performed or near completion:

**Completed the BEVT bridge project.** The BEVT bridge project was dedicated in August of 2022 and named after the retiring planner. Katie's Crossing will kick off the start of BEVT 5, which will link the river crossing to the Avis interchange with State Route 220. From that point, the Pine Creek Rail Trail is approximately 3 miles away, once passing through Avis Borough, Pine Creek Township and a short section of Porter Township, Lycoming County.

**Completed the Peale Avenue Bridge Project.** The Peale Avenue bridge project is located in the Borough of Mill Hall. The Peale Avenue contractor demobilized from the site in mid-2022 and the bridge has been reopening to the public. There are several additional bridge projects in the queue for 2023, which may be funded through the County Bridge Fund or SEDA-COG's MPO Bridge program.

**Updated the Clinton County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.** The 2022 Clinton County SALDO was approved by the Planning Commission in November of 2022. The SALDO was then passed on to the County Commissioners for their consideration, public hearing and adoption. The public hearing is scheduled for January 19, 2023, with adoption anticipated shortly afterwards.

**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.

**Utility Projects.** The Planning Department assisted with the acquisition of funding for several water and sewer projects. In 2022, a grant was acquired through PADEP's Capability Enhancement Program to study the Cottage Lane water system. In late 2022, the Bald Eagle Township supervisors passed a tap on ordinance which will trigger a PENNVEST Application for the project. The Planning Department is also working with SEDA-COG on the South Renovo Water Main Project.

## **UNPLANNED 2022 EVENTS**

**911 Tower and Radio Project.** In an unprecedented award for Clinton County, Kari Kepler was able to acquire approximately \$9,400,000.00 in grant funding to update the 911 communications system in Clinton County. The project will update Clinton County's older 911 system to a fully digital, P25 Phase 2 federal standard. The project will provide new portable and mobile radios to the Fire Departments in the LMI areas of the County, which will be a \$1,000,000.00 investment for Northern Clinton County's volunteer emergency service providers. All of the radio towers will be upgraded with microwave technology, and the entire 911 computerized server system will be replaced. This project is anticipated to be of little to no cost to the tax payers of Clinton County.



## 2023 GOALS

- As the new Director of Planning, I am still working on some goals for 2023 as I learn the vastness of the County Government responsibilities. In 2023, I hope to utilize my engineering experience to help design and execute in house projects, and reduce the reliance on engineering consultants. My expectation is that as this department grows, there may be situations where the County Engineer can assist the local municipalities and authorities with smaller projects and provide general consultation that will benefit all of the residents of the County.
- Complete the first phase of the 911 Tower Project, which will consist of the acquisition of millions of dollars of telecommunications equipment for the entire 911 system. In conjunction with this project, the Lock Haven Planner has acquired funding to replace the portable and mobile radios for County Law Enforcement, making this a very well timed grant project.
- Explore additional non-motorized transportation projects throughout the county. Work on bringing the Hogan Boulevard safety study to fruition. This project will improve the pedestrian and bicyclist safety adjacent to a major commercial center in Clinton County. The current roadway from the edge of Flemington Borough to the Borough of Mill Hall is unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the commercial district. The County is meeting with the City to look at opening up the City's watershed to more non-motorized trail recreation.
- Continue to 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 connectivity of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail.
- Anticipate the finalization of design for BEVT 5, with public bidding of the project in the fall of 2023.
- We plan to continue to pursue housing assistance grants, COVID relief grants, and look for funds to help develop more moderate-income development.
- Apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant, through FEMA, to supply the remainder of Clinton County with P25 Phase 2 radios.
- Begin the process for updating the 2014 Clinton County Comprehensive Plan.
- Work within the SEDA COG Metropolitan Planning Organization to add several local bridges and roads to the PennDOT Transportation Improvement Program.
- Continue to organize the Planning Department electronic filing systems.

- The Planning Department will be reviewing the 2010 Clinton County Greenways & Open Space Plan to determine the extent of a future plan update.

## 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-2022													x = Present
													A = Absent
													E = Excused
	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Terry Murty		x	x		E	x	x		X	X	X		7
Reza Lotfi		x	x		x	x	x		X	X	X		8
Dave Calhoun		x	A		x	x	x		X	E	E		5
Roger Hoy		x	x		x	x	E		X	X	X		7
Larry Sheats		x	x		x	x	x		X	x	E		7
Ryan Graw		x	x		x	x	x		E	A	X		6
John Dotterer		x	E		x	x	x		X	X	x		7
Richard Bowman		x	x		E	x	x		X	E	A		5
Melvin Coakley		E	x		x	x	x		X	E	E		5

## 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. We can only assume that with the COVID pandemic ending, residential and agricultural development projects are back on schedule.

