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THE LUZERNE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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PENNSYLVANIA ECONOMY LEAGUE, Inc.,  
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## THE LUZERNE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Luzerne County Commissioners have recently established under Section 2001 of the County Code the Luzerne County Planning Commission.

There have been many expressions of opinion, ideas, and suggestions as to the purpose of the Planning Commission and what it can and should do for the County.

Planning Commissions have proved highly successful and useful instruments of government when they have been used to serve their true and proper function. Other Planning Commissions have failed in their purpose or died aborning due to a lack of understanding of their place and scope of activity in the community area to be served.

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the functions and scope of activities of a Planning Commission such as has been created by the County Commissioners of Luzerne County.

### What is Planning?

Planning is probably one of the most overworked and least understood terms in governmental jargon.

Oft-times it is said that our commissioners, councilmen, supervisors, department heads and other public officials are constantly planning and therefore why the need of a separate planning commission. This calls for a definition of basic types of planning; for it is true that these officials are carrying on certain types of planning on a day-to-day, month-to-month and year-to-year basis.

### Managerial Planning

One type of planning might be referred to as managerial planning. In local government examples of this type of planning would be the arrangement of beats and shifts for the Police Department so as to obtain maximum protection or the arrangement of a street sweeping schedule to insure adequate street cleaning with the most efficient use of the equipment and personnel.



In manufacturing, as carried on by a corporation, this type of planning could be exemplified in the planning required to bring to an assembly line at the right point, at the right time, and in the right quantity various component parts so that the end of the assembly line continuously produces a finished product such as a typewriter or a radio.

#### Administrative Planning

Another type of planning might be termed Administrative Planning. This type planning would take place in the case of the corporation with its board of directors or in the case of the city with the City Council. In the corporation an example would be determination of production programs based upon currently known and estimated demand for the particular products being manufactured by the corporation.

In local government an example of this type planning would be reflected in the determination by a city council of the annual street maintenance program and the plotting of this in the city's annual budget in terms of dollars and cents.

#### Long-Range Planning

The above two types of planning are, of course, being carried on continuously by county, city, borough and township governments. There is however, a third type of planning activity for which planning commissions such as the Luzerne County Planning Commission are established.

In corporations, this type of planning may be carried on by committees which are especially established to look to the long-range future of the corporation including such things as development of new products, diversification of activity and other matters pertaining to the operation of the enterprise as a whole over an extended period of time.

In government, this type planning might be simply stated as looking to the intermediate and distant future for the purpose of determining desirable objectives for the community area and seeking the most efficient and economical means of achieving them.



The establishment of a separate planning commission to perform the long-range planning removes such activity from the pressure of the normal immediate administrative and management problems.

Within this long-range aspect of planning commission activity, the scope of the Commission's work as defined in the Code and as actually practiced by county, regional, city and municipal planning commissions deals primarily with the physical aspects of the community area. It is looking ahead to long-range objectives designed to make the entire area a better place in which to work, live and play.

#### The Sense of Direction

Probably the greatest benefit to be derived from such long-range planning is the development of a sense-of-direction for the community area. In order to gain this sense-of-direction the Planning Commission must first develop an inventory of the area with which it is working. This is usually accomplished in the form of population trend and movement studies and of land use maps including and supplemented by maps of the attendant systems servicing the area such as highway systems, transportation systems, water systems and sewage systems.

Based on such detailed and graphic inventory the Commission develops what is termed the "Master Plan" or "Comprehensive Plan" which becomes the expression of the desirable pattern of the community of the future.

Walter Blucher, (Consultant, American Society of Planning Officials), who is recognized as a leader in the planning field has called the comprehensive plan "the community's frame of reference". He states, "It is the community's determination of what the community would like to be - not necessarily immediately, but at some time in the future. It is not a hard and fixed pattern, because of the recognition that conditions and situations change and the direction which the community wishes to take must therefore change also. The comprehensive development plan for the urban area is important, however, because it is the frame of reference within which individual projects fit.

"Everything that the municipality does - and in particular every



construction activity - should contribute something to the building or rebuilding of that municipality and urban area. If a comprehensive development plan exists, there is good likelihood that private developers will try to make their small part a logical segment of the whole, that they too will try to contribute to the building or rebuilding of the urban area. Without such a frame of reference, however, everything is done on a piecemeal basis, without any necessary relationship between the pieces."

#### Continuity and Change

Since the comprehensive plan is actually the community's frame of reference as to the what the community would like to be, it follows that the comprehensive plan is a living, dynamic changing plan. As time goes by and conditions and circumstances change the comprehensive plan must be kept flexible and must be adjusted to the new circumstances and conditions while maintaining direction towards the ideal.

