

Manager Committee Meeting
TCVCOG Offices
June 17, 2015
10:00 am

In attendance: Moe Rayan, Penn Hills; Julie Bastianini; Edgewood; Craig Robinson, Churchill; Annette Dietz, Pitcairn; Clyde Wilhelm, Swissvale; Rebecca Bradley, Wilkins; Connie Rosenbayger, East McKeesport; Amanda Settelmaier, TCVCOG; Liz Kozub, TCVCOG; Yongzhe Zong, TCVCOG intern; Qianyu Mo, Churchill Intern

GIS Data

We now have a GIS data system within the COG and can produce municipal maps. Yongzhe showed us the GIS maps he has already created using data from the county and code violation data for our code enforcement program. Yongzhe can create almost any map for the municipalities that are interested. In order to do so he will need a lot/block number that we can associate with the property. It is really up to the managers and the municipalities to tell us what their mapping needs are.

The managers agreed that tax delinquency data would be a helpful thing to have mapped. They will work on getting us the data, in Excel format preferably but we can accept other formats.

Clyde said that it would be interesting to see the sales data, this is something that can likely come from Allegheny County. Yongzhe can do maps that display data over time. This function is something to consider when trying to track crime, property values, code enforcement etc.

Cable Franchise Proposal

Cohen Law group submitted a proposal to renew the cable franchise agreements for our municipalities. In 2007, 16 municipalities came together to negotiate the agreement with Verizon. The current agreement will expire in 2017 but negotiations can start as early as 36 months prior to the expiration date.

Cohen Law Group is conducting a franchise fee audit in East McKeesport to make sure they are getting the money they should be collecting from penalties and interest. The firm is also suing Verizon in a class action lawsuit under to premise that the correct amount of franchise fee was not remitted to the municipalities. Monroeville and Penn Hills are involved in this law suit. It would be wonderful if all the managers involved in these types of audits and lawsuits would share the results with the group so that everyone has a better understanding of the fees they are entitled to.

There was some concern from the managers that the price in the proposal was too high. The first round the COG paid Cohen Law Group around \$20,000-\$30,000. This time around if the same amount of communities are involved it will cost around \$90,000.

Julie proposed asking the North Hills COG how much they paid for a similar joint agreement.

Dan from Cohen Law Group said that it is more expensive this time because renewals are more complicated than the first agreement. Amanda will forward the email to the managers so they can read his explanation.

Amanda will go back to Cohen Law Group to talk about the price. If the firm is not able to lower the price the managers would like to put out an RFP to see if any other firms are capable of doing the negotiations.

Property Maintenance Appeals Board

Many of the towns expressed interested in forming a property maintenance appeals board through the COG. Amanda reached out to the UCC Construction Board of Appeals that is already in place. Three of the board members said they would serve in both capacities.

Clyde mentioned that there was not a lot of appeals because the qualification to file an appeal are very limited. Swissvale has an application that the person filing the appeal is required to designate the appeal qualification. In the past, they have rejected the filing of the appeals because they do not fit to requirement.

Moe asked if anyone has landlord registration program. Penn Hills recently enacted one and Moe was wondering what fees other communities were charging. Wilkins charges a \$30 annual registration fee per parcel (not unit). East McKeesport charges on a sliding scale for 1-2 unties 3-5 units, the cap is set at \$200.

Connie said that Pittsburgh Capital Management which manages properties for owners living overseas, has gone out of business. They are affiliated with numerous LLC's, including Realty Choice, UERD, Pittsburgh Landmark Corp., and have been the cause of a lot of problems in many of our communities. We need to keep an eye on what happens with that company and their properties.

In terms of the legality of appointing the UCC Board as the International Property Maintenance Board municipalities will likely need to pass an amendment. Municipalities that are interested can amend the ordinance that would allow the UCC board to also hear property maintenance appeals. Those towns that use the UCC board but have their own Property Maintenance Appeals Board, do not have to have to pass the amendment.

The COG will need to think of the fee structure of the appeal.

The managers also talked about the International Fire Code. Clyde said he would be interested in a fire code appeals board. Most municipalities do not yet have the International Fire Code Ordinance passed. Swissvale saw structural fires decrease by 75% since adopting and enforcing

that code. The fire code has more teeth than just preventing fire, it is a very powerful code for life and safety standards.

ARLE Grant Program

Amanda handed out information related to the ARLE grant programs and which projects would be eligible under the grant guidelines. If you are interested please let Amanda know by the end of the month.

Street reconstruction is not an eligible activity but they may consider paving around an intersection. Rebecca asked if bike lanes were an eligible activity. It was unclear but the grant does allow for "pedestrian mobility" which is not defined any further.