

**MUNICIPALITY OF MT. LEBANON  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**DATE:** Tuesday, August 18, 2020

**TIME:** 7 p.m.

**PLACE:** Mt. Lebanon Municipality – Commission Chambers

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Suzanne Seiber (chair), Andrew George, Dennis Pittman, Dave Hornicak

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Municipal Planner Ian McMeans, Municipal Engineer Dan Deiseroth

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:** Commissioner Steve Silverman; Alex Ferraro, Historic Preservation Board liaison

**1. Old Business**

NOTE: The Asbury Heights site plan to expand on-site parking was tabled until the September 2020 Planning Board meeting upon request of the applicant.

**2. New Business**

- a. Annual report on the Mt. Lebanon Comprehensive Plan. In October of 2013 the municipality adopted *Elevate Mt. Lebanon* as the municipality’s comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan guides public policy in terms of transportation, utilities, land use, recreation and housing.

Each year the planning board will review the status of various items contained in the plan and offer recommendations on possible items to be considered as priorities to assist the Commission in their annual budget and Capital Improvement Program decisions.

Mr. McMeans gave an overview of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan is a 10-year plan that was adopted in October 2013 and is in effect from 2013 through 2022. It is the responsibility of the municipal planner to every year provide to the Commission an update on the obtained goals and objectives. Some goals do not have an end because they continue on a yearly basis, such as conduct an annual evaluation of user fees, or to work with the school district. Other goals are more easily obtained. Great progress has been made in the last seven years reaching many of the goals and objectives. He said the reason the Comp Plan is through 2022 is so there is time to get complete information from the 2020 Census before starting the next plan.

Mr. McMeans said some of the larger capital improvement plans have been put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sanitary sewer road maintenance programs have continued. The Vibrant Uptown project is in the planning stage. There are three development stages for the project: schematic design, design development and construction development. The municipality is getting to the end of the schematic design phase, and is making good progress. The goal is to put the project out to bid late 2020 or early 2021, with the idea of starting construction in 2021. The municipality has been working on the CONNECT transit-oriented

development study with the City of Pittsburgh, and surrounding municipalities working to improve and better utilize public transportation. Numerous grants have been applied for and received especially for the Vibrant Uptown project. The municipality got approval for a systems project with the Heinz School at Carnegie Mellon to do a study on the life cycle costs of brick streets.

Mr. Pittman asked if there was any kind of origin/destination study regarding transit, such as having the T go from First Avenue out to the hospitals in Oakland. Many of his neighbors travel downtown then transfer to a bus to take them out to Oakland. He thinks that spur would be helpful not just for hospitals, but also for the colleges.

Mr. McMeans said that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is in a study phase on a multi-modal transportation improvement program plan for the southwestern area of Pennsylvania. There have been some people from SPC come to the CONNECT meetings.

Mr. McMeans said one of the action steps laid out in the Comprehensive Plan was to expand mentoring programs which the Commission put into action when they implemented the Junior Commissioner program, and again in 2017 when they instituted the high school student internship program, which is more of an experiential in government program. Through an application process he takes students each semester and teaches them how government works. The Commission just recently decided to continue expanding the opportunities available to high school students and created a junior board member program. If a high school student has a particular area of interest and would like to learn more about how government works they could be assigned to a corresponding board. There were two students this year each assigned to a board, and Mt. Lebanon is hoping that program will continue to grow in interest.

Mr. McMeans said Mt. Lebanon continues to work closely with the school district, and neighboring communities, regarding regional strategic planning, such as glass recycling. Mt. Lebanon, Bethel Park, Upper St. Clair, and Dormont formed a collective of South Hills communities to provide for glass recycling at various times in those communities, with an eye towards having some permanent sites.

