

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES ROUNDTABLE CLEARFIELD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SEPTEMBER 13, 2005

ATTENDEES

Jodi Brennan, Director of Clearfield County Planning Office
Meredith Krejny, Planning Specialist of Clearfield County Planning Office
Rita Bass, Clearfield County Planning Commission
Susan Reed, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
Sandy Fink-Barrett, Clearfield County recreation & Tourism Authority
Rex Read, County Commissioner
Cathie Hughes, Clearfield County Historical Society
Floyd & Janet Hauth, Osceola Mills Community Historical Foundation
Hildred E. Rowles, II, Curwensville-Pike Twp. Historical Society
Margy Marshall, Philipsburg Historical Foundation
Richard W. Snyder, Coalport Area Historical Coal Museum
Michael Wennin, Lumber Heritage Region
Jane Elling, Clearfield Heritage Foundation

INTRODUCTIONS

After introducing one another, the question was asked, “who’s missing from this roundtable that should be contacted?” Participants indicated the following should be contacted: Clearfield Fair Manager, McCracken Canoe Rentals, CCC museum, SB Elliot, CAST & the DuBois theatre group.

PURPOSE

County Planning Director Jodi Brennan explained that the input collected at today’s roundtable would be used for the purpose of updating the county’s comprehensive plan. She then briefly explained what a comprehensive plan was and the purpose it serves. She also stressed that they would accept input after the meeting as well and asked for participants to share any data sources or reports that would be useful in the development of this plan. The roundtable participants will be sent the final draft of this comprehensive plan section for final review and comment.

PROCESS

The Director also explained the process in which today’s meeting would be run to obtain this input. The SWOT analysis, a commonly used planning process, would be utilized which simply stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. These items would then be used to develop a list of goals.

After lengthy discussion, participants developed a list of the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and goals. Participants were then given five stickers, which they used to vote for the top five goals they felt were the most important. Participants were allowed to use more than one sticker per goal if they so desired. These “votes” were then used to prioritize the goals.

STRENGTHS

- Hunting & fishing
- Bloody Knox (civil war log cabin)
- Historic buildings open to the public
- Industry-specific (lumber, coal, etc.) heritage
- Access to cultural activities in higher education (PSU-DuBois, LHUP-Clearfield)
- Geneological libraries
- McGee's Mills covered bridge (only one on Susquehanna)
- Community Theatres
- Low cost of living, geographic features attract retirees & their knowledge & talents
- Local artesian, craftspeople
- I-80 (brings in people)
- Number of historical societies
- Having organized planning commission
- Outdoor recreational opportunities (bring people to related historic/cultural sites)
- Itineraries: CCC Route, Elk Scenic Drive, WWII Remembered, WB of Susquehanna Water Trail
- Concerned Citizens
- Work done for Bicentennial (improved signage, education, etc.)
- County's diversity
- New park, canoe launch near Cherry Tree
- West Branch of Susquehanna

WEAKNESSES

- Some parts of county lack interested youth (no one to continue programs)
- Time & money issues lead to fewer volunteers
- Apathy
- "Inferiority complex" (many feel our area can't compete w/ places like St. College)
- Lack of communication
- Lack of awareness of our assets
- Losing our storytellers
- Handicapped accessibility lacking in many places
- Few people know how to "play the game" finding funding difficult
- Brain Drain
- Poor economy, low incomes, unemployment, people lack money to spend on us
- Lack of appreciation for value of the assets of the county (selling ourselves short)
- TV: distracts people from other activities
- Barriers created by bureaucracy
- Grant processes cumbersome (often "not worth it")
- Many organizations don't have 501(c)(3) status

OPPORTUNITIES

- Tap into DCED funding for genealogical libraries
- Develop more opportunities related to covered bridge
- Make more use of hotel tax funds
- Encourage Eagle Scout/ school projects related to history/culture
- Glendale schools create/ host free websites; make more use of this service
- Utilize youth/schools more
- Take advantage of media
- PHMC funding
- PA Humanities Council funding
- Find way to become 501(c)(3) organizations; benefits of being incorporated
- Penn DOT signage (use more) funding programs for signs
- Include local history in school curriculum, field trips, etc.
- Leverage group assets, cooperation
- Lumber Heritage Region funding
- This region has the Governor's attention (money may now be available)
- SB Elliot (gateway to our area)

THREATS

- Economic downturn lead to loss of funding
- Historic places deteriorating, not fireproof
- Artifacts irreplaceable
- Many organizations don't own their office/museum spaces (ownership issues)
- Inter-organization cooperation feared to lead to loss of individual identity
- Undesirable economic development could erode area's value as destination
- Vandalism, burglaries
- Antique vs. historical value of items
- High maintenance costs
- Missing out on funding opportunities by not following through
- Storytellers dying before getting their stories

GOALS (in order of priority as voted on by roundtable participants)

1. a. Identify more funding sources
b. Increase funding
c. Leverage county funding expertise
d. Increase number of grant writers (county employee?) (total votes = 10 votes)
2. Get local history in schools (go to school boards to show them what we have to offer) & word out to public (7 votes)
3. a. Increase communications among historical societies, museums, etc.
b. Communication, collaboration, cooperation, & coordination
c. Promote cooperative effort among historical societies (total votes = 5)

3. County award program – recognize restoration efforts, businesses, citizens involved in historical/cultural activities etc. (5 votes)
3. Countywide grant website (info. on public, private funding sources) (5 votes)
4. Identify signage needs & address this issue (4 votes)

5. Take advantage of regional opportunities (3 votes)
5. Identify & move forward on projects (3 votes)
6. Increase preservation of artifacts, digitizing documents, photos (2 votes)
6. Parking lot at Bloody Knox (2 votes)
6. Encourage asking questions, talking with our elders (great source of history) storytellers- collect info. (2 votes)
7. Identify & develop Native American heritage (1 vote)
7. Plan & exploit media better (1 vote)
8. Use banks & post offices for historical /cultural displays (0 votes)
9. Promote building security / safety (protect assets) (0 votes)
10. Increase attendance at historical/cultural facilities (0 votes)
11. Increase participation in historic/cultural activities (0 votes)
12. Make all county's museums ADA compliant (handicap assessable) (0 votes)
13. Come up with program to attract former residents back to area (0 votes)

Participants were informed that they would receive minutes from this roundtable with the results of the prioritization of goals in the near future. An invitation will follow for a second follow up meeting to develop a plan of action to implement the top 5 goals established at today's roundtable. Participants were encouraged to provide additional goals.