

# DOYLESTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

## FEBRUARY 14, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of the Doylestown Borough Planning Commission was held at Borough Hall at 7:30 PM on January 10, 2022. Members present were as follows:

James Lannon, Chairman  
Andy Happ  
Maryanne Baenninger  
Heather Mahaley  
P.R. West  
Lynn Bush  
Karyn Hyland, Director of Building and Zoning

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mr. Lannon, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of Martin Corr.

**MEETING MINUTES** from the January 10, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY** was provided by Mr. Lannon. Our consultants have conducted and compiled the results from an internal survey of staff, board and commission volunteers, and elected officials to understand what challenges they would like to see addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Discussions have begun in earnest as to the composition, content, and execution of the forthcoming series of workshops that shall take place as the next significant step toward an implementable comprehensive plan.

**BUCKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION – INTERNAL SURVEY RESULTS, WORKSHOP PREPARATION** Mike Roedig from the Bucks County Planning Commission gave a brief update of what an implementable comprehensive plan is to the new members of the Planning Commission and members of the community.

Janet Santiago of Davis Rd. wanted to know if there is a saturation number for the Borough in terms of population. The BCPC did not have this information and explained why. This plan pertains to an area of growth. Since the population of the Borough is changing it is difficult to predict for the purpose of the comprehensive plan. There have been a lot of changes within the Borough. The BCPC will not say what the growth capacity is for the Borough. They will offer guidelines, but they cannot offer caps for the population. Mr. Lannon advised Ms. Santiago to reserve her questions for the workshops.

Lynn Lai of the Bucks County Planning Commission reviewed the results of the internal survey. It was a brief survey consisting of eight questions. The BCPC used the same method as the Community Survey to rank the results of the internal survey.

June of South Main St. asked why some of the topics in the summary were not included in the results. The color indicates they were in the majority of the comments. The top 5 priority rankings were the only results included on the priority ranking slide, but no discussion will be off the table during the workshops.

Cynthia McMillan of Harvey Avenue asked if the results that are being reviewed tonight included the entire community or just the internal survey. Mike explained the baseline of the results and clarified what each column meant. The internal survey ranked the same issues as the community.

Jason Wood of Meadow Lane asked how the “approaches” column were created. Mr. Lannon explained these were created by comments respondents wrote in the survey directly.

Lynn continued to explain the survey results with no additional questions from the public. Mike let the community members present at the meeting know where they can find the results of the Community Survey and as well as the presentations.

Mike moved onto to speaking about the workshop schedule, identifying community issues workshops. The first workshop will take place in March 2023. The BCPC thought it was important to take the main topics as identified by the community and divide them into two. It would allow everyone to attend as many meetings as possible. The goal of the meetings is to have community members start to nail down what is an issue in the community with help from the BCPC and to come up with more details for each category. The goal is to refine the issues and topics. Workshop 1A will discuss economic vitality, historic preservation, arts and culture, and parking. Workshop 1B will focus on sustainability and conservation, parks and recreation, and housing. All the topics are interrelated, but we want people to be comfortable in the conversations. All the conversation is welcome, and we want to hear what the community thinks is important. Both workshops will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month in March and April.

Nick Forte of Woodbridge Drive asked how comments from the public tonight will fit into the workshops. If a person was interested in population saturation, which workshop would he attend. Mike said either would be appropriate and explained how it falls under housing but also economic vitality. The BCPC wants to hear diverse opinions.

Lynn Bush wanted to discuss the use of the word “development” in the survey. For the citizens, ¼ of the participants wanted development changed. She wants to make sure it isn’t being missed as an issue. It could be any number of different things and she wants to be sure it has been captured in the workshop topics. How does the BCPC dig into this issue further? Can a table and facilitator be provided for that one singular issue? If a separate workshop to just focus on development is needed, that could be an option. There will be a lot of overlap with the subsets whether it is development or another topic. They will all weave into each other. Mike from the BCPC agreed with this comment. If we start with the other topics first, we can move from there and see how development is included in those topics. The concern about development is the impact on the community, so development on its own isn’t necessarily the challenge but how it is affecting the Borough. From these discussions we can decide how much development is appropriate. Speaking only about development can quickly devolve.

Maryanne Baenninger wanted to second Ms. Bush’s comment. She also wants to say that what she is hearing in response to the concerns is right. However, it doesn’t necessarily reflect the openness of the conversation we are trying to have. If she was not familiar with the process and development is her concern, she would feel the conversation may disenfranchise her view. She also wants to go back to the question that was asked about the 3 items that were not in the top 5. She was told there would be an opportunity to talk about them but there is no place set aside for the workshops to discuss any other issues. There is no recognition that the topics impact each other. Perhaps a 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop would allow people to discuss those things not included in the first two workshops.

Sarah Wood of Meadow Lane, spoke positively about the survey results. She is curious if this is representative of people who may attend workshops? She wants to be sure there is diversity of opinion among the attendees of the workshops. The workshops will be advertised via DMail, the Borough website, and other channels of communication. The most important way to make sure people know about the workshops is word of mouth.

Cathy Arnold of E. Court Street is interested in knowing how consensus is determined once a workshop is finished and determine what is an actionable item. Mike explained it is a process and groups will continue to meet throughout the process to make realistic implementable recommendations that can be carried out. It means there will be instant surveys to gather opinions from people present at meetings. Each group will present their thoughts on what they think needs to be acted on. Ms. Arnold wants to know when something will become an actionable item. She thinks there should be timing considered before something is acted upon.

Noni West of Creek Drive wondered if the Planning Commission is open to calling the last category “housing and development” and she wondered if meetings could start a little earlier than 7:30 pm. Karyn explained it may be a challenge based on staff and Council availability due to other meetings, however, 7:00 pm is a possibility.

Scott Nichols of E. Court Street is interested in the overhead lines throughout the Borough. He is referring to the telephone and cable lines, not the electric utility lines. He is aware he will need to attend a workshop to discuss this issue. Mr. Lannon is not sure if there is something a single municipality can do to change where the utilities place their lines. Mr. Nichols is curious about which workshop he should attend. Mr. Lannon thinks the workshop is a great place to start with this concern.

Mike Frank of S. Franklin Street wanted to know if meetings could take place on a Saturday morning? He wants it to be considered. Mr. Lannon agreed it could be successful.

Jane of S. Main Street appreciates what another commentor stated about the wires. She shares this concern and thinks it is a safety issue. She is concerned that the wires can come down and be unsafe. Karyn said if there is an unsafe condition the resident can reach out to Borough Hall, and we will have the appropriate department or utility company come out to address that concern.

**NEXT STEPS** Mr. Lannon gave the group what the next steps will be. The first workshop will be in Council Chambers on March 14 at 7:30 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 8:40 pm in honor of Libby White.

Respectfully submitted,  
Erika Fellman