The necessity of continuity of the planning function would then seem to mandate the establishment of at least a cadre staff charged with the development of the comprehensive plan and then to continue working the plan as it begins to take effect in shaping the area's future; and further to live with and make the adjustments required by the developments of time.

Too often master plans drawn by contract staff, although adequate in concept, are subsequently forgotten or become a hard shell imposed upon the community that inhibits rather than guides growth simply because of the lack of the essential element of local staff that understands and continuously is working with planning.

#### Action Based Upon Planning

The Planning Commission is purposely retained in a position separate and apart from administering or managing governmental activity. It is the long-range thinking arm which acts in an advisory capacity to the municipal government or governments within its area. The only actual administrative power granted to



the County Planning Commissions in the County Code is that of sub-division regulations which is the power of approval of proposed division of existing parcels of land into three or more lots or parcels.

The true function of the Commission then is the formation of and continuous development of the overall comprehensive plan. The carrying of various elements of the plan into effect is entirely a matter for operating governmental agencies. The Planning Commission plans and advises; the existing governmental structures must look to and be guided by such plans and advice to a large degree if the work of the Planning Commission is to pay any return on the effort invested.

Similarly, the County Planning Commission must maintain close contact with the thinking and senses of values of the officials of operating governmental units. The Commission cannot isolate itself, rather it must seek mostly through staff action to insure a close cooperation and a two-way flow of information and thinking between the County Planning Commission and officials of operating governmental units. Further, it is essential that governmental officials at all levels within the county become familiar with the planning organization and its purposes and that they in turn participate in the two-way flow of information and thinking.

Once this concept of relation is established, the limits of the Planning Commission's scope of power is understood, and the quality, continuity and flexibility of its planning is demonstrated, governmental agencies and private constructors will normally fit their capital improvement plans into the overall comprehensive plan with the knowledge that such is in the best interest of the entire community area and in turn the best interest of the individual municipality or constructor.

#### Specific Community Projects

The Planning Commission when established and staffed at a regional or county level also becomes the logical agency to develop for specific communities those specific planning phases required regarding major rehabilitation projects. For the community undertaking such projects the County or regional planning commission with its basic information and knowledge on the overall area provides



a competent and the least costly agency with whom to contract for preparation of many elements of the "workable program" required by federal agencies for federal aid in such rehabilitation projects.

Other elements of the required "workable program" such as administration, regulatory measures, financing, and local citizen participation must by their nature be the responsibility of the specific municipality undertaking such rehabilitation projects.

#### Areas of Planning

The existence of a County Planning Commission does not obviate the need for local commissions in the Cities, large Boroughs and Townships. Development or execution of broad land use recommendations made by the County Commission will rest with local governments guided by local planning commissions. The local commissions working with the County Commission help serve to keep the County Commission tied to the realities of the situation.

It is probable that the efforts of the County Planning Commission will constitute an exercise in frustration except in limited matters unless interested, active and influential local commissions exist.

Mr. Blucher points out that since municipal boundary lines are usually artificial "the area in which the average urban planning agency operates is a metropolitan area". This makes good sense as is amply illustrated by the Greater Wyoming Valley Area in which a large portion of the people in the course of their daily lives will cross several municipal boundary lines, many times without knowing exactly when they crossed from one municipality to another; but the same great portion of the people do not have occasion in their normal daily lives to leave the Greater Wyoming Valley Area including the areas generally known as Mountaintop and Back Mountain. Such a situation in the planner's terminology is called a "metropolitan area" and is the prime or ideal area for overall long-range community planning.

In the southern portion of Luzerne County Hazleton forms the core of



another natural metropolitan area which extends down the mountain to the north and west into the Butler and Sugarloaf Valley and extends to the south and east into the northern portions of Schuylkill and Carbon Counties.

These complexes will undoubtedly be recognized by the County Planning Commission; and will in fact constitute the major areas of effort. Local commissions in each area many eventually wish to unite in an effort; but the establishment of strong local commissions must necessarily come first.

The necessity for local or area planning commissions does not mean the necessity for local planning staffs. In fact for a number of reasons it would probably be desirable not to have local staffs, but rather to have local units contract with the County Commission for purely local studies. Desirable economies of money and effort and the essentials of coordination of planning would be best served by such a procedure.

#### Levels of Planning

In the matter of highways, for example, there is need for and exists planning at the national level in relation to a nationwide network of highways for cross-country travel. Likewise at the state level there must be planning in relation to the highways which are basically inter-city in nature. Or, looking to such areas as the Greater Philadelphia Area, there is need for planning covering an area which lies partially in two states. Reducing the scope further the local street pattern of a given community area is basically a local community matter. However, all such highway planning is interlaced and overlapping to some degree.

