

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Transportation and Planning Commissions
March 12, 2019

The State College Borough Transportation (TC) and Planning (PC) Commissions met on Tuesday, March 12, 2019, in Room 304 of the Municipal Building. The TC and PC were combining for the purpose of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Municipal Workshop.

The meeting began with TC Chairman Raymond Najjar calling the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

TC Members Present

Raymond Najjar, Chair; Richard Garis, Vice-Chair; Rick Gilmore; Diana Malcolm; and Hugh Mose

TC Members Absent

Mieke Haeck

PC Members Present

Zoe Boniface, Chair; Anita Genger, Vice-Chair; Jon Eich; Richard Kalin; Mary Madden; Ron Madrid

PC Members Absent

Scott Dutt

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Garis motioned to approve the meeting minutes from January 8, 2019. Mr. Gilmore seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Public Hour

No one in the audience wished to speak during the public hour.

Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission

Long-Range Transportation Plan

Ms. Hoag reported the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) was in the process of updating the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which would identify transportation needs out to the year 2050. She added the CCMPO was mandated to update the LRTP every five years, and the current effort was aimed at adopting a new Plan in June 2020. She said the MPO staff was hosting today's round table discussion to obtain input about transportation-based needs and issues for both the state and the local infrastructure. She asked the TC members to recess to the round tables joining the PC members and introduced Tom Zilla, Transportation Planner for CCMPO, who would open the workshop.

Mr. Zilla summarized that the CCMPO was one of 24 MPO's in Pennsylvania and they were the liaison for US DOT, PennDOT and local officials and responsible for transportation planning in Centre County. He added that in addition to preparing the LRTP, the CCMPO was responsible for allocating federal, state and local capital project funds for roads, bridges, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

He then introduced Mike Bloom, Assistant Director at Centre County Planning & Community Development Office, who explained the rules of engagement for the workshop which were to identify issues and needs of both state and local transportation infrastructure for all modes of transportation. He said one person

from each group should be selected to report out but to be sure everyone was included in the group discussions.

Mr. Bloom explained the topics each group would be discussing including key corridors, alternative modes of transportation, land use, emerging technology and other county/regional issues. He asked the groups to begin their discussions. The groups, which were comprised of members of both the TC and PC, were given approximately 45 minutes for their discussions.

KEY CORRIDORS

What are the major needs and issues by corridor, including safety, multimodal user conflict, congestion, and condition?

- Atherton Street
- College and Beaver Avenues
- Other

Mr. Eich reported on the Atherton Street corridor. He said his group was concerned there were no alternative routes to get around town leading to congestion on Atherton Street as well as the side streets. He said a survey suggested staff consider incorporating those areas in the work that was being done. He said there was lack of walkability along that corridor with safety issues for pedestrians crossing Atherton Street. He said there were questions regarding if the speed limit would be reduced. He said his group also discussed the bike path from Atherton Street to downtown and the winter maintenance on the bike path. He added there should be consideration of having bikes use an access on one side of Atherton Street with pedestrians using the other side.

Mr. Mose reported on College and Beaver Avenues. His group thought there were significant pedestrian issues at the Allen Street intersection with concern about congestion at peak times and would like to see traffic flow improved. The group discussed the possibility of replacing the over crossing at University Drive and E. College Avenue. Mr. Mose said the group thought the golf course could be an alternative route for pedestrians and bicyclists to get off Beaver and College Avenues. He added the western gateway to the University was going to be an issue that would impact College and Beaver Avenues in the future and one idea would be to look at West College and West Beaver Avenues to be reduced from two lanes to one lane and find a better use for Calder Way.

Mr. Jovanis reported about other roadways and key corridors. He said his group spent a lot of time discussing pedestrian safety on Atherton Street as well as College and Beaver Avenues. He said they talked about distracted pedestrians in various contexts about E-scooters and having more bike lanes.

ALTERNATIVE MODES

Where are the gaps and capacity issues?

- Bike/Pedestrian
- Public Transportation

Mr. Eich said his group discussed the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) was a good service but could use adjustments in frequency including service to and from Bellefonte on weekends. They noted some areas had a lot of bus service, but few users. He added at times traffic had to stop or go around while loading/unloading. The group suggested CATA incorporate solar panels into the roof of their new facility using grant money. The group questioned what was happening with the intercity bus terminal as the project had been studied frequently but not yet resolved. The group thought additional bike parking was necessary and there was a need to start thinking about E-scooters and other transportation devices.

LAND USE

What are the anticipated changes in land use/development and what are the potential issues or impacts on the transportation system?

Ms. Madden said her group talked about the idea that the area was over zoned for retail and commercial use. They thought the large parking lots should be looked at for possible residential uses. She said some neighborhoods would be receptive to small-scale commercial services that were carefully located within walking distance. She said they talked about increasing density and intensity in the Borough having positive and negative effects, but if increasing density was taken on very carefully it would be mostly positive.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

What new or emerging technologies would you like to see deployed to improve mobility or system operation within State College Borough?

Mr. Jovanis said his group thought there was too much signage at intersections. He said the group also discussed planning for autonomous vehicles and retaining traditional meeting spaces for people to get together in an electronic world. He said the group had an interesting conversation about the Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Program (CVPDP) at the US DOT level. He said the CVPDP had sites that used vehicle connections from the roadside to the vehicle that relayed information about land use, other activities, and availability of transit as well as information about parking garages, hotels, etc. He said his group was hoping something could be done about the huge signal pole foundations that PennDOT puts in the middle of pedestrian crosswalks.

COUNTY/REGIONAL

What major transportation needs, and issues exist throughout Centre County?

Mr. Eich reported his group discussed the big three missing links throughout Centre County, two of which had already been funded including the I-99/I-80 Interchange Project and completion of the US 322 Boalsburg to Potters Mills Project. He added there was no funding for the Corridor O Project – Port Matilda to I-80, but that needed to be kept on the LRTP list. He said they talked about the impact of climate change in 2050 and how the Borough was planning for the anticipated impact between now and then. He said the group expressed an interest in easier access to cities via air and rail and the current challenge of having rail access to New York and cities in the east by having to drive to Lewistown which made for an all-day event. He said his group discussed small projects such as the turn back which was currently a state route from South Atherton Street out to University Drive. They questioned if the Borough, College Township and PennDOT could work together to make that a local street and make safety improvements by installing center-line rumble strips where appropriate.

Mr. Zilla then closed the workshop by stating all the information would be documented and presented to Borough Council. He added the CCMPO would be reporting back to the TC and PC later in the year with an action plan of addressing these needs and issues.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Najjar thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 2:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy Hall
Administrative Assistant