

Public Meeting #2 Report

Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan

Meeting Date/Location: February, 16, 2012 6pm-8:30pm at the South Lebanon Elementary School Large Group Instruction Room

Attendees: 68 signed-in, 75+ in attendance

Meeting Notice:

- 2/9/2012 Legal Ad in the Lebanon Daily News
- 2/13/2012 general ad in the Lebanon Daily News
- meeting flyer distributed to
 - municipalities for posting on municipal websites
 - persons interviewed for the project, and
 - Steering Committee members for further distribution.

PowerPoint presentation by Project Manager, Michelle Brummer, Gannett Fleming, Inc.

After a welcome and an overview of the planning effort to date, including the availability of information on the project website, www.cornwall-lebanonplan.com, Michelle reviewed the issues presented in Public Meeting #1, held June 16, 2011, then turned to the 12 goals and multiple recommendations prepared for the regional comprehensive plan. The presentation is included at the end of this summary. She then asked the audience what, if any, concerns had been missed or if any of the items needed additional consideration.

Summary of Question and Comment Discussion

1. Who is the planning effort for, how is it funded, and how was Gannett Fleming selected?

The Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan is a multi-municipal plan for Cornwall Borough, and North Cornwall, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, and West Cornwall Townships. The municipalities have been discussing their interest in regional planning since 2008. They agreed to work on a regional comprehensive plan. In 2010, they solicited proposals for consultant services for the plan. Gannett Fleming submitted a proposal for \$75,000 in services, was interviewed and was selected for the project. The municipalities applied for a grant from the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan Implementation Fund, established by the County Commissioners, and received \$37,500. They agreed to pay the balance of the contract with municipal contributions based on the regional population distribution.

2. How is the plan coordinated with the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan? The County plan recommended multi-municipal planning regions, specifically school districts, for municipal comprehensive plans and other community planning efforts. The County Planning Department

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offered to facilitate discussions among municipalities, which was how this group of municipalities came together. The Planning Department is represented on the Steering Committee. The assistant director and/or the senior planner attend Committee meetings, and two transportation planners have attended meetings focused on transportation.

3. **Residents of the Mt. Gretna area (residents of Mt. Gretna Borough and South Londonderry and West Cornwall Townships) have been observing the planning process. Some would like to see language in the goals, objectives and recommendations for the protection of forest land, and preservation of the natural and historic qualities of the Mt. Gretna area.** Michelle indicated that she would discuss the concern for greater specificity for protection of these resources with the Steering Committee at its next meeting.
4. **The Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce made a statement supporting regional planning and land use cooperation. The Chamber is reviewing the recommendations and will submit comments to the committee soon. Please summarize how the plan addresses economic development and its relationship to the Chamber, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the Tourism Promotion Agency.** The plan outlines the municipal role for economic development in terms of land use policy, infrastructure, and services. It recommends coordination with the Chamber and the EDC on marketing available business and industry sites and addressing feedback from prospective businesses that choose to locate elsewhere. The plan also recommends that this region begin a heritage tourism strategy. The Lebanon County Heritage Trail, promoted by the Lebanon Valley Conservancy, is just one piece of a heritage tourism package. Municipalities, the Conservancy, and the Tourism Agency should work together on directions for heritage tourism, perhaps beginning in this region.
5. **The Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan stated that there is sufficient, even excess capacity for residential development in the county. Is this true for the Cornwall-Lebanon region? Why are areas for higher density development proposed?** The county plan did make that statement for the county as a whole. Some areas of the county have seen more development approvals than others since that analysis. While there is still capacity for the 10-year population projection and associated residential use/housing in this region, built-out of the current zoning footprint for intensive uses is approaching, as shown on the Developed vs. Zoned map. Some areas of current commercial and higher density zoning cannot be filled in. At the same time, the committee asked us to identify opportunities for new types of development, including traditional neighborhood development, where residences are placed on smaller lots and co-located with small-scale commercial services within a walkable, bikable distance. A few of these developments have been completed in Lancaster and York Counties. Committee members have said that these developments offer a contemporary

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type of housing that is not available in this region. These developments will require regulations that permit higher densities.

6. **A resident requested that soils, specifically agricultural soils, receive more detailed attention in the plan to acknowledge the significant quantity and quality of soils in this region for food production. Soil data should provide the foundation for infrastructure service area decisions, and then support land use and development locations.** Michelle stated that the plan references the county comprehensive plan where soils are detailed and mapped. Prime farmland soils are concentrated between Route 422 and South Mountain, and in portions of North Lebanon Township, interspersed with other productive soils. She added that the Committee has expressed a desire to protect farmland as much as possible.
7. **Land owned by Tenaska for a future natural gas-fired power plant is shown on several maps. Does its appearance in the plan mean it is recommended for development?** There are several properties shown as “Pre-market Development Projects” on the Future Land Use Discussion map and other maps. These are development projects that have been approved (some under construction), are in the plan review process, or have been presented informally and discussed with the municipal officials and staff. The consultant requested this information from the municipalities as a measure of development pressures, namely the quantity and types of development anticipated and proposed in the region. Most of these projects have been approved for construction. A few, like the Tenaska power plant, would require a rezoning. The appearance of these projects in the plan is not a recommendation for them. It is merely meant to capture the fact that this development has been discussed and is possible. The boundary of the Tenaska property was recently expanded on the Plan’s map to accurately portray land ownership. The property occupies a significant portion of North Lebanon Township’s intensive agricultural district, which may be further evaluated.
8. **Has there been outreach to the landowners who would be affected by the identified rezoning recommendations?** To this point, no, there has not been outreach. At least one property owner has attended a few committee meetings and expressed his desire for his land not to be rezoned. The plan will direct municipalities to outreach to affected property owners to evaluate the landowners’ interests prior to taking any action.
9. **Is there interest in this region for establishing a transfer of development rights program?** North Cornwall Township is the only municipality that has asked about a transfer of development rights program.
10. **Can we maintain our rural character without changing the zoning?** Current rural character is not likely in jeopardy in the next 10 years. However, once the areas currently designated for

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development are filled, new opportunities for development will need to be considered to avoid the possibility of legal challenge. Choices will include 1) zone additional rural lands for more intensive development (build out), and 2) zone developed areas for more intensive redevelopment (build infill and build up).

11. Is power supply addressed in the plan? Power outages after storms last year increased damages and prolonged recovery. The availability and reliability of electricity have not been part of the planning discussions.

12. Would redevelopment of the Bethlehem Steel property as apartment buildings along a future passenger rail line solve our growth, transportation and environmental protection problems?

This comment was admittedly offered in both jest and truth. Yes, some residential growth could be accommodated by redevelopment of properties either along the rail line (for future passenger rail service) or in the City of Lebanon and adjacent areas that are readily served by transit. If the City of Lebanon is a partner in a future regional comprehensive plan, a wider array of uses/densities could be planned for and accommodated through the implementing zoning ordinances.

Next Steps and Closing

After discussion, Michelle closed the meeting by outlining the remaining steps of plan preparation and the public review and municipal adoption schedule.

- Spring 2012 – Compile the draft plan from previous meeting handouts and discussions. The Steering Committee will meet April 5th to discuss the draft. (The March 1st meeting was cancelled to provide additional time for committee review.) Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed. Once the committee is satisfied with the draft plan, they will pass the plan to the municipal planning commissions for their review.
- Late Spring/Early Summer 2012
 - Joint Planning Commission Public Meeting, a required meeting with 2 advance meeting notices. The planning commissions will hear public comments, determine if revisions are needed, and once satisfied, will authorize distribution of the draft plan for “public review.”
 - 45-day Public Review period, a required period time for the county, adjacent municipalities, the school district and the general public to review the draft plan. The plan will be available in each municipal building and on the project website.

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- Joint Council/Board of Supervisors Public Hearing, a required hearing with 2 advance meeting notices. The governing bodies will hear public comments on the plan. They will determine if revisions are needed.
- Municipal Adoption - Once satisfied, either at the public hearing or at a subsequent meeting, the governing bodies will adopt the plan by resolution.

For more information,

- Contact your Steering Committee representative
- Contact Michelle Brummer, Project Manager at 800-233-1055 ext 2177 or mbrummer@gfnet.com
- Visit www.cornwall-lebanonplan.com

Michelle thanked the audience for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:15pm.