

Crafton PC minutes: February 25, 2020

Attending: Lydia Herring, Kirsten Compitello (Crafton); Greg Butler (Ingram)

Meeting Minutes:

The joint borough meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm. The committee took roll call and noted that neither Crafton nor Ingram had a quorum. There were no citizen comments.

The Crafton Planning Commission briefly introduced the names of two new members, both recently selected and unable to attend that week.

The joint commission then discussed the Crafton Zoning Ordinance update and RFP. The RFP was released in 2019, received submissions in August 2019, and went through several rounds of selection interviews throughout October 2019 before being put on pause as the Crafton Council went through reorganization. There was also interest, expressed in previous meetings, in trying to collaborate with Ingram on a zoning ordinance that would consider both boroughs together, in reflection of the joint Comprehensive Plan goals. Crafton Planning Commissioners gave a short recap to Greg Butler of Crafton's goals, RFP process, and current thinking. Crafton's goal is to pursue the zoning update soon, but reopen the proposal process to include Ingram if Ingram desired.

Greg Butler conveyed that Ingram Borough is unsure about the cost but interested in exploring the opportunity. All present commissioners discussed what a joint effort would look like: we agreed that the ideal product would be two separate zoning ordinances (per Borough) but a joint overlay within each that provided consistent regulation to govern areas of overlap, specifically in the Crafton-Ingram shopping plaza area.

The commissioners also discussed the cost and schedule impact to the initial RFP. There is reason to believe that DCED grant funding will be more available if Crafton and Ingram pursue collaborative zoning efforts: DCED has been favoring collaboration, and our joint Comprehensive Plan makes continued collaboration appear likely to succeed and thus favorable for grant funding. Crafton Borough Manager was in attendance, and he confirmed that this sounded reasonable. Although we can't be sure to receive a grant, both Boroughs will be better positioned to apply. The Commissions discussed whether funding could be secured in advance: it was believed to be retroactive. Crafton Borough Manager offered to look into DCED grant requirements further.

Greg Butler said he would take the idea to Ingram Council and discuss the budgets that the top two firms had presented to Crafton. It was the group's assumption that the cost for Ingram would be similar, and a collaborative effort to update zoning for both together would allow some overlap in work, which could reduce the overall cost to both Boroughs somewhat. If Ingram Council was interested, then they would review the Crafton RFP and provide any adjustments or amendments to include their interests.

In order for Ingram Council to make a decision, they would need an idea of cost; in order to get an amended cost, the two Boroughs would need to reissue a joint RFP. It was decided that the Crafton Borough Manager would send out preliminary emails to the top two firms to gauge their interest while

Ingram Council reviewed estimated costs and made a decision. Ingram is very interested in having TOD language in their potential zoning update. Greg Butler closed this agenda item by stating that he would review the Crafton RFP from 2019, provide revisions roughly a week later if needed, and discuss with Ingram Council to seek approval to proceed with a revised scope of work to include Crafton and Ingram. Ingram Council was set to meet March 9. Based on the responses from the preliminary emails to the previous applicant firms, the two Boroughs would then determine whether the RFP needed to be reissued.

Following the zoning discussion, Kirsten Compitello gave a brief overview and description of the Ecodistrict Protocol. This is a movement that has been growing in popularity in our region, with notable successes in Etna, Sharpsburg, and Millvale. The Ecodistrict certification is given to areas that commit to collaborative organizational structures and specific targeted goals – with community buy-in – aimed at improving equity, resilience, and environment. It's guided by principles that focus both on sustainability and community organization. The Ecodistrict Protocol was shared as a set of principles worth knowing about and learning from.

The Planning Commission adjourned at 8:30 pm.