

Meeting Minutes

Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee

Friday, December 1, 2023

The Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee was called to order by Chairman Matt Price at 9:30 A.M. The meeting was in the Huntingdon Borough Municipal Building-Borough Council Chambers, 530 Washington Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

Attending:

Judy Scott, Laurie Nearhood, Patrick Reeder, George Conrad, Charles Harper, Matt Price, Jen Bellis, Jayme Reck, Laura White, Alisha Grove, John Turack and Zach Lee

Not in attendance:

Wendy Melius, Debra Clark-Loner, Vince Greenland, Chris Stevens and Brian Wiser

Minutes

Matt Price called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. The first item up for review and action were the meeting minutes from October 27, 2023. Matt asked for a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Judy made the motion and George seconded it. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Matt welcomed guests John Turack (Penn State Extension) and Patrick Reeder (Huntingdon County Commissioner-elect and Huntingdon County Planning Commission member).

The next item up for discussion is the ATC's mission, structure and operating procedures. With the Active Transportation Plan being adopted, and Laurie being hired as Planning Director for the Planning Department, the following questions arose: (1) What role(s) should the committee play in its implementation; (2) Should the ATC adopt a new structure for reorganization in January 2024; and (3) What role should the Huntingdon County Planning Department play in supporting/advancing the committee's initiatives? Matt mentioned that he feels it is the ATC's responsibility to research and advocate for active transportation projects. For example, he's spent some time researching PUC orders and PUC law concerning Route 33. He also added that the ATC is still in the time period to get the Plan adopted as part of the County Comprehensive Plan. The public comment period has ended, and Laurie will be contacting the Commissioners about a date for the public hearing and their role in that process.

Laurie stated she wasn't clear about the structure of the ATC because any information she found from when the committee was first created focused on the creation of the Plan.

There were questions within the Planning Department as to if the Department will act as the mediator between the committee and the Commissioners, or is the committee going to have sub-committees and committee members named to do specific jobs. As Matt mentioned before, he sees the committee acting in an advisory role to the Commissioners and townships and advocating for active transportation projects.

Laurie feels if a Circuit Rider could be obtained (it's been discussed in the past) then there would be someone who could act as a mediator with the Commissioners, but it's unknown when that could occur. Matt asked Zach if he had any information on the Circuit Rider Program. Zach said it's a 5-year program, with DCNR providing 100% of the funding the first year, 75% in year two, 50% in year three and so on. So, it eventually becomes more of a responsibility of the county to provide funding to sustain the program. It would then be the ATC's responsibility to figure out how the County would pay for it beyond year 1. George asked what a Circuit Rider position does. Basically, the person in that position acts as a project manager. DCNR will help localities by hiring a Circuit Rider to work on capacity building and coordination of recreation and active transportation efforts. This person is based within the county, but can assist different entities in the area. Several ways that can be managed is that the Circuit Rider can be an employee within the Planning Department or with a stand-alone authority, such as a trail authority. Matt mentioned in terms of capacity building, some examples could be building volunteer capacity or needing maintenance equipment to maintain trails, AmeriCorps has a program called Vista, which is used for capacity building. An AmeriCorps Vista person could work on lifeways projects while a Circuit Rider could work on the bigger recreation projects.

Jen feels the Circuit Rider position is a good idea as far as finding grants, resources and working solely on the Plan, but that it's something to revisit down the road. In the meantime, the ATC needs to structure themselves so that they'd be able to communicate and work together with a Circuit Rider. Jen also said, as far as the politics of it all, they (Jen and Jayme) give their time to do minutes and meeting prep, but they're paid entirely by CDBG grants, meaning they have to justify their time. So, they're basically doing ATC duties as a donation of time. So, she suggested creating a Secretary position within the ATC to take over some of that. Not that they (Jen and Jayme) don't want to be involved, but it does create a conflict as to how they're paid with what they're doing with their time. Laura mentioned that she was under the understanding that through Zoom it's possible to have AI create a transcript of the meeting and suggested that maybe the ATC would want to look into doing that.

Matt said he feels like everybody is in agreement about the ATC's role and asked how the committee should be structured to make it work. George suggested also figuring out what the committee looks like, how long the term limits are and how do they get new

members moving forward. Laurie asked if there were by-laws, and Matt said there were not. He said that originally, Mark Colussy took a presentation to the Commissioners to form the committee. The current board of Commissioners (about 2 years ago) did the same thing with Jim presenting volunteer forms and reforming the committee with new members. He also mentioned there was never a committee charter or by-laws.

Matt stated it's his hope to take a document from the ATC to the Commissioners next month when the new board takes office stating what the ATC envisions their charge to be and what support they'd like to have from the County. Propose that to the Commissioners and if they adopt it, then move forward if the Commissioners want to appoint new committee members.

Patrick suggested looking at Somerset's (Authority) by-laws and getting our own in place. Matt mentioned he thought Cambria has one as well. Laurie asked if there are any other counties that have an active transportation committee. George mentioned that Mifflin County has one, and John thought Indiana County had one, but best to reach out to Barb to confirm that.

Matt said it would be good to do a re-organizational meeting at the first meeting in January of each year. He suggested getting a structure figured out before the January 2024 meeting. Currently, there's a Chairman and Vice-Chairman, but nothing beyond that.

Matt checked/read links provided by John Turack (these links are included)

Jen also asked who the ATC wants at the meeting representing the Planning Department because it's really difficult for the whole Department to attend. George said he like to have the director at the meetings because of the in-depth knowledge and being able to network with other counties. He also suggested bringing more people on to the committee. Jayme suggested the possibility of having sub-committees that work on promoting the Plan to the townships; one that researches grant/funding sources. The committee is in agreement that there should be a Secretary in addition to a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Laurie asked if the ATC is going to be a stand-alone committee reporting on a quarterly basis to the Planning Department. Jen gave the example of how CDBG staff gave (2) reports to the Planning Commission throughout the year (one in winter and one in summer) about their progress/updates. That could possibly be an avenue for the ATC, and the Planning Department can always write letters of support as well.

Matt asked if in the proposal, the idea of the ATC being a level of review for the Act 13 funding would be something to be included. To review if the applications would be consistent with the Plan. Patrick mentioned that the Planning Commission already review Act 13 applications. Jen gave an overview of how the application and review process works. She suggested asking that a 1/3 of the funding always be designated to active transportation projects. Laurie said the Conservation District gets \$5,000.00 of that funding prior to the \$30,000.00 coming out. She said she'll check on the status of the fund. There will eventually be an end to the County funds. Patrick said it was brought up at CCAP of the funding being extended, and there is also a process if you feel your county needs more funding. Laurie said she knows it's based on the number of gas wells the county has, and that Huntingdon County only has one, so county's that have more would receive more funding.

Matt wanted to give the committee an update on the Route 33 abandonment (Segment 13). He got a copy of the full PUC order and language that was used that it would provide for the abolishment of the existing crossing. The order goes on to determine how the steel-girder bridge is to be removed, backfilled in and where the cost share is for that (shared between PRR, PennDOT and Huntingdon Borough), this was all done when the first version of the "Million Dollar Bridge" was built and extended from Penn Street out to the bridge. All of this took place in the 1940s. The answer is that it looks like that right-of-way has been abandoned. Did it revert back to the municipalities, which was not specified in the orders, or did it go back to the property owners? Matt said there is a process to petition the PUC to re-establish a crossing. The PUC owns anywhere a railroad crosses a roadway. He stated the reasons they gave for closing it are probably still valid. Especially for motor vehicles because there was not adequate clearance, and not an adequate turning radius. In light of that, Matt suggests that the ATC not proceed with Kirby doing a survey until more clarification is received. Laura asked if he knew anything about a timeframe with a PUC petition. Matt stated he does not, and that the information he had didn't list much in terms of a timeframe.

The next item was upcoming funding opportunities. The PennDOT MTF and Local Share Account have passed. Laurie mentioned she is researching information about Arise Grant funding. Zach stated that he is currently working on one for the 9/11 Memorial Trail and that grant funding is usually for bigger, multi-state projects. Matt stated there is also the Trails Capacity Program through American Trails. This was funding that Sam Pearson from the PA Downtown Center mentioned in an email. The DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants (C2P2) will open in January 2024 and close in March 2024. Zach said he will look into any deadlines for the DCNR Land Conservation, Acquisition and Stewardship grant funding.

Laurie stated that she will contact the Commissioners as to setting up a public hearing for the Plan to be adopted to the County Comp Plan. Matt said he would be there to discuss the plan and has a presentation that can be shown as well. Matt said he would not be available on December 14, but that December 15 could potentially work for him.

Matt stated that he'll look at this meeting's minutes and get a proposal together based on what was discussed for the Commissioners to review. It was agreed that Laurie should reach out to Somerset, Bedford and Cambria's Authority's and ask about their structure and funding sources.

Next Meeting

Friday, January 5, 2024 at 9:30 A.M. in the Huntingdon Borough Municipal Building-Borough Council Chambers, 530 Washington Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Reck
Assistant Community Development Administrator

<https://americorps.gov/partner>
<https://www.blm.gov/careers/students-and-grads/civilian-climate-corps>

Zack Lee, SAP&DC 9:55 AM

https://apps.dcnr.pa.gov/grants/Help/opportunities_peer.htm

John David Turack 10:04 AM

Circuit Rider

These projects provide grant funds for county or regional organizations to hire a professional, full-time staff person. The circuit rider's purpose is to initiate new programs

and services for a county and/or municipalities that individually do not have the financial

resources to hire a professional staff person. The intended result of such a hiring is to

increase the ability of county and local officials to more efficiently and effectively meet

their recreation, park, greenways, open space and/or natural resource and community conservation needs. Examples of eligible Circuit Rider projects include:

- The first full-time professional recreation director to expand recreation program offerings for a multi-municipal agency or county.
- An established recreation and park department serving one municipality hires a recreation program coordinator to provide contracted recreation services to two or more neighboring municipalities.
- A county greenways and open space coordinator is hired to help implement a county greenways and open space network plan

Messages addressed to "Meeting Group Chat" will also appear in the meeting group chat in Team Chat

John David Turack 10:05 AM

Circuit Rider Project Special Requirements and Conditions:

- Circuit rider applications are accepted at any time. The application must come from a county, one municipality, a council of governments, an authority or an official agency created under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law. In most situations, the Bureau will require a peer review under our Peer grants before approving an application for circuit rider funding.

- To be eligible for circuit rider funding, two or more municipalities must cooperate

in a new intergovernmental effort by adopting an intergovernmental agreement. A single county can be eligible without an intergovernmental agreement providing the county is undertaking or has completed the appropriate recreation and/or greenways planning and will be providing services countywide to their residents and municipalities.

- This is a four-year commitment of funding.

Eligible project costs include the circuit rider's salary only, as well as, Bureau-approved technical assistance and training expenses as follows:

- o First year up to one hundred percent (100%) of gross salary.
- o Second year up to seventy-five percent (75%) of gross salary.
- o Third year up to fifty percent (50%) of gross salary.
- o Fourth year up to twenty-five percent (25%) of gross salary.
- o Training Expenses up to \$2,000 available for Bureau-approved training expenses over the four years of funding.

o Mentoring Expenses up to \$1,500 for a Bureau-approved mentor to assist a new circuit rider.

- Participating parties must provide local funds to cover the circuit rider's employee

benefits for all four years, the balance of the salary in years two, three and four, and normal support services, such as office space and furnishings, training and travel expenses, clerical support, equipment, etc.

- In year five and beyond, the Bureau expects the local effort to continue on its own.

https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1753342&DocName=DCNR_002448.pdf
Ready-To-Go Checklist

This Checklist is to be used by the applicant to ensure the Partnerships Project is "Ready-To-Go".

The items below need to be addressed, included and/or uploaded in the application.

It will be used

by DCNR in the grant application evaluation process. If you have questions regarding this Checklist,

please contact the DCNR Regional Advisor assigned to the region in which your project is located.

John David Turack 10:10 AM

Question from John -- Does DCNR's representative have examples of how the local match is typically raised for this program? i.e. How the costs are typically allocated to any various local partners and how they each raise the funds for their portion?

DCNR Regional advisors --

https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1753442&DocName=d_001184.pdf

<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/multimodal-transportation-fund/>

John David Turack 10:15 AM

<https://dced.pa.gov/programs-funding/commonwealth-financing-authority-cfa/>

Keep this one on the radar for next year --

<https://www.psats.org/cfa-accepting-grant-applications-for-multimodal-transportation-fund-2/>

<https://weconservepa.org/blog/penndot-invites-applications-for-multimodal-transportation-funding/>

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/TravelInPA/active-transportation/Pages/default.aspx>

John David Turack 10:23 AM

[https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/Documents/MTF%20Awards/2023-24%20MTF%20Selection%20List%20\(web\)_08.24.2023.pdf](https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/Documents/MTF%20Awards/2023-24%20MTF%20Selection%20List%20(web)_08.24.2023.pdf) This year's awards

<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/local-share-account-lsa-statewide/>

<https://dced.pa.gov/business-assistance/business-financing/local-share-account-lsa/>

I have to move on to another meeting. Let us know if we can be of further

assistance. Great work all in moving the AT plan forward.