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 2022, Planning Department staff issued 45 zoning permits with a total improvement value of \$2,733,300.00. There was one permit renewal and one zoning permit amendment for Lost Acres Campground in Gallagher Township. In comparison to 2021, there appeared to be an uptick in development with most of the permits being issued in Logan or Gallagher Townships. The Zoning Officer and Director are currently working with the County Solicitor on a SALDO Enforcement in West Keating Township associated with unpermitted development of land and building for recreational purposes.

## **ZONING HEARINGS**

There were no zoning hearings that occurred in the 2022 year.

## **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 2022, the Planning Commission reviewed 12 zoning ordinance amendments and provided comments for each.

## TOURISM FUND PROJECTS

County Tourism and Recreation seemed to be on an upward trend in 2022 with the COVID-19 Pandemic seemingly slowing down and businesses and social events going back into full swing of operations. The County received 21 applications requesting more than \$87,000 for the \$50,000 available for award in 2022, and awarded 17 projects.

Applicant	Project/Event	AMOUNT AWARDED
Castanea Township Recreation Committee	Promotional support for Castanea Community Day	\$500
Central Mountain ATV Association	Promotional and marketing support	\$4,000
City of Lock Haven	Support for the Outdoor Summer Concert Series	\$5,000
City of Lock Haven	Expansion of the Pickle Ball Courts at Hanna Park	\$2,000
Clinton County Arts Council	Marketing of the Lock Haven JAMS Festival	\$4,000
Clinton County Fair Association	Marketing and advertising support for the fair	\$3,000
Clinton County Historical Society	Wine in the Wilds wine tasting festival	\$3,000
Clinton County Speedway	Promotional Support for the speedway	\$5,000
Downtown Lock Haven Inc.	Marketing support for downtown events	\$3,000
Kettle Creek Music Festival	Promotional support for the festival	\$3,000
Keystone Central Foundation	Alumni promotional support	\$1,000
Lock Haven Area Jaycees	Promotional Support for the annual Labor Day Regatta	\$4,000
Millbrook Playhouse	Promotional Support for this year's performance season	\$5,000
Mill Hall Borough	Support for the community pool	\$1,500
PA State Flaming Foliage Festival	Promotional messaging project at the Flaming Foliage Lot	\$2,000
Piper Aviation Museum	Support for expansion efforts at the museum	\$2,000
ReVibe Outdoors	Supporting the Little Loggers Trail Fest	\$2,000

## RECREATION PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

**The Bald Eagle Valley Trail.** In July of 2022, the Phase 4 pedestrian bridge crossing was completed after another temporary delay for the mating season of peregrine falcons that took roost atop of one of the piers. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, a ribbon cutting ceremony for the bridge was held to officially open the bridge to the public. The bridge was officially named “Katie’s Crossing” in honor of the retiring Planning Director Katherine de Silva, who was very dedicated to the construction and development of this trail and to the citizens of Clinton County. In December, PennDOT began the archeological subsurface investigation on the Pine Creek Township side of the bridge as the design and permitting process for Phase 5 continues to gain momentum.



**The Clinton County Recreation Advisory Committee:** The Clinton County Recreation Inventory, which is a new database of all recreation facilities in the county, is still an ongoing project for the group. The Rec Advisory Committee has received responses from several participating municipalities and are awaiting responses for just a few more. There are two major events coming to Clinton County in the summer of 2023. First is the 2023 Canoe and Kayak National Championships. The event will be held in August and will operate out of the Woodward Township Boat Launch. In the same outdoor realm, there will be an Ironman Race that will cross from Centre County into Clinton County that is scheduled for July of 2023.

## **LIVE AND WORK PROGRAM**

The County Planning Office administers the Live and Work Program, which was initiated by the County Commissioners in February of 2022. The relocation program essentially provides funds, through the American Rescue Plan, to assist qualified candidates and their families to relocate to Clinton County. In 2022, the program assisted with the relocation of 22 applicants, totaling 41 persons. Of these 22 applicants, 9 relocations came from within Pennsylvania, 12 relocations were from other states, and one relocation was from outside of the United States. Details of this new program is available on the County Website.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES**

The Affordable Housing Fund earns fees of approximately \$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. \$10,000.00 was awarded to help homebuyers. STEP, Inc. was paid \$50,000 from the 2021 Commissioners' \$100,000 commitment for owner-occupied home rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, Clinton County Housing was paid \$29,560.00 for the Returning Citizen's House rehabilitation. This year, revenues were \$29,053.92 in recording fees, plus \$10,000.00 from satisfied liens, and \$113.15 in interest.

