

# CRAWFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## April Regular Meeting Minutes Crawford County Public Safety Building, Meadville, Pennsylvania

Commissioner Wickert, Vice-Chair, called the Regular Meeting of the Crawford County Planning Commission (Planning Commission) to order at 3:30 p.m. on April 25, 2022.

### 1. Planning Commission Roll Call:

#### **Present –**

Austin Rock  
Jessica Hilburn  
John Frye  
John Lawrence, Treasurer  
Katie Wickert, Vice-Chair  
Ron Mattocks, Secretary  
Travis Palmer  
Scott Sjolander

#### **Absent –**

Maria Dreese, Chair

#### **Other Attendees –**

Francis Weiderspahn, Crawford County Board of Commissioners  
Eric Henry, Crawford County Board of Commissioners  
Thomas Gilbertson, CC Assistant Planning Director for Community Planning  
Peter Grella, CC Land Use Planner

### 2. Action on the March 2022 Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Wickert requested a motion to approve the March 2022 Regular Meeting minutes. Commissioner Lawrence moved to adopt the minutes. Commissioner Palmer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### 3. Communications Report:

Mr. Norwood provided an update on the communications received by the Planning Commission since their March 2022 regular meeting. Communications included:

- Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development – Comprehensive Plan Amendment concerning their 5-Year Recycling Strategic Plan;
- PennDOT NW RPO (*Rural Planning Organization*) Project Updates; and
- Letter from the Crawford County Planning Office to express support for the Meadville Area Sewer Authority's PENNVEST grant application for treatment plant upgrades.

### 4. Subcommittee Reports:

A. Standing Committees –

Transportation Committee: Commissioner Lawrence mentioned that they did not formally meet but has continued to conduct research on electric vehicles. Weber Electric provides electric vehicle charges at cost for entities interested in offering them. Commissioner Lawrence is yet to find a company that can process credit card payments for those charging their vehicles. Commissioner Mattocks asked if we are aware who the College [Allegheny College] and hospital [Meadville Medical Center] use for their electric vehicle charging stations. Commissioner Lawrence stated that we are uncertain.

Agricultural and Environmental Concerns Committee: Commissioner Wickert reported that the committee held its County Forest Day on April 11, 2022. The event had a great turnout and hosted presentations from the Conservation District, PA Game Commission, and PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry. The committee was also joined by students from Titusville High School's Ecology Club.

Personnel Committee: Commissioner Wickert commented that the committee has not met.

Planning Initiatives Committee: Commissioner Mattocks noted that the committee did not meet during that last month but is working on a [housing revitalization program] proposal to present to the Planning Commission. The committee will meet next on April 11, 2022.

B. Planning Director's Report –

[ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES]

None.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECTS (Corrected from the April 25, 2022 Director's Report)

Conneaut Valley Boroughs Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan –

The final public engagement event for the Conneaut Valley Boroughs Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan will take place on Monday, May 16th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Conneautville Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall - 1015 Strawberry Alley in Conneautville. Ron Mattocks has agreed to volunteer his time for this event.

Erie County Comprehensive Plan Amendment Review –

The Planning Office has received a notice from the Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development concerning a proposed amendment to their county comprehensive plan. The amendment concerns Erie County's 5-Year Recycling Strategic Plan. The Planning Office is requesting a response to come from the Planning Commission's Agriculture and Environmental Concerns Committee with the opportunity for the whole Planning Commission to provide comments at this regular meeting. Please see the communication item on Monday.com to review Erie County's notification and visit this link to review the proposed comprehensive plan amendment – <https://eriecountypa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Complete-and-FINAL-Draft-Erie-Recycling-Strategic-Plan-Erie-County.pdf>

The Planning Commission has until May 13, 2022 to submit comments. Comments may be submitted to [larmel@eriecountypa.gov](mailto:larmel@eriecountypa.gov) or to:

Erie County Department of Planning & Community Development

150 East Front Street, Suite 300  
Erie, PA 16507

#### Ernst Trail Feasibility Study –

Crawford County and the French Creek Trail Association, Inc. is coordinating with the Northwest Commission and Michael Baker International to conduct a feasibility study of connecting the Ernst Trail to Meadville and creating a trail connection between Conneaut Lake and Linesville. A public survey and project website has been created. The website is available at <https://crawford-trail-studies-baker.hub.arcgis.com/>.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

##### Community Development Block Grant Program –

The Planning Office is coordinating upwards of 14 construction projects this construction season through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Here is a list of the projects that we anticipate will be in some form of construction this year.

