

JOINT MEETING MINUTES FOR CRAFTON & INGRAM BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Sept 28, 2021

6:30 PM via Zoom

Crafton Commissioners: Kirsten Compitello (Chairwoman), Richard Kraemer (Secretary), Lydia Herring, Colton Chandler, Eric Valcheff

Ingram Commissioners: Greg Butler, Jim Marsilio, Aaron Cygnarowicz

- I. **Call to order:** announced at 6:34 PM (Kirsten)
- II. **Roll call:** Rich Kraemer was not present. Members present were Kirsten Compitello, Colton Chandler, Lydia Herring (stand-in Secretary for 9/28/21), Eric Valcheff, and Greg Butler
- III. **Citizen comments:** Lydia Morin Congress of Neighboring Communities (CONNECT) Executive Director, Greg Wozniak, Alice Glaser were present; no comments
- IV. **Crafton Borough Planning Commission Updates**
 - a. Zoning:
 - i. DCED MAP Grant funding anticipated to be awarded at the end of October per Planning Commission member (L. Herring) call with Nick Mackereth of DCED on 9/17/2021
 - ii. Zoning benefits content provided to Crafton Borough for inclusion in the fall newsletter
 - b. Parks Master Plan update
 - i. 2nd steering committee meeting held week of 9/20/21
 - ii. Consultant tested out public input ideas on the steering committee
 - iii. Public input meetings will be scheduled in the upcoming months. *MOTION: Recommend that Crafton Borough Council work with Parks Master Plan Consultant, EPD, to hold public input meeting(s) at an outdoor location accessible to all (e.g., Crafton Park amphitheater) with audio visual that allows full participation and a Zoom (or equivalent) component to allow citizens to participate remotely.*
 - c. Conditional Use Permit update: Crafton Borough Council approved the Wolbert Repair Shop conditional use permit and did not follow all PC recommended conditions. Applicant was issued a stop work order for paving prior to issued permits. The Planning Commission has decided that conditional use hearings will not be expedited in the future. It will require applicants to follow rules set forth in the borough code to ensure adequate review time.
 - d. Brick street inventory assembled: Kirsten spoke with Greg Wozniak and took an inventory as to where the brick streets are via GoogleEarth. Once Mt. Lebanon finishes its brick street policy, Crafton hopes to review it and subsequently prepare recommendations to Crafton Borough regarding our brick streets.
 - e. Items from Borough Manager:
 - i. parking study: informal request made to manager regarding costs for a parking study to determine where in the borough might benefit from more well-defined parking (e.g., Union Ave). Public works has the capacity to take on better parking identification near the busway without a parking study.
 - ii. commercial business registry: no updated redacted tax records yet. Planning Commission to create a map with data (once available) via Eric Valcheff's suggested process. The Planning Commission will then request that the commercial business registry map be made available on the Crafton Borough website.