## **HOMELESS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**

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

**DHS/HAP Funding:** The County's Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), an annual county entitlement from the state Department of Human Services (DHS), is used for cash assistance to homeless persons for rent and utility payments, and also to support shelter operations. The County is allocated \$23,818.00 and passes this through to the Coalition.

**PHARE Funding:** The PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE) grant 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 2022 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
2020 PHARE	Housing Rehabilitation - countywide	\$250,000	Underway
2021 PHARE	Shelter Operations and Forensic Housing	\$89,350	Completed
2021/2022 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Completed
2022/2023 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.

Fund Year	Project Names	Funded	Project Status
CDBG-2018	Countywide Owner-Occupied Home Rehabs, Part 3 (STEP)	\$52,530	Completed
2018	Bucktail Medical Center – Accessibility Doors	\$66,257	Completed
2018	Booneville Water Main Replacement	\$75,473	Completed
CDBG-2019	Renovo Borough Water Authority, 4 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> St. water main replacement	\$195,226	Completed
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	Completed
2020	Clinton County Housing Coalition Reentry Housing	\$25,602	Completed
2020	Renovo Borough – 9 <sup>th</sup> Street Road Rehab	\$129,964	Completed
CDBG-2021	Bucktail Medical Center/HVAC upgrade	\$71,400	Waiting on heaters to be installed
2021	Greater Renovo Area Heritage Park – Maxwell Building roof	\$55,000	Bid once- over budget. Bidding again in the Spring
2021	Western Clinton Municipal Authority – Grinder pump purchase	\$74,127	Waiting on Env. Rev.

CDBG-2022	Renovo Borough Water Authority-Pipe purchase	\$21,771.00	Applied to DCED
CDBG-2022	Citizen's Hose of South Renovo-Equipment	\$50,000.00	Applied to DCED
AFG	Firefighter grant to buy additional responder radios	\$983,000.00	Applying 2/9/23

## 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 performed in house.

Program Name	Program Purpose	Received in 2022 or left from 2021	Funding Distributed	Number of Recipients: businesses, nonprofits, municipalities, households
ERAP Part 1 – From DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$2,540,838	\$2,540,838	289
ERAP Part 2 – from DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$2,145,127.80	\$1,800,000	239
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.	\$3,751,906.50	TBD	21
ARPA-Tranche 2	TBD	3,751,906.50	TBD	TBD
USDA Emergency Rural Health Care	Department of Emergency Services – radio tower project	\$750,000 toward \$1,000,000 request	0	Will be used for installation of 911 equipment
CDBG-CV Competitive	Department of Emergency Services radio tower project – Awarded Phase 1 & Phase 2	\$510,962 \$8,112,115	0	All users and beneficiaries of our 911 system in Western Clinton County
HIRP-PA Office of Rural Health	Health Initiatives for Rural PA	\$50,000	30,000	Used for COVID vaccine clinic events, mental health

**HIRP:** In 2022, the Planning Office assisted with the administration of the Health Initiative for Rural Pennsylvania (HIRP) Grant. The CDC, PA Office of Health and Penn State University established the project to implement COVID-19 reduction strategies in rural Pennsylvania. Funding is utilized to connect local residents to pandemic support that aligns public health, health care and non-health interventions as outlined in the Action Plan.

Participants in the program consisted of representatives from Clinton County Government, LHU, United Way, Penn State, Health Dept, Housing Coalition, KCSD and hospitals.

Clinton County goals were:

- COVID-19 mitigation
- incentivize vaccination
- Vaccine incentives at local events (Farm City Festival), job fairs
- pandemic recovery
- book bags with health supplies for students
- School-based mental health and wellness programs

The original funding for the project was \$100,000, ending on May 31, 2023. The Group has applied for an extension and additional funding of \$50,000 to continue/expand the mission.

## **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 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); PA Wilds Planning Team; PA Wilds Board of Directors; Clinton County Sewer Authority; SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative; 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.

## **COUNTY ENGINEER**

The Clinton County Commissioners have created a new position of County Engineer, which I will be fulfilling. The purpose of the County Engineer is to perform all “in house” plan reviews for the County

Planning Commission, work with County Government on the planning and execution of capital projects, provide consultation to County Authorities and Municipalities – if requested - and perform tasks that require the seal of a Professional Engineer. In 2022, the following engineering tasks were accomplished, which offset engineering consultation fees:

- Environmental Review for the 911 Project.
- Engineering consultation for the Chestnut Grove Recreation Authority on the Robbie Gould Youth Sports Center – East Park Project.
- Engineering Consultation for the Clinton County Sewer Authority.
- DCNR BEVT Phase 6 Grant Preparation and Application.

Projects in 2023 will consist of the execution of the 911 Tower Project, multiple bridge rehabilitation projects and continued consultation on Phase 3, 5 and 6 of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail.