



ORPC Oxford Region Planning Committee

Chair: Albert Jezyk Jr. Vice-Chair: Charles Fleischmann Treasurer: Robert Ketcham

June 2023 Meeting Report

Thank you David for hosting the June 2023 Zoom meeting and providing information for this meeting report

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 - 7:00 pm **Venue:** Zoom Video Conference

Voting Representatives: Rachel Greer – East Nottingham Township; Albert Jezyk, Jr. – Elk Township; Joel Brown – Lower Oxford Township; Bob Ketcham – Oxford Borough; Charles Fleischmann, Scott Rugen – Upper Oxford; Bill Winand, David Ross – West Nottingham Township. All six municipalities were represented for the first time in a long time.

Welcome Rachel to the ORPC family. Rachel is the new Codes Enforcement Officer for East Nottingham and the alternate for East Nottingham’s ORPC BOS representative, Joe Herlihy.

- Chair’s Report** *Albert Jezyk, Jr.*
None at this time.
- Treasurer’s Report** *Bob Ketcham*
Balance: \$1,375.40. \$20.00 to OMI for the July First Friday. The ORPC membership voted to allow the Regional EAC to spend up to \$100.00 to participate in First Friday events in 2023.
- Municipal Updates** *Planning Committee*

Oxford Borough Pauline asked Mark to share the following with the group:

DVRPC partnered with Oxford Borough, the Oxford Arts Alliance, and Oxford MainStreet (OMI) to create new safety features on Broad Street between 3rd Street and Railroad Avenue. Come celebrate the opening of the project, engage, and provide feedback at OMI’s First Friday on August 4th, 2023!

The safety features will be visual cues to alert motorists of pedestrian activity when turning from 3rd Street onto Broad Street. Drivers turning onto Broad Street from 3rd Street cannot always see pedestrians, especially if the turn is made too quickly. This pilot aims to showcase



traffic calming features, including asphalt art and vertical road elements, and will be a step towards creating a safer pedestrian network in Oxford Borough.

This project will be an opportunity to collect important traffic data and hear community feedback with minimal cost and use of Borough resources. This data and feedback will help guide the direction for future pilots and recommendations for Oxford Borough's Active Transportation Plan. DVRPC's Expo (Experimental Pop-ups program) offers assistance to communities in the region to test innovative solutions to transportation problems through demonstration, or pop-up projects. If you want to bring a similar pilot project to your community, please contact Cassidy Boulan via email at cboulan@dvrpc.org.

Other Borough News. The current OMI Director (Brian Dix) is leaving at the end of the Summer. The Oxford Arts Alliance has leased the building that formerly housed Outback Apparel co. and will be creating multiple studio spaces. There is a lot of enthusiasm for the redesign and rebirth of Niblock Alley as a destination in the Borough.

West Nottingham (Broadband). At their recent meeting, the Board discussed one of their biggest issues during the pandemic, broadband access. Armstrong Cable completed a 2 ½ year study that identified a cost of \$91,000.00 to provide service to 21 residences and three businesses. However, as Bill Winand mentioned, when the infrastructure is installed, there is no guarantee that the residents or business owners will sign on. Another idea that was discussed involves accessing broadband directly from a tower that is in close proximity to the user. Bill will follow-up with Verizon to inquire about the installation of other towers in the Region. Bill asked Mark to look into grants that may be available to fund broadband improvements.

Charles mentioned a gentleman in Virginia who implemented a private wifi (broadband) system by installing repeaters to extend the range of the broadband signal from existing towers.

Starlink was also identified as a possible answer to unserved or underserved areas of the Region. Starlink is a satellite internet constellation operated by American aerospace company SpaceX, providing coverage to over 60 countries. It also aims for global mobile phone service after 2023. SpaceX started launching Starlink satellites in 2019. Bill was reviewing the Starlink service area map during our discussion and shared that, at this time, the closest service areas include Kennett Square and Pocopson Township.

David mentioned that Carolyn Comitta's office can provide information regarding availability of federal funding for broadband improvements through the state.

Joel shared that Comcast had visited Lower Oxford, East Nottingham, and Oxford Borough requesting a franchise for that area and that they would try to cover more of the unserved and underserved users.

□ Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan Update *Mark*

In lieu of a draft scope of work for the Multimunicipal (MM) Comprehensive Plan update, Mark shared some of the details that he has been working through with his division director Bill Deguffroy. Bill is also the administrator of the Vision Partnership Grant program that will be funding a large portion of the Plan update.

Public Participation – Mark reminded the ORPC that that was very little, if any, public participation during the development of the current Plan. Public participation will be an important part of the Plan update. This will include a public survey, two public open houses, a public information meeting (in accordance with Act 247), ORPC website updates on a regular basis, and grass roots public engagement with attendance at community events and website updates on a monthly basis.

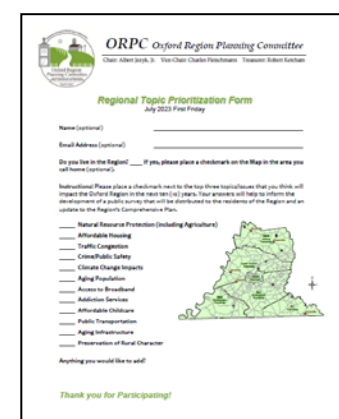
Project Timeline and Costs – In order to allow time for all phases of Plan development, including public participation, the plan schedule will be expanded to 30 – 36 months. The project costs will not be impacted by the extended time period required to accommodate all phases of the Plan development.

Implementable Plan – The Plan Chapters included in the 2012 MM Comprehensive Plan include introductions, inventory, analysis, goals, objectives, and recommendations. Previous discussion has suggested an interest in a more “Implementable” Plan where the chapters focus on goals, objectives, and actions and the inventory is included in a separate appendix. This type of Implementable Plan results in a more focused, user-friendly, and action-oriented final product.

July First Friday – Mark will be sharing a booth with our friends at the Brandywine Conservancy. This will informally begin the public participation for the MM Comp Plan with an opportunity for the public to prioritize topics that are important to the Region. David provided the initial list of topics and we asked the ORPC membership to build on it.

A goal of the event will also be to provide an introduction to the ORPC in the form of a past, present, and future poster/handout.

The final poster and prioritization form that was prepared for the July First Friday are shown to the right. The topic list includes: Natural Resource Protection (including Agriculture), Affordable Housing, Traffic Congestion, Crime/Public Safety, Climate Change Impacts, Aging Population, Access to Broadband, Adulthood



Services, Affordable Childcare, Public Transportation, Aging Infrastructure, Preservation of Rural Character, Recreational Amenities

ORPC Questions/Comments regarding the MM Comp Plan update:

Charles spoke to the importance of including a diverse set of plan recommendations (he called it a toolbox) to meet the needs and priorities of the individual municipalities and regional recommendations that capture the cooperative efforts of the Region.

Scott shared ideas for engaging the plain sect community with a focus on how to share and receive feedback on the public survey. Perhaps handing out surveys at the polls at the upcoming elections in November. This accentuated the point that there will be a need for a volunteer effort to engage the public effectively and that the public survey will need to be efficient in its contents. Perhaps there will be a long version of the survey and a shorter, more digestible version.

David Ross brought up the possibility of sharing the prioritization form or the survey with school-aged children who may take this opportunity home to their parents. What if we shared this with our municipal Planning Commissions and see what the top three answers are in each participating municipality. David shared that he liked to idea of a Plan that focuses on the most implementable (in the next ten years) recommendations while still including reference to all the "tools in the toolbox."

Regional Volunteer EAC Update *David Ross*

The booth at the July First Friday will feature the MM Comp Plan (Mark) as discussed above and Brandywine Conservancy staff will highlight the Native Plant/Pollinator Garden that has been installed in front of the OMI office.

The EAC shared a table with the Elk Creeks Watershed Association at the Oxford Library Fishing Tournament on June 24. A great turnout of anglers! A beautiful setup for public outreach that was interrupted at 10:30 am when the heaven's opened up!

Public Input None.

Website Updates: See for yourself:

<https://chescoplanning.org/municorner/projects/oxfordregion>

Next Meeting: July 26th