

# DOYLESTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

## DECEMBER 13, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of the Doylestown Borough Planning Commission was held at Borough Hall at 7:30 PM on December 13, 2022. Members present were as follows:

James Lannon, Chair  
Gus Perea  
Heather Mahaley  
Lynn Bush  
Karyn Hyland, Director of Building and Zoning  
Phil Ehlinger, Public Works Director

Also present were Council Members Ben Bell, Amy Popkin, Wendy Margolis, Dennis Livrone, Larry Browne, and Mayor Noni West

**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 November 11, 2022 meeting were moved to be approved as submitted by Mr. Lannon and seconded by Ms. Bush.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY** was provided by Mr. Lannon. Mr. Lannon explained to the public in attendance a brief summary of what has been completed with the Comprehensive Plan. He further explained how the results of the Comprehensive Plan will be used to inform the next steps as the planning process continues.

**BUCKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION - POPULATION DATA AND SURVEY RESULTS** were provided by consultants from the BCPC. This is an implementable comprehensive plan process. An implementable comprehensive planning process gives more understanding of what is going on within the community and is more effective than a traditional comprehensive plan. A brief history of Doylestown Borough was presented by the BCPC.

Mike, from the BCPC provided US Census data to give an overview of Doylestown's population growth to further help explain the survey results. Mike pointed out how the population in the Borough is getting younger. Mr. Bell spoke with regard to the forward looking forecasts. Is there a way to project the median age? The BCPC responded that forecasting what the composition of the population will be in the future is very difficult to predict. Ms. West asked why the population decreased but it is younger in Ward 3. Is it possible that people did not fill out their census forms? The BCPC agreed it was a possibility that not everyone filled out their forms and it is something that should be looked into.

Ms. Popkin had a question about the mid-20 to 30-year-olds. Are the 25-30 year-olds actually owning homes or do they live with their parents? Ms. Bush responded that college students are counted where they are living at the time of the census (at college – not their parent's homes).

Mike moved onto the housing units' portion of the survey presentation. In terms of total housing units, there was a slight decline at the end of the last century with an upswing in the last ten years. Where housing values are concerned, Doylestown Borough has housing values above the County and similar sized boroughs within the County. Median household income was the next topic. Doylestown Borough is slightly below the County as a whole. Doylestown does have some very expensive homes but there are areas of the Borough where housing values and income are lower.

Nick Forte spoke to the income slide. He asked about Heritage Towers, a high rise with 250 units. Would that skew the data with regard to income? It was agreed that could have an impact on the data provided by the survey. Data regarding employment, work commute times, and the education levels of Borough residents was also presented. Additional data was presented with regard to how Doylestown compares to 5 similarly sized boroughs. Mr. Bell spoke to one tagline on the slides. "A well-educated borough" was very helpful to understand what was being presented on that slide. Can similar taglines be generated to summarize key takeaways from each slide? The BCPC said moving forward, they will provide summaries that are the most meaningful to the community.

**SURVEY RESULTS** were presented by Lynn from the BCPC. She did the analysis of the survey results. Ms. Margolis would like further definition of the term “stakeholder.” It was explained stakeholders are people who live or work in the Borough or who own a business in the Borough.

Mr. Bell spoke to whether there were adverse factors with regard to the fixed choices or was that free text input (smell, congestion, etc.). The BCPC responded there were fixed options with a space for additional comments. Ms. Bush questioned whether the consistent light blue line in the bar graphs representing “no answer/skip” should be interpreted a specific way? The survey allowed people to skip any question they wanted and can cause different data sets for each question. This could indicate the respondent didn’t have an opinion or possible survey-fatigue in later questions.

The Bucks County Planning Commission would like to categorize comments left on the survey. Mr. Lannon would like to have just the data set with no comments. Mr. Perea and Ms. Mahaley think it is important to see what people commented on. Mr. Ehlinger suggested it be put into the appendix and does not know how much value is in the comments. Ms. Margolis suggested a word cloud to summarize comment content. Mr. Forte believes the people who went to the trouble to leave a comment should be heard. Whether the exact data and answers are made available to the public is one thing but by necessity all that data should be given to Borough Council. Mr. Bell made a few observations. There were only 841 responses. He believes the comments are necessary and would like to see them before a decision is made. The data would allow an opportunity to apply analytics down the line. Mr. Bell would like the report to be provided in a machine readable form (not a scanned PDF). The BCPC said it will probably be in an Excel spreadsheet. Mr. Ehlinger stated that the BCPC initially suggested word clouds to summarize comments but removed them from the presentation in response to staff’s concerns regarding how to present them objectively. Mr. Steven Nelson, EAC liaison, thanks the BCPC for the data provided. He also invited the Planning Commission and Borough Council to the next EAC meeting for a presentation on greenhouse gas emission data. He would also like to hear more about the January Comprehensive Planning Meeting.

**NEXT STEPS** Is there enough data to begin workshops or should there be further info found out about their concerns for the future of the borough? Timeline adjustments may be necessary to collect more meta data. Boards and commissions may need to be surveyed for further information. The timeline for the first workshops should be pushed to February meeting.

Ms. Margolis spoke to what conclusions can be drawn from the demographic data. There is some context that needs to be understood with regard to renters vs. homeowners, age demographics and the income category. Looking at those insights can give a little more information about folks who aren’t accurately represented in the survey.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2023 but we could push that meeting to February. BCPC sees a value in keeping the January meeting scheduled. We should continue to work through data and making progress.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Perea, second by Ms. Bu, the Commission adjourned at 8:57 pm in honor of Libby White.

Respectfully submitted,  
Erika Fellman