V. Ecodistrict Discussion with CONNECT

- a. CONNECT Executive Director, Lydia Morin (Lydia M.), was present to discuss preliminary ideas around Crafton and Ingram becoming part of an Ecodistrict.
- b. Lydia M. noted that she has worked with Crafton and Ingram on their CONNECT TOD toolkits. Lydia M. to provide a final copy of the toolkits to the current Planning Commissions for reference. From this work, she's interacted with Greg Butler and Doug Sample.
- c. Lydia M. relayed that CONNECT has greenhouse emissions data associated with Crafton and Ingram (both part of Allegheny County) and suggests Community Projects Manager, Eric Raabe, come to a future meeting to discuss climate action and its connection to efforts in creating an Ecodistrict.
- d. Lydia M. was heavily involved in the award-winning tri-boro Ecodistrict Plan including Etna, Millvale, and Sharpsburg. Funding for this tri-boro Ecodistrict included the Henry L Hillman Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and the PA Department of Environmental Protection. In Lydia M. 's experience, funders are much more likely to be interested in funding boroughs that work together and also to those who work on accessibility and environmental justice initiatives. The fact that Crafton and Ingram are hoping to work together with other possible collaborations with Carnegie Borough is a wonderful start. We could borrow a lot from the tri-boro Ecodistrict planning process. Millvale joined the process after Etna. This history might be worth confirming to understand how additional boroughs may be able to be added. Eric suggested reaching out to McKees Rocks to determine if there is a potential for partnership, as well. It was noted that McKees Rocks has a CDC that may be able to be leveraged.
- e. Ben Estell, Manager of Dormont, is a member/leader within CONNECT and is able to share knowledge and processes for forming an Ecodistrict (avoid reinventing the wheel).
- f. Lydia M. relayed that a major reason for the success of the tri-boro Ecodistrict Plan was the involvement of consultant expertise (Christine Mondor - EvolveEA). In addition, Etna's borough council was on board, the initiative won \$2M in funding over 2-3 yrs, there were enthusiastic leaders, the project included a riverfront trail connector project and 2 catalyst developments. Planning funding went to CDCs/non-Borough community organizations (New Sun Rising, Etna Economic Development Corporation, and Sharpsburg Neighborhood Organizations).
- g. It was noted that Crafton and Ingram do not have CDCs or existing community organizations, which may be a potential constraint with private foundation funding. State funding (e.g., PADEP) may still be available to work on an Ecodistrict plan, especially with a Climate Action Plan component.
- h. Lydia M. relayed that CONNECT Climate Action Planning committee meetings would be good to participate in regularly for Crafton and Ingram (Carnegie already attends these regularly). 1-3 people can be designated per borough to participate in CONNECT executive board meetings, as well.
- i. Kirsten Compitello recapped efforts to date for Lydia M.: Crafton and Ingram have disseminated some information to citizens about what an Ecodistrict is, Crafton has held a public workshop on the topic. Kirsten also asked for Lydia M.'s guidance on the next steps and relayed that the Planning Commissions have limited capacity to complete this project alone.
- j. Kirsten asked Lydia M.: Does initiating Ecodistrict progress on our own help better position us to obtain funding? Lydia M. said not necessarily.
- k. Kirsten relayed that Crafton and Ingram are well-positioned to win a DCED MAP grant to revise Zoning ordinances. Lydia M. suggested potentially including some Ecodistrict-adjacent topics in the public input sessions for the Zoning code updates to start "wetting people's appetites".
- l. Eric asked Lydia M. how and what do we do to get a dialogue going; to get councils up to speed and citizens up to speed? What are the top 5 reasons to go for an Ecodistrict? Lydia M. suggested we start by discussing our own vulnerabilities (e.g., flooding, population change, air

quality, lead, sewage backups, energy - high gas bills, food security, mobility, assets around the borough, equity) and how an Ecodistrict plan might alleviate those. Lydia M. tasked us to determine what aspects of the Ecodistrict process our communities would be most responsive to, since all communities are different. The Ecodistrict process allows for communities to choose their own quality of life areas to focus on.

- m. Lydia M. is willing to come back to a future meeting to discuss the Climate Action Plan and how data can be leveraged in funding requests. *PC action:* discuss with Doug Sample and plan to touch base with Lydia Morin in late 2021 or early 2022.
- n. Crafton/Ingram brainstorming document on shared google drive folder still available and able to be edited. This is a good place to start laying out ideas. *PC action:* Add vulnerabilities referenced during the meeting (no major business corridor with tax base supporting boroughs and school districts, Carlynton school district struggling financially, nobody currently sees Crafton and Ingram as a place to invest) and how we could address them, brainstorm catalyst projects, brainstorm what a future Crafton and Ingram could look like.
- o. It was stated that there is a need to move the boroughs forward so that what's here doesn't continue to cost more money to maintain than the boroughs have.

VI. **Ingram Borough Planning Commission Updates:** Pedestrian plan coming to an end. Public input completed. Draft plan underway after a few more steering committee meetings. Some ideas displayed at Ingram Park during ice cream social. Michael Baker is the consultant. Ingram intends to pursue complete streets ordinance as part of the Pedestrian Plan. Crafton expressed interest in seeing the final complete streets ordinance, once completed. Would be a great example to reference for the borough.

Ingram is excited about the upcoming Zoning ordinance revision opportunity.

VII. **Review of August minutes:** Postponed

VIII. **Citizen Comments:** Greg Wozniak stated he's working with Mt Lebanon to provide a copy of its brick street policy for Crafton to reference and thanked Kirsten for working with him a few weeks ago to take preliminary inventory of Crafton's brick streets.

IX. **Adjourn:** 8:20 pm