

**December Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday | December 9, 2021 | 10:00am
Via Zoom



Municipal Attendees: Deneen Underwood, Carnegie; Ron Borczyk, Ross; Tim Rogers, Shaler; Mark Sampogna, Green Tree; Patty DeMarco, Forest Hills; Jessica Semler, Etna; Darla Cravotta, Allegheny County; Tim McLaughlin, Aspinwall; Shawn Alfonso-Wells, Swissvale; Andrew Flynn, Mt. Lebanon; Krista Koller, Churchill; Ben Estell, Dormont; John Stinner, Jefferson Hills; Mary Ellen Ramage, Etna; Brittany Reno, Sharpsburg; Cindy Bahn, Bellevue

Other Attendees: Breen Masciotra, Jeanne Clark, Alex Graziani, Jim Price, Susan Hockenbery.

GSPIA/CONNECT: Lydia Morin, Kelley Kelley, Brett Stewart, Blair Mickles, Eric Raabe, Sarah Downing

The Zoom room opened at 9:45am for members to casually chat with one another

Introductions, Call to Order, and Agenda Overview by Chair Patricia DeMarco

July 2021 and September 2021 Executive Committee Minutes

- Voted to approve these meeting minutes

Membership Engagement Survey Review and Discussion – Lydia Morin

- If you haven't taken the survey yet, speak your mind during this meeting. Will be going over the results for some context and to give everyone a chance to speak.
- About 25 responses to the Membership Engagement survey. We had 39 responses to the Comms and Tech survey, the comms and tech committee will be getting some marching orders from the capstone presentations. Holding discussion questions to the end.
- [Please find the PowerPoint of the shared results linked here.](#)

Discussion

- **Aspinwall:** Government isn't my daily job, fitting meetings in sometimes becomes a struggle. Noted that at the Friendraiser, talked with others who agreed that fitting in shorter 45-minute meetings was easier.
- **Churchill:** When trying to get electeds engaged, time commitment is an issue. Have we explored message boards to hold minutes, information, etc.?
- **Jefferson Hills:** Regular zoom meetings on a monthly basis are time efficient. Likes the intersecting working groups for the information sharing and resource identification. Used the LEAD subcommittee as an example of resource identification, that

conversation isn't generated without a meeting on "what are the challenges to facilitating this program?"

- Mt. Lebanon: As an elected, I don't know if I have the expertise that staff has. Says we need to ask "who do we need to be engaging to get work done?" We need electeds, and we need staff to make progress, to have practical application. Make sure we have less confusion in subcommittees and in dialogue around "what is being proposed and what is implemented" versus "talking about concepts"
- Swissvale: Reiterates that there is a split between the elected and administrative staff in terms of time commitment. Likes briefer meetings, to get in and get out, it is easier to make time for a lunch hour break. Likes to keep in contact. Proposes that if we have more meetings to keep them shorter, as its easier to get away for meetings that way. CONNECT has helped tremendously as an elected official. Zoom makes a lot of sense for meetings. It is hard to get away to get somewhere unless it's in the evening.
- Bellevue: How many municipalities have an elected official that is appointed as CONNECT's representative?
- Etna: Appointed two elected officials along with myself, that seems to work well. Makes sure that everyone gets agendas and meeting minutes. Makes sure someone is reporting out.
- Jefferson Hills: Going back to the working groups, brings up onboarding newer people to working groups and committees that is in their interest. That was a way for us to onboard people.
- Ross: We assign a delegate; I also participate as much as I can. I try to put resources together so we can have useful dialogue and input, if CONNECT is speaking about a topic that is also being discussed in our community. This model has been helpful, it also helps with time limitations. CONNECT is a good source of concentrated information.

Action items/Summary – Patricia DeMarco

- Focus on Zoom meetings more engaging. Use [Mentimeter](#), other dialogue tools and items. from leadership training. Shorter, more engaging meetings.
- Schedule in person meetings at lunch time, maybe quarterly, to have them planned in advance. This might help with cohesion.
- Maybe only two social functions a year, one in summer and one in fall.
- Staff support and expert groups gives us an opportunity to engage with university and industry working group communities. Very productive way to get resources into our group.

Economic & Environmental Development WG

Recycling/Materials Management - Andrew Flynn, Mt. Lebanon

- Going into the summer, there was a lot of work with materials management. Conversation about understanding what recycling is, what is recyclable, understanding waste management contracts.

- With the Regional CAP, there was recognition that there are synergies between the two. Going into next year, as CAP progresses, work needs to continue especially on understanding the materials stream. It needs to be a regionalized effort. Not sure if we have a grasp on how those steps will be taken, but everyone has been supportive.

