

October 16, 2008 Stakeholder Workshop

Town of Bloomsburg Comprehensive Plan

Summary

October 16, 2008

6:00pm-8:00pm

Monty's, Bloomsburg University Upper Campus

1. Welcome from Mayor Daniel Knorr

The Mayor opened the workshop with a warm welcome and thanks to the approximately 31 stakeholders who attended. He indicated that participants' opinions and ideas are valid inputs to the planning process. Suggestions are welcome during the workshop or by contacting him directly.

2. The Planning Process – An Overview of the Project to date and Schedule Ahead

The Gannett Fleming project team introduced themselves as planning consultants working with an appointed Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on preparing a new comprehensive plan for the Town Planning Commission's and Township Council's consideration.

Michelle Brummer, project manager for Gannett Fleming, reviewed the planning process in brief, emphasizing that planning is an iterative process of assessing conditions and needs, determining changes (or decision-making), and implementing changes in policy and investment; then allowing time for changes to take effect and assessing again.



She noted examples of planning that the town, the county, state and federal agencies, the University and non-profits have done since the 1950s – including a parking study that will kick-off in November. She introduced Justin Jackson from McTish, Kunkel & Associates, the firm contracted to perform the parking study. This comprehensive plan simply continues the process of planning for the Town's physical development and vitality.

The project was initiated in February 2008 with a PAC kick-off meeting. A first stakeholder workshop was held on April 17, 2008. A public open house is planned for February 19, 2009. The project team expects to present a draft comprehensive plan to the Borough Planning Commission and Borough Council next spring (2009).

3. Stakeholder Workshop 2 – Setting Direction and Goals

The purpose of this workshop was to further discuss the direction and potential goals for the assets, issues and opportunities that have been identified to date. The comprehensive plan must address various aspects of community development – land use, transportation, community facilities and services, etc. – but it should do so in a way that reflects the community's character and needs. Five themes will form the framework for the Town of Bloomsburg's comprehensive plan.

- Bloomsburg as a Place (Location, Physical Design and Infrastructure)
- Living in Bloomsburg (Housing and Neighborhoods)
- Working and Doing Business in Bloomsburg

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- Lifelong Learning in Bloomsburg
- Relaxing in and Visiting Bloomsburg (Social and Cultural Aspects)

Ms. Brummer reviewed the assets, issues and opportunities of each theme. She then asked the attendees to participate in small group discussions by theme for direction and goal setting. After a short break, stakeholders moved to a second theme for additional input and discussion in each of the 5 topic areas.

4. Bloomsburg as a Place

- 1) Issue - Flood hazard
- 2) Opportunity – Redevelopment
- 3) New Issue – Safety from Gang Activity spilling over from Williamsport and Hazleton
- 4) Issues - Traffic and Parking (discussed in Living and will be addressed in Place)

5. Living in Bloomsburg (Housing and Neighborhoods)

- 1) Asset – Safety
- 2) Asset/Issue - Walkability
- 3) Issue - Managing community among different lifestyles
- 4) Comment: Lack of transit
- 5) Comment: Why isn't Bloomsburg a town in which professionals wish to live?
- 6) Asset – Historic District

6. Working and Doing Business in Bloomsburg

- 1) Issue - Labor Pool
- 2) Opportunity with Long Term Impact - Emerging Energy Jobs
- 3) Issue - Flood protection
- 4) Other Issues that affect business
- 5) Assets/Opportunities – Facilities: Airport and University
- 6) Other Opportunities for Stimulating Economic Development

7. Lifelong Learning in Bloomsburg

- 1) Assets (in addition to those listed on the meeting handout)
- 2) Actions, Investments, Initiatives
- 3) Measures of Success

8. Relaxing in and Visiting Bloomsburg (Social and Cultural Aspects)

- 1) Asset – Park
- 2) Asset – Airport
- 3) Asset – Fairgrounds
- 4) Opportunity - Community Calendar
- 5) Other assets

9. Closing

The project team closed the meeting with a summary of the input received in the small group discussions. Those interested in more information about the parking study were asked to leave an email address on the sign-in sheet.