

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
July 18, 2018
Commission Office**

Convened: 10:00 A.M.

Adjourned: 11:45 A.M.

Members in Attendance:

Mr. Jay Cessna
Mrs. Sharon Clapper
Hon. S. Paul Crooks
Hon. Barry Dallara
Hon. Bruce Erb
Mr. James Foster
Hon. Josh Lang
Mr. Rick Leese
Hon. Rodney McCray

Hon. Mark Sather
Hon. Jeff Thomas
Hon. Stuart Ulsh
Hon. John Vatavuk
Hon. Gerald Walker
Hon. Scott Walls
Mr. Arthur Wilkin
Hon. Mark Wissinger

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Daniel Bowers
Mr. Brandon Carson
Mrs. Jill Gordon
Mr. George Gvozdich
Mr. Steven K. Howsare

Mrs. Trudy Mitchell
Mrs. Debbi Prosser
Mrs. Deborah Shaffer
Ms Katelynn St. Clair

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Wissinger, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M

MINUTES, May 16, 2018:

A motion was entered by Mrs. Clapper to approve the May 16, 2018 minutes, as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster and was unanimously approved.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

Mr. Daniel Bowers, Director of Finance, presented the Accounts Payables and reported no changes to the information submitted. He also provided a brief overview of the bank summaries indicating that SAP&DC's financial position is the same as normal for this time of year.

A motion was entered by Mr. Wilkin to approve the Accounts Payable report, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCray and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Bowers reported that he is working closely with SAP&DC's new audit firm, Maher Duessel, in preparation for the FY 2018 audit. Preliminary audit work is scheduled to begin in late July, most of the audit work will be done in September and the "wrap up" will be done in early October. Presentation of the audit will take place at the November 21st Finance Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

BUSINESS LENDING SERVICES:

Mrs. Trudy A. Mitchell, Director, Business Lending Services, presented and reviewed the action taken by the Loan Review Committee. The application for Dale W. and Jodi M. Pheasant was approved as presented. The application is now presented to the Board of Directors for concurrence.

Mr. Leese expressed concern with dairy farmers taking on debt due to small dairy farmers being unable to compete because of the issues/obstacles faced by dairy farmers such as the price they receive for their fluid milk and the supply of milk overtaking level of demand. Lengthy discussion was held regarding the problems facing small dairy farmers. Mr. Leese explained that he is not against loans to these farmers and believes that dairy farmers should receive as much assistance as possible, but just wants small dairy farmers to be cautious when borrowing. Mrs. Mitchell stated that she has never lost one cent on loans made to dairy farmers.

A motion was entered by Mr. Cessna to concur with the action taken by the Loan Review Committee, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thomas and was unanimously approved.

FY 2018 APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) INVESTMENT PACKAGE:

Mr. Brandon Carson, Director, Planning and Community Development Division, reported that SAP&DC is required each year to submit its project recommendations for funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Mr. Carson then presented and provided a detailed review of the list of the projects that were developed from requests received by SAP&DC staff.

Mr. Carson explained to members that additional projects may be added and/or removed later by the Board, as requested. He further stated that there is a limited amount of money allotted for projects submitted by all seven of Pennsylvania's Local Development Districts (LDDS); therefore, all projects may not be funded.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Walker to approve the projects recommended for Appalachian Regional Commission FY 2018 funding, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster and was unanimously approved.

REGIONAL GREENWAYS MINI-GRANT AWARDS:

Mr. Carson explained that the Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program is funded through the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The program is administered by SAP&DC and is intended to provide funding for projects that support implementation of the overall goals related to conservation, recreation, alternative transportation and economic development. The program started in 2013 and is now on the fourth round. This year the mini-grant guidelines informed applicants that, unlike previous rounds, priority would be placed on projects that support the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in addition to the Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan.

Nine project applications for funding were received; these were then reviewed by the Planning Division staff in conjunction with the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on Monday, July 16, 2018 to score and rank the projects. A total of \$95,000 was available this year for project funding. Mr. Carson then had Ms Katelynn St. Clair, SAP&DC Community Development Planner, who will serve as the mini-grants project manager, to present and review the top three projects being recommended for award.