1. Beaver Township – Architectural Barrier Improvements
2. Richmond Township – Architectural Barrier Improvements
3. Steuben Township – Architectural Barrier Improvements
4. Crawford County Care Center – Patio COVID-19 Renovations
5. Vernon Township – Municipal Building Architectural Barrier Improvements
6. Vernon Township – Roche Park Improvements
7. City of Meadville – East Street Paving
8. City of Meadville – Walnut Street Paving
9. City of Meadville – East Steers Street Paving
10. City of Meadville – Plateau Drive Paving
11. City of Meadville – South Main Street Emergency Shelter Roof Replacement
12. City of Meadville – Huidekoper Park Improvements
13. City of Titusville – Diamond Street Park Improvements
14. West Fallowfield Township – Rocky Glenn Road Bridge Replacement

In addition, Crawford County, and our OBO communities, are preparing for the 2022 CDBG application cycle. This includes the first public hearing for CDBG. Each of the community public hearings are as follow:

1. City of Meadville – April 22, 2022
2. City of Titusville – May 3, 2022
3. Crawford County – May 5, 2022
4. Vernon Township – TBD

As part of the County's Language Access Plan (LAP) we post public notices in limited English proficiency areas of the County. Planning staff are asking for assistance from Commission members to volunteer posting these notices in communities they reside in or are located near.

##### Community Development Block Grant – Competitive Application –

Planning staff was notified by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED) of a third competitive CDBG-CV application cycle that will have an application deadline in June 2022. Furthermore, Crawford County received a letter from the City of Titusville requesting aid in preparing a competitive application for the next round of CDBG-CV funding. The city is looking to make an application to address a blighted structure under conservatorship in their downtown.

Additionally, the County's Board of Commissioners have approached planning staff with a request to explore making a competitive application in the fall to the annual CDBG competitive program for construction of county owned towers to service public safety radio, cellular phone, and possibly wireless internet service provider deployment. Planning staff is working with public safety and their consultant on the project.

Appalachian Regional Commission – Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Grant –

Crawford County is coordinating with HRG on negotiating a fixed price contract for design and engineering services for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) project. Staff anticipate a contract will be secured and design work will begin late spring/ early summer.

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Low-Impact Home Based Businesses –

Representative Tracy Pennycuick has introduced legislation, House Bill 2286, that will amend the MPC to allow temporary low-impact home business relocation. The representative's memorandum states:

*The COVID-19 pandemic shifted the way many businesses conducted operations throughout the Commonwealth. In my district, a constituent who does electrical contracting and computing relocated a portion of his business to his home, so he could continue to provide for his family. However, when he did this, his municipality threatened him with fines and even jail time if he did not desist his business at his home. Therefore, in the near future, I will be introducing legislation to amend the Municipalities Planning Code to allow for temporary low-impact home business relocation.*

*Currently, individuals can operate what are deemed no impact home businesses from their properties. My legislation would amend the Municipal Planning Code to expand this provision to allow low-impact home businesses to operate during any future declared disaster emergency or natural disaster that renders operation of the business at its location unsafe and impossible.*

*Please join me in supporting business owners who want to temporarily move their businesses to their homes, so they can continue to conduct business during an emergency or natural disaster.*

We will keep an eye on this legislation and provide updates.]

The commission briefly discussed the Ernst Trail Feasibility Study including some of the other priorities for the trail's continued expansion.

## **5. Public Comment:**

Use of brackets [ ] represents information not directly stated into the record at the meeting but summarized from another document. Use of italics represents information stated into the record but herein clarified in greater detail.

None.

## 6. Subdivisions, Land Developments & Zoning Reviews:

### A. Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Oil Creek Township –

Mr. Grella provided an overview of proposed zoning ordinance amendment to regulate solar energy system developments in Oil Creek Township. Mr. Grella mentioned that one of the Office's main concerns about the proposed amendment is that it includes numerous provisions that are beyond the limits of what can be enforced or included within zoning laws per the PA Municipalities Planning Code. Commissioner Wickert requested questions and upon hearing none called for a motion to convey the review letter on to Oil Creek Township. Commissioner Lawrence moved to forward the County Planning Agency's review on to the Oil Creek Township Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Hilburn seconded that motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### B. Modwash – Preliminary/Final Land Development, Vernon Township –

Mr. Grella provided an overview of proposed Modwash land development in Vernon Township. Mr. Grella mentioned that the nature of the proposed development may impact roadway safety and that the review recommends that a traffic study be conducted. Commissioner Wickert requested questions and upon hearing none called for a motion to convey the review letter on to Vernon Township. Commissioner Lawrence moved to forward the County Planning Agency's review on to the Vernon Township Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Hilburn seconded that motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### C. Administrative Subdivision Reviews –

Mr. Grella provided an overview of administrative reviews completed by the Crawford County Planning Office since the Planning Commission's March 2022 regular meeting. Mr. Grella pointed out one subdivision, the Hutton Conneaut Plan of Lots, as being related to the Modwash land development in Vernon Township.