Transit & Access - Ben Estell, Dormont

- Focused on following through with TOD work. Worked with Mobilify to come up with TOD guidelines. Link shared in the chat: <https://carnegiemellon.shorthandstories.com/tod-guide/index.html>
- Have also been hearing from Port Authority on their plan for Next Transit. Link shared in the chat: <https://nextransit.network/programs>

Discussion

- CONNECT: Next week we have the dual recycling/CAP meeting. Looking for thoughts on what you want to see come out of this, we are at a spot where we're not sure how to move forward besides it being included in the climate action plan.
- Mt. Lebanon: This is a regional dialogue. How do we get the right people at the table? The issue won't get solved overnight; this will take some thinking.
- Forest Hills: In transportation arena, a considerable amount of focus from the infrastructure & jobs bill that was just signed will be on infrastructure that will be coming through the state DOT and the counties. TOD will be a good thing to have in hand so we can find ways to collaborate on regionally connecting plans.
- Forest Hills: In terms of recycling: With the city considering a ban on plastic bags, that is another opportunity for regional collaboration. The fate of the markets for recycled materials will be the driver of this. The Nationally transitioning issue of plastic. There are two communities in our areas looking at Eco industrial parks, etc. If we could have two capstone groups focusing on this issue (students + industry people) that could be very helpful.
- CONNECT: Bring attention to Dormont. Took the TOD RFP and ran with it, have a new code.
- Dormont: Shared this link: <https://ecode360.com/37592845>
 - Codified version of the link, work with General Codes and they were able to take the graphic intensive code and put it into an online version. They also are still finishing the work with General Code and essentially will have a GIS map purely for zoning. Will pull up all the zoning regulations for a piece of property. Useful for developers.

Action Items: Review minutes and recording of December 13 CAP/Recycling & Materials Management meeting.

Public Safety, Health, & Human Resources WG

LEAD Subcommittee- John Stinner, Jefferson Hills

- Lots of activity in the last 6 month once cohort communities passed resolutions. Local policy coordination groups have started to form. Starting to integrate EMS into the LEAD model in some cohorts.
- Had first county-wide policy coordination meeting. Each cohort offers at least one representative, as well as their stakeholders, including AC Health Department, DHS.
- As far as the future of subcommittee and LEAD, we need to internally discuss. we are starting to see trenches form in how far along each community is with implementing LEAD. We are having new communities onboard regularly. Rather than cohort specific discussions in the subcommittee, if we could expand topics to include more information sharing as well as resource identification, this would meet needs. Build a database of resources, having multi-faceted discussion on issues. New resources are identified every time we have a meeting.
- Local policy coordination groups are forming, as are Community Leadership Teams.
- In October, LEAD National Support Bureau toured every site and provided training to police officers and other relevant personnel. Allowed cohorts the opportunity to talk about challenges to each cohort, and any roadblocks to implementation. Great opportunity to draw on their knowledge.
- The flexibility of the program has helped it be accepted across the county, especially the self-determination (cohorts realize their own challenges and lay out their own cohorts).
- New staff at City of Pittsburgh Office of Community Health & Safety, Camila Alarcon-Chelecki and Malaysia Smith, to collaborate with.

Future of Fire Subcommittee – Brett Stewart, CONNECT

- We had a leadership change. Greg Porter from Etna just agreed to be new chair. Over the last few months, we have worked on the needs assessment study. Based on last year's findings that showed a decline in collaborative capacity between fire departments and municipalities. Keep an eye out for email from Brett or Blair.
- **Action item:** Keep an eye out for email from Brett Stewart and Blair Mickles for interviews regarding the needs assessment survey and how to best support volunteer fire.
- Working on convening a Future of Fire summit. Working with partners such as DCED, ALOM, to make a strong event for the county. Hoping this project goes into a county-

wide focus. January 26 is the next subcommittee meeting. Feel free to email or call Brett Stewart at brettstewart@pitt.edu.

Infrastructure & Utilities Coordination WG

General Updates: Mark Sampogna, Green Tree

- Last spring, I&U held two large meetings based on priorities and how they pertained to the first draft of the CAP plan. In March, we convened on energy issues and heard from utility providers on funding and opportunities to include in our climate action plan. In May, convened on water issues to discuss projects and plans with CONNECT. Decided which pieces to incorporate into CAP draft.
- July – Voted to focus meetings on implementing a final draft. Subcommittee met monthly for rest of 2021. Last meeting of the year is dual subcommittee is dual CAP and Recycling Materials Management on December 13.

Climate Action Planning Subcommittee Updates & Actions : Brittany Reno, Sharpsburg

- Building on efforts of Climate Action planning happening in smaller pilots in our communities and expand the research out for a CONNECT-wide grasp on strategies and looking at data infrastructure. How to improve on tools, find some funding to develop better tools. Eric convening productive meetings with interesting partners at the table and many opportunities to put comments in the draft plan.
- Working with Duquesne Light, they are looking at launching electric vehicle events in 2022, to support municipalities in electrifying fleets and installing that infrastructure throughout their communities.