Ms St. Clair then gave a detailed overview of the top three applications and answered questions regarding each of the projects.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Dallara to approve awarding the projects for Regional Greenways Mini-Grant funding, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Clapper and was unanimously approved.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROJECTS:

SAP&DC is designated by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (under E.O. 12372) to review requests for Federal financial assistance within its six-county service area for concurrence with relevant regional planning documents. Mr. Carson briefly reviewed those projects requesting federal financial assistance, as presented, and stated that all are consistent with the Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Commissioner McCray expressed concern with the requests from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation under the Chesapeake Bay Grants Programs. His concern was regarding whether this funding had an impact on the Southern Alleghenies Region. Commissioner Thomas explained that this funding was utilized in various ways to assist counties in the region specifically providing financial assistance to local dairy farmers.

A motion was entered by Mr. Cessna to approve the Projects Under Executive Order 12372, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vataavuk and was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Steven Howsare, SAP&DC Executive Director, reminded members of the decision to establish an Angel Fund in Pennsylvania within the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) targeted counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset, Fayette, Greene and Westmoreland. The Allegheny Catalyst fund is now seeking investors and offering two membership options: 1) individual, family trusts, LLC, etc. which requires a minimum commitment of \$20,000 (1 individual unit with 1 vote per individual unit purchased) and 2) Institutions (Corporations, Financial Institutions, Foundations, non-family Trusts, non-family Partnerships) which require a minimum commitment of \$60,000 (3 units with 1 vote per 3 units purchased). The private funders have more votes per unit so that the weight given to investments is based on business factors rather than economic development factors. The fund is intended to be in business for ten years with a minimum of \$700,000 and a maximum of \$2 million available.

Currently, 12 commitments have been made for private units (\$240,000) and one Institutional Commitment (\$60,000). Mr. Howsare then requested approval for SAP&DC to purchase an Institutional membership at a cost of \$60,000 (\$20,000 each year for three years). Money for this purchase is available in the Commission's

unrestricted LED account. Utilizing \$60,000 from this account will in no way affect loans which may be made utilizing these funds. By investing, the Commission could realize a return of 300%. If for any reason, the minimum investment of \$700,000 is not met, investors money will be returned.

A motion was entered by Mr. Wilkin to approve SAP&DC purchasing an institutional membership in the Allegheny Catalyst fund, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Erb and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Howsare reported that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) along with other federal agencies will be holding a Regional Economic Diversification Summit (REDS) at the Bottleworks in Johnstown on July 25, 2018. This summit is designed to respond directly to locally identified economic development strategies and priorities.

The purpose of this summit is to assist in finding ways to advance project implementation. This summit will provide a forum where EDA and its federal partners can directly engage with representatives from local counties, municipalities, etc. that have completed economic development strategic plans, identified economic growth objectives and related project priorities, but lack the necessary resources to commence with project implementation. The hope is that this will assist in bridging the gap between planning and implementation. Fifteen federal agencies are expected to be represented at the summit. Mr. Howsare encouraged those whose schedules permit to attend.

Commissioner Wissinger began a discussion on Governor Wolf's unfunded mandate requiring all counties to upgrade their election equipment by the end of next year. This mandate was instituted because most current election machines are totally electronic; and, that became a point of concern in the 2016 elections. The new election equipment will produce a paper trail making election results easier to verify.

However, the cost to the counties is going to be exorbitant. Commissioner Wissinger inquired as to whether members were interested in exploring the possibility of purchasing new election equipment on a regional basis. Mr. Howsare introduced Mrs. Jill Gordon, SAP&DC Fiscal Tech, whom formerly had the position of Chief of Elections in Bedford County. He had asked Mrs. Gordon to begin researching the types and cost of new

election equipment and the potential for bulk purchasing cost savings. Mrs. Gordon stated that currently information on new election equipment is minimal, but she is willing to continue to research this and the potential for purchasing machines in bulk to realize a cost savings to member counties. Discussion was held regarding the variety of equipment utilized by each of the counties and the cost and other issues that the counties will face in upgrading their election equipment.

It was decided to have Mrs. Gordon continue to research the purchase of new election equipment in bulk for the six-county region and to report back at a later meeting once she has results.

The next meeting of SAP&DC Board of Directors will be held Wednesday, September 19, 2018 beginning at 10:00 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerald Walker

Secretary