

# Penn Township Comprehensive Plan Update Meeting

**Purpose:** The Penn Township and HRG representatives met at 9:30 am on July 11, 2023, at the Penn Township Municipal Building, 157 East Airport Road, Butler, PA 16002 to discuss the initial development of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

## Attending:

- Bert Mowry – Penn Township, Supervisor
- Clinton Bonetti – Penn Township, Land Use Administrator
- Doug Roth – Penn Township, Supervisor
- Jason Graham – HRG, Intern
- Laura Ludwig – HRG, Project Manager & Senior Community Planner
- Lori Morgan – HRG, Community Planner
- Sam Ward – Penn Township, Supervisor
- Sommer Schneller – HRG, Planner

## Distribution of minutes:

- Attending
- Andrea Viazanko – HRG GIS Analyst II
- Chad Hanley – HRG, Group Manager, Water & Wastewater
- Christina Sarson – HRG, Land Planner
- James Feath – HRG, Assistant Vice President
- Robert Grimm – HRG, Municipal Consulting & Management Strategist
- Linda Zerfoss – Penn Township, Manager

## Discussion:

- HRG representative, Laura Ludwig, introduced the members of her team.
- The current Penn Township Comprehensive Plan is more than ten years old.
- Penn Township has retained Herbert Rowland & Grubic (HRG) to prepare the Comprehensive Plan Update at a cost of \$68,020 as outlined in the HRG proposal, dated May 8, 2023, the HRG Agreement, dated June 26, 2023, and the HRG PowerPoint presentation, dated July 11, 2023. The Scope of work is as follows:
  - Plan purpose, goals, and objectives: (refer to the HRG proposal, dated May 8, 2023, and PowerPoint, dated July 11, 2023)
    - How to adapt to and plan for development and redevelopment along the Route 8 corridor;
    - How to set the stage for growth and balance growth and development preservation, open space, and parks and recreation;
    - How to plan for additional Township amenities and facilities that help to serve the existing and new residents and businesses;
    - How to create community support and buy-in and leverage partnerships to truly effect change and plan for the future;
    - How to work with area property owners and stakeholders, including the Butler Airport, to best address needs and issues in the community; and
    - How to provide an easy-to-use framework for the implementation of the various goals and strategies outlined in the Plan.
  - Stakeholder and public engagement:
    - A comprehensive plan that is embraced by the community gets enacted by the community.
    - The Comprehensive Plan must be supported by the Township staff, residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders.
    - HRG has included a public kickoff/open house meeting, an online survey, a project webpage on the existing Township website, [www.https://penntownship.org/document-category/land-use-development/](https://penntownship.org/document-category/land-use-development/), visioning and branding exercises at public meetings, social media outreach, and other elements throughout both phases of their scope of work. Linda Zerfoss will coordinate the website additions.
  - Phase I: Visioning, outreach, needs assessment, and strategy development. Getting to know the community and building on the past while thinking ahead to the future.
    - Discovery and Outreach.
    - Vision. and
    - Create a dedicated web page for related information, a schedule of events, meeting minutes, draft documents, Interactive mapping, digital polling capabilities, videos, and social media interaction.
  - Phase II: Plan Development, Capacity Building, and Implementation.
    - Current land use trends and develop a future land use plan.
    - Transportation plan.
    - Environmental and Natural Resources plan, including stormwater management.
    - Housing plan, including Mandel Trails, Concordia, St. Barnabas, and private development.
    - Economic Development strategy, including shopping, employment, entertainment, and fulfilling area businesses' needs.
    - Community facilities and utility plan, including water, sewer, and stormwater (High Meadows and Thornridge development reconstruction).
    - Parks, recreation, trails, and open space amenities, including Harcrest and Renfrew Parks, Audubon Succop Nature Park, and golf courses.
    - Plan implementation table, including tasks, responsible parties, costs, and timeline, and
    - Adoption.
  - Schedule: July 2023 to August 2024.
- Penn Township will forward a list of relative documents to HRG, including the past Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Plans for Butler County, Middlesex, and Forward Townships.
- HRG will coordinate uploading documents to the Penn Township website with Manager, Linda Zerfoss.
- Penn Township is interested in applying for a Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS), Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) grant. Penn Township will request that HRG provides a proposal to help write this grant application.
- Penn Township discussed the guidelines for the comprehensive plan as follows:
  - HRG will request prior authorization to perform additional tasks.
  - Penn Township will maintain the rural integrity of the community, consistent with the Land Use Development Ordinances.