## 7. Old Business:

### A. Discussion – Crawford County Development Review Criteria –

Mr. Norwood noted that he did not have a report on this item. Commissioner Wickert reiterated what the item is about and stated that development review criteria may be focused upon more immediately now that the Agriculture and Environmental Concerns Committee has past the 2022 County Forest Day. Commissioner Wickert granted the floor to County Commissioner Henry who discussed the nature of the Planning Commission's relationship with local municipalities. County Commissioner Henry highlighted that all governmental entities within the county want to accommodate business but also have different ideas for how to create a viable community. Several members of the Planning Commission responded by highlighting the importance of working with local municipalities to understand the development review process as well as how they can work to maintain what they care about as a community.

### B. Discussion – Update on Planning 101 Training for 2022 –

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Mr. Norwood provided an update on the progress of lining up presenters for the upcoming Planning 101 training conference. Commissioner members discussed several resources for lining up presenters as well as some of the county's circumstances for future development considerations.

C. Discussion – 2020 Planning Agency Strategic Plan –

Mr. Norwood commented that the Planning Office has recently produced a board in Monday.com that inventories and tracks items from the Crawford County Planning Agency Strategic Plan.

**8. New Business:**

A. Action Request – Erie County Comprehensive Plan Update –

Mr. Norwood provided an overview of the proposed amendment to the Erie County Comprehensive Plan and the request for comments. Commissioner Hilburn mentioned that she did not have any substantive comments on the proposed amendment; however, she suggested that the County's response ask for Erie County to keep us (Crawford County) in mind as they go through the work to implement their recycling efforts. Commissioner Wickert suggested that we should highlight our willing to talk and potentially collaborate with Erie County especially as we undertake the process of updating our comprehensive plan. Commissioner Wickert further suggested that we can take Erie County's proposed amendment to Crawford County's recycling authority to see what potential may exist for plan implementation in the future. Commissioner Hilburn moved to provide formal review comments to the Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development concerning (1) Crawford County's interest in working with Erie County to implement recycling programs, (2) the desire to hold discussions with Erie County administrators when working to update our comprehensive plan, and (3) that the Planning Commission's Agriculture and Environmental Concerns Committee may meet with Crawford County's recycling agency to discuss Erie County's proposed amendment what possibilities for Crawford County. Commissioner Lawrence seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Presentation – Community Design, Transportation, & Rural-to-Urban Transect –

Commissioner Frye exited the meeting.

Commissioner Wickert, at the requested of Mr. Norwood, decided to table the presentation on Community Design, Transportation, and Rural-to-Urban Transect.

C. Discussion – Planning Commissioner Comments –

Commissioner Rock –  
Complemented County Forest Day.

Commissioner Palmer –

Do we have relationships with other counties to share ideas? Mr. Norwood mentioned that we share ideas through our membership in the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association. Additionally, the County Planning Directors Association of Pennsylvania meets quarterly to discuss planning topics and has an email list-serve to address common questions. Conversations and subject matters vary with numerous similarities across the commonwealth.

Another resource is the Northwest Pennsylvania Planning Directors group which includes the seven counties in the region.

Commissioner Sjolander –  
Complemented the proceeding.

Commissioner Lawrence –  
Still have trouble logging into Monday.com.

Commissioner Hilburn –  
Complemented County Forest Day and the recent library broadband project. Also noted that Titusville is experiencing an uptick in homelessness and that the Planning Commission should consider how it may address that issue in the future.

Commissioner Mattocks –  
Commented on a recent presentation he attended that highlighted the use of ARPA funds for historic preservation in other Pennsylvania cities.

Commissioner Wickert –  
Will attend a wetland trail development training this week.

## 9. Adjournment:

Commissioner Wickert requested a motion for adjournment. Commissioner Mattocks moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lawrence seconded. The April 2022 Crawford County Planning Commission Regular Meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Dreese, Chair  
**Crawford County Planning Commission**

cc: Crawford County Board of Commissioners  
**Crawford County Planning Commission June 2022**