Update from Jim Price, Sustainable PGH

- Website launching in March. The Sustainable PA program has been enhanced thanks to efforts from Brittany and others. New website with action resources for people working on CAPs. Worked together with Eric and an agreement on sharing this data. we have resource documents on areas of sustainability, such as best practices, local examples, funding resources, federal and state programs, nonprofit programs. It takes effort to build these out. Made sure when designing the system that it is easy to maintain. Whether they are regional or any program, it takes effort to build these resources out.
- Built a database of resources. If any links break, it updates across all the information sharing sites. Keeping funding resources updated is a major part of the work.

Update from Eric Raabe, CONNECT

- Excited to bring this into the CAP plan and into communities. Just posted on the connect website the second draft of the CAP. Link here:
<https://www.connect.pitt.edu/working-groups/infrastructure-utilities-coordination-working-group>

- Highlights of the new draft: Answered comments and replies are on the draft, full plan is reflective of these updates. The plan is shorter, new one pager shows how a lot of actions are connected and how local governments, no matter what step they are at, can apply actions. This links to the full plan.

Action items

- Reengage and reach out to Green Building Alliance to bring them to the table for 2030 compliance conversations.
- Visit <https://www.connect.pitt.edu/working-groups/infrastructure-utilities-coordination-working-group> and become familiar with the CAP one-pager.

Comms & Tech Committee Launch - Tim McLaughlin, Aspinwall

- One of the biggest things we have been working on is how we digitize borough records and how we organize it, categorize it, how it becomes accessible for staff as well as constituents.
- Working with Alan Kugler and Pitt partners regarding the capstone projects. A lot of good suggestions from capstone presentations (link video here).
- From the capstone, overwhelming consensus that this process needs to be bottom up and top down. Not something that can be left to an individual borough. Without any top-down participation from the state and what type of funding is available, it won't get done. Need to commit to a budget and man hours.

Lydia Morin, CONNECT

- We will share the presentation and the report out. Working with Dr. Sabina Deitrick and Alan Kugler and DCED and Local Government Commission are really interested in seeing what happens next. They are the "top" and didn't think the "bottom" cared. Having these people in the room together made everyone realize we need to work together.
- **Action Item:**
 - Hold big Comms & Tech meeting in the beginning of February.

Discussion:

- Aspinwall: Cannot encourage electeds enough – this needs to be part of monthly dialogue in meetings. If website isn't current, it has to start from there. Direct residents to your site. Aspinwall committed to a part time comms director. Residents are talking about communication at every meeting. Would encourage municipalities to start now, in 2023 municipalities to put money into websites. there is going to be a big learning curve.
- Forest Hills: interface with our communities is a challenge when we can't gather in the usual way, it's been a challenge to interface with our residents. It's been an adjustment to get people to interact electronically.

- Aspinwall: Was on our COG call, people asked about distributing the packet before. It shouldn't be an option to mail things. Encourage people to go to the website.
- Forest Hills: mechanisms are reaching out. Mentions Churchill using programs like Swift Reach and Constant Contact. Many programs for proactive outreach.
- Allegheny County: Over last two years with COVID-19 and everything we had to do online, and with elections, my experience is there are still a fair amount of people who don't use internet, don't understand how to use their phones, who can't pay for unlimited data, etc. As much as I agree, we need to be cautious because communication needs to be at a variety of different levels. It needs to be accessible, don't talk "above" anybody. We need to work on rural internet access, general internet access, as a communication mechanism.
- Aspinwall: What my hope is, is that if someone needs a form, right now we go to a file folder. Instead of that process, there are options to print, direct to website, to email.
- Etna: We limit access if we do everything online. we do a lot of social media in the borough, and there are complaints. When I do email blasts, we get thank-yous. The people who are excluded are often the most vulnerable and the ones you want to get the information to.

Closing Reminders:

- Next EC meeting is on the beginning of the Jan. 27th retreat, coffee and lunch provided.
- **Action Item:** Register for the January 27th Executive Committee retreat: https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6hbSmSIC0xJ1xoq
- The retreat is a great onboarding opportunity for new people. Going to go through what roles are, how to engage, what working groups are. We want to make this retreat a time for people to on-board and plug-in, meet peers who can answer questions.

Upcoming Events (Updated 12/16/17)

Click the title links to register for the Zoom meeting and receive the Zoom link.

[CAP Subcommittee](#)

Recurring monthly, Mondays 12:00-1:00pm

Next meeting: January 10, 2022

[LEAD Subcommittee](#)

Recurring monthly, Mondays 2:00-3:00pm

Next Meeting: January 17, 2022

[The Future of Fire Subcommittee](#)

Recurring monthly, Wednesdays 12:30-1:30pm

Next meeting: January 26, 2022

[1st Annual CONNECT Executive Committee Retreat](#)

Thursday, January 27, 2022 | 10:00am-2:00pm

This will serve as our bimonthly Executive Committee meeting

12th Annual Legislative Session & Reception

Thursday, April 21, 2022