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- Laura Ludwig suggested that Penn Township appoint eight to twelve members to the Comprehensive Plan update committee. These committee members should include residents, property owners, staff, and the Board of Supervisors.
- Penn Township will appoint a Comprehensive Plan Update committee to work with the Supervisors and HRG at the next Board of Supervisor meeting on August 8, 2023.
- Penn Township previously forwarded a list of Penn Township businesses, including contact information, to HRG to facilitate their work.
- Once the Comprehensive Plan is updated, Penn Township will also move forward to update the current Zoning Ordinances that are approximately five years old. Mr. Bonetti has a list of issues that will be addressed in this update.
- Middlesex Township has started its Comprehensive Plan update and will ask Penn Township for our review and comments prior to their adoption. Sam Ward suggests that Penn Township and Middlesex Township share minutes of their meetings during the update processes for their mutual benefit. The HRG involvement in this review may be an additional service if they have not included discussions with Middlesex Township in their scope of work. HRG will advise. Penn Township forwarded a copy of the Middlesex Township email, dated June 28, 2023, including an electronic copy of their initial update.
- The Middlesex Township initial update includes links to provide comments, the Middlesex Township Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan, the Butler County 2017 Comprehensive Plan, the Middlesex Township zoning map, the Route 228 Zoning Overlay, and a completion schedule. Middlesex Township is currently working with Richland Township in Allegheny County.
- Forward Township recently completed its Comprehensive Plan update in November 2022. Clinton Bonetti will forward an electronic copy to HRG for their information. Again, this may be an additional service. HRG will advise.
- HRG participated in the Penn Township 2010 Comprehensive Plan update. The HRG files are labeled 2010 BAMM Plan – Comp Rec Appendix.pdf and 2010 BAMM Plan – Comp Rec Plan.pdf.
- Penn Township asked HRG for a digital copy of their May 8, 2023, proposal and their July 11, 2023, PowerPoint presentation to be forwarded to the Comprehensive Plan committee members.
- Laura Ludwig stated that the Comprehensive Plan draft will be forwarded to neighboring townships, the South Butler School District, the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport, and other parties. Post-meeting note: St. Barnabas and Concordia.
- Doug Roth suggested that a new "Greenspace" be created on the twelve-acre Township Municipal Building property. Approximately six to seven acres of this property could be developed to include walking trails.
- Doug Roth suggested that Penn Township develop a Facebook page and include community events and the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Doug Roth suggested that the community event be held at the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania facility "Picnic in the Park".
- HRG to-do lists:
  - Start working on the Trends report.
  - Set up information on the Penn Township website.
  - Send a welcome email to the committee and meeting time/date pole.
  - Prepare for and schedule the first committee meeting.
  - Send a draft survey to the Penn Township staff and Board of Supervisors.
- Penn Township to-do list:
  - Appoint the committee members and forward contact information to HRG.
  - Determine a neighborhood "Pop Up" event and community organizations outreach.
  - Set a date for the HRG and Penn Township tour and interviews.
  - Send HRG background information and past plans to review.
  - Review the draft survey questions.
- The next meeting will be scheduled in August/September and will be held in the Penn Township Municipal Building meeting room.
- The meeting concluded at 10:35 am.
- Minutes of the meeting will be posted on the Penn Township website, [www.penntownship.org](http://www.penntownship.org) under Documents, Park Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Samuel M. Ward, Supervisor