Mr. McMeans said some of the other completed items are: updates to the Zoning Ordinance, and the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance in accordance with the comprehensive plan, which the planning board make recommendations and the commission approved; making our GIS mapping system available on-line which has helped our public works department to be more efficient with completing jobs, such as street trees. Mt. Lebanon has over 11,000 street trees that the forestry crew maintain. The public works department keeps a log of all service requests regarding street trees, which they have on their iPads in the field, and helps them maximize their schedules. The GIS mapping system has also helped with the sidewalk replacement program; the sidewalk inspector can categorize and prioritize the sidewalks on his iPad as he is inspecting them. Work on the parking garages is completed. There are three large planning studies that will be happening over the next five years: the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks Master Plan and Recreation Center Feasibility Study – which the Commission funded in the 2020 budget. The Parks Advisory Board had requested an update to the Parks Master Plan which was last done in 2003, and the Sports Advisory Board wanted a feasibility study done on the community recreation center to provide more indoor recreation opportunities so when

the Commission was going through budget discussions they paired those two studies together, and applied for grant money. That study will take place in 2021; the Comprehensive Plan will be conducted in 2022; a parking feasibility study on the south garage – which was recommended in the 2013 Comp Plan but will be completed under the 2022 Comp Plan. The south garage is nearing the end of its useful life and a study reflecting what the parking market is and where it's going, a needs analysis for what parking is like in the Uptown Business District, as well as potentially pursuing a partnership for public/private funding, needs to be done. The current parking garage is in prime real estate along Washington Road, and if a garage is going to be rebuilt is it possible to rebuild it strong enough to serve as a below-grade parking structure with first floor retail and residential floors above. The life of the garage has been extended so the study won't need to be done until approximately 2024.

Mr. Pittman asked about the pile by the rifle range on the public works site, and what the status is on that property.

Mr. McMeans said the public works facility is complete, but the rifle range has some outstanding items that need to be finished, mostly dealing with sound. There was a plan for the parklet on the property, which the planning board approved, and the Commission approved as well as allocated funding for the project, but it has been pushed back to 2021.

Commissioner Silverman, who attended the meeting, said bids had been received but they were too high.

Mr. Pittman asked if the ingress and egress have been completed for the parklet.

Mr. McMeans said the public works yard is complete, and funding has been allocated to the parklet project.

Mr. George asked about \$440,000 in the 2023 year of the Capital Improvement Program for McNeilly Park. He sits on the Economic Development Council, and they have suggested ideas such as sports facility similar to Cool Springs. He asked if these funds were for construction, or still considered for the parks study.

Mr. McMeans said the \$440,000 is based on a cost estimate received for installing trails on the site. The Commission only assigns funding for the current year, so funds for subsequent years are not actually funded, but they are provided so the Commission and the Planning Board can see what the urgency of the improvements are, based on what year they are listed in the CIP. The municipality is looking to supplement the parks study with a resident survey to see what types of recreation facilities are wanted by residents.

Mr. Hornicak asked if the parks master plan would include all of the park elements and the recreational facilities listed in the CIP.

Mr. McMeans said there are 17 municipal parks, playgrounds, and facilities that would all be included.

Mr. Hornicak said he is excited to see what could be done with Brafferton Park which is in high demand. Currently the only fields available in the Sunset Hills neighborhood is at Howe School. There are drainage issues at the park, but he knows there are field demands for youth baseball, lacrosse, and girls' softball.

Mr. Deiseroth said one of the challenges for Brafferton Park is providing enough parking, which will probably come out in the study.

Mr. McMeans said there is a lot of interest in the community for other recreation activities that are not currently provided for, such as pickleball.

Mr. George asked about the Thornwood stream restoration, saying he thought it would be funded for 2021, but looks like it's funded in 2022. He would like to see that funding back in 2021.

Mr. Deiseroth said the original intent was to address all those issues when the stream restoration was being done.

Mr. McMeans said the board has the ability to advocate for particular items in the CIP in their recommendation to the Commission.

Mr. Pittman moved and Mr. Hornicak seconded to provide the annual update on the Comprehensive Plan to the Commission. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. Recommendation from the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board on the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Mt. Lebanon, PA for the years 2021– 2025.

Mr. George moved and Mr. Hornicak seconded to recommend the 2021-2025 CIP as being in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, with an amendment to recommend the Thornwood stream restoration to 2021.

Mr. Pittman asked about the trees that had been removed in the neighborhood park called Pinecone Park, and asked that replanting trees in that park be part of the motion that is on the floor.

Mr. George moved and Mr. Pittman seconded to recommend the 2021-2025 CIP as being in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, with an amendment to recommend the Thornwood stream restoration to 2021, and to replant Pinecone Park. The motion carried unanimously.

### **3. Citizen Comments**

There were no citizen comments.

- 4. Next Meeting** — The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board is **Tuesday, September 15, 2020**, at 7:00 p.m.

### **5. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.