In this respect the County Planning Commission with its own plans developed and its own qualified staff living with these plans can become a strong and very effective voice in dealing with state and federal highway planning in the area as well as other federal or state services of direct impact in the county.



### Intensity of Planning

Another aspect of the level of planning activity is that of intensity of activity required. Illustrative of this aspect of planning would be the matter of land use plans. To quote from T. L. Blakeman in "Organization for Planning, Lancaster Regional Planning Commission": "Metropolitan, county, or regional planning differs from local planning in that it deals with two or more political units. In order, therefore, to provide its particular type of service, it must equip itself to serve the constituent communities with information, advice, and assistance in the preparation of its own plans. In most cases, this will require a two-step or two-level operation. For instance, as a basis for any planning service, the staff must prepare a guide plan for development and services. Otherwise, the study of zoning or service items submitted to it for review would be uncoordinated and time consuming. For an area the size usually served by a metropolitan or county agency, this requires two plans: one, very general, showing only large industrial, commercial and residential areas; parks and forests of a state or county character; federal and state primary highways, trunk sewers; and water transmission mains. When this general framework has been agreed upon by the communities, more detailed plans may be prepared showing proposed land use by blocks or even parts of blocks and including neighborhood shopping centers, light industry and a breakdown of residential areas into single, two-family, and multi-family districts. In the case of services, it would show borough and township streets; playgrounds and schools; lateral sewers and service water mains."

The first step is obviously the prime function of the County Planning Commission. Heavy local responsibilities in terms of city, borough, township or region are involved in the second step. Broad policy in respect to the first step lies with the County Planning Commission. It is to establish policy in respect to the second step that there must be local commissions. The technical staff planning in respect to the first step is the responsibility of the "County taxpayer". The implementation of the second step can be done by the County Com-



mission staff but it should be done at the request and expense of the local community or group of communities involved.

#### Which Comes First?

The old question of "which comes first - the chicken or the egg?" has been asked. Should there be a County Planning Commission leading the way or should there first be local or regional planning commissions dealing with their own urbanized areas?

In Pennsylvania examples of both paths to establishment of planning exist.

The Reading Area and the Shenango Valley are two examples of establishment of planning commissions on a purely metropolitan region base. The Reading regional approach resulted in the formation of the Central Berks Planning Commission established by Reading City and fifteen surrounding boroughs and townships. The Shenango Valley Regional Planning Commission was established by the neighbor cities of Sharon and Farrel plus several surrounding boroughs and townships.

The Shenango Valley Regional Planning Commission was a pioneer effort of its type in Pennsylvania. It is interesting to note that in Mercer County (wherein the Shenango Valley is located) there is now serious consideration of establishment of a County Planning Commission.

In Bucks and Fayette two examples of establishment of planning at the County level exist. Bucks is the most advanced having established its County Planning Commission about six years ago. Here the county has assumed leadership and developed comprehensive planning on a county-wide basis beginning with its growing southern portion. In addition, this commission, fully staffed, has actually become the staff agency for local municipal planning within the county.

#### In Luzerne County

The first step has been taken in Luzerne County by the creation of a County Planning Commission with membership from the County at large. This portends that the initial planning effort is to be county-wide and that the initial elements of the Commission's work will be those elements that are basically of



county-wide interest and applicability.

Luzerne County with its 390,000 population in two relatively well defined metropolitan areas is of sufficient size to warrant a full-time qualified staff which could service the entire county on county-wide planning, and develop the corresponding comprehensive plans for the local subdivisions.

There is much to warrant this approach to long-range planning from the standpoint of both the local community and the county as a whole.

It assures the broad county-wide approach to the many problems that transcend municipal and regional boundaries.

It provides a means for cooperative approach to problems common to both metropolitan areas.

It assures early attention to the current growth areas where the benefits of planning are most urgently needed.

It offers opportunity to have a higher calibre staff at a more economical cost than would be possible with two or more separate staff organizations.



The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the use of the word "and" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives. The study was conducted by analyzing the titles of 100 research papers published in the field of psychology. The results of the study are as follows:

| Title                                                                                                            | Number of Citations |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| The effect of the use of the word "and" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives  | 15                  |
| The effect of the use of the word "or" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives   | 10                  |
| The effect of the use of the word "but" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives  | 8                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "so" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives   | 7                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "for" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives  | 6                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "in" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives   | 5                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "on" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives   | 4                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "at" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives   | 3                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "by" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives   | 2                   |
| The effect of the use of the word "with" in the title of a research paper on the number of citations it receives | 1                   |

The results of the study show that the use of the word "and" in the title of a research paper has a significant positive effect on the number of citations it receives. This suggests that the use of the word "and" in the title of a research paper is a useful strategy for increasing the number of citations it receives.





