

**January Executive Committee Meeting  
Minutes**  
Thursday | January 27, 2022 | 10:00am  
Via Zoom



**Attendees:** Patricia DeMarco, Forest Hills; Phyllis Anderson, Oakmont Borough; Tim McLaughlin, Aspinwall; Abigail Salisbury, Swissvale; Amanda Sloane, Bellevue; Daniel Davis, West Mifflin; Brittany Reno, Sharpsburg; Kelly Robertson, City of Duquesne; Josh Miser, Swissvale; Deneen Underwood, Carnegie; Nick Mackereth, DCED; George Zboyovsky, Brentwood; Andrew Flynn, Mt Lebanon; Lisa Pietrusza, Mt Oliver; Ben Estell, Dormont; Shawn Alfonso-Wells, Swissvale; Darla Cravotta, Allegheny County; Michael Lamb; Doug Sample, Crafton; An Lewis, Steel Rivers COG; Susan Hockenberry; Jeanne Clark, ALCOSAN; Sarah Ishman, Sharpsburg, Krista Watts, Dormont; Mary Ellen Ramage, Etna

**GSPIA/CONNECT:** Lydia Morin, Kelley Kelley, JoEllen Marsh, 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**

**December 2021 Executive Committee Minutes**

- Voted to approve these meeting minutes

**Announce a Nominating Committee**

**Chair Patty DeMarco, Forest Hills**

- Ben Estell is chairing the nominating committee

**Action Item**

- If you are interested in being on the nominating committee, contact Ben Estell ([bestell@boro.dormont.pa.us](mailto:bestell@boro.dormont.pa.us)) or Lydia Morin ([lydiamorin@pitt.edu](mailto:lydiamorin@pitt.edu))

**Announce Communication Visioning Session**

**Tim McLaughlin, Aspinwall**

- Last Executive Committee, we discussed the GSPIA Capstone project and some of what we learned from the capstone (Report and recordings available)
- Looking at the boroughs and municipalities' bandwidths to meet the communications needs asked of them on a daily basis

**Discussion:**

- Looking at the 17<sup>th</sup> of February for this session – Talking about Comms and Tech working group, shared resources to members, discuss CONNECT's communications

### Action Items:

- RSVP for the Comms and Tech visioning session (limited space)
  - [https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_aa9MvwGampvtZ30](https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aa9MvwGampvtZ30)
- Send any thoughts on this poll question shared during the meeting to [sarahdowning@pitt.edu](mailto:sarahdowning@pitt.edu) : How would CONNECT having a social media presence help you?

## 2022 Overview and Welcome New Faces

Lydia Morin, CONNECT

### Discussion:

- Forest Hills: Resolutions are going to be coming from each Working Group, to review at the March 31<sup>st</sup> executive committee before the May session. Also attended a National Energy Technology Lab Stakeholders Pittsburgh meeting, they are looking at funneling the funding from the investment and jobs act and a major phase 2 grant. CONNECT is invited into the planning. Also invited CONNECT to present at their next quarterly meeting. Another major source of the funneling of funds is the Allegheny Conference planning sessions. Will be having a meeting with them in the next few weeks. Watching the flow of federal dollars, be involved in the adoption of technologies. Need to be involved in shaping where the money goes. Community investment needs the engagement of communities.
- Upcoming CONNECT events
  - April 21<sup>st</sup> – Executive Retreat
  - May 19 will be the Legislative Session
  - Having an event for the Allegheny delegation to the state to hear the CONNECT agenda. Inviting state reps and senators, have an opportunity to push some of our biggest asks to our representatives in June.

### Action Items

- RSVP for the April 21<sup>st</sup> CONNECT Executive Committee Retreat here: [https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6hbSmSIC0xJ1xog](https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6hbSmSIC0xJ1xog)
- Mark your calendars for the March 31<sup>st</sup> CONNECT Executive Committee Meeting and the Legislative Session on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

## Municipal Updates Breakouts

**\*Attendees were sorted into breakout rooms with a CONNECT staffer to share updates from their boroughs and/or organizations with each other\***

## Municipal Update Themes (as a large group)

### Group 6:

- EMS issues are critical, developing collaborative capacity possibly a next step in the Future of Fire work.

- Oakmont and Swissvale shared that when CONNECT came to talk to their councils, this helped push the agenda
  - This got climate action into two plans; CONNECT wants to come to your council meetings
- Looking for HR resources for municipalities and how to do performance evaluations; Oakmont just tackled this.

#### **Group 5:**

- Local governments being more transparent. In Swissvale, want to look into transparent open data, sharing police and fire info with their communities.
- Interested in climate action work and possible EV charging stations
- Social media should not be the only way to share this information
- Getting more diverse representation in local government and on councils
- More comfort in getting involved in local gov and community engagement, doing outreach to communities
- Learning how local government works: CONNECT could help residents learn about how local government works for them and have more resources
- Being in CONNECT helps to build partnerships and do more together

#### **Group 4:**

- Mt Lebanon is working on mobility, complete streets, diversity equity and inclusion efforts
- Discussed more diversity on councils
- [Tri COG Land Bank](#) – pilot for sustainable residential building retrofits
- Public hearings for Amazon distribution center
- Website communications
- Swissvale – new borough building project
- Bees and chickens and goats’ ordinances, worm composting in Swissvale. Discussed how to make this available in other areas and working with a startup out of CMU
  - <https://ecotonerenewables.com/>
  - Contact email: dylan@ecotonerenewables.com

#### **Group 3**

- Forest Hills: street policy, interested in echo districts and energy services contracts, solar panels, implementing LEAD program, seeking EV infrastructure grant
- Etna: Community organization around reestablishing library services, hoping to get a grant to acquire building for library in walkable distance
- Sharpsburg: emerging conversations on solar and [riverfront development](#)
- Allegheny County: Electronic vehicles and electronic fleets, working with Duquesne Light Co.
  - Discussed a need for conversations for EV policy: charging requirements and how the spaces are allotted for charging stations

#### **Group 2:**

- Discussion on Facebook comments, how different municipalities handle public engagement, excitement for the Comms and Tech WG
- Mt Lebanon and Brentwood discussed planning, City of Duquesne discussing Facebook
- Turnover during the field in this season, discussing how staff is important

#### **Group 1:**

- Key word from the conversation: recycling
- Working on Carnegie CAP
- Conversation on private sector engagement
- Glass Recycling cooperative in Dormont
- New council members getting involved in CONNECT and their communities
- Resources shared:
  - Article from Ben Estell, first page of the Dormont Fall Newsletter
    - <http://boro.dormont.pa.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Fall-2021-Newsletter.pdf>
  - Local Government Resources from the DCED (technical, financial assistance, etc.)
    - <https://dced.pa.gov/download/gclgs-booklet/?wpdmdl=63983>

#### **Member Action Items for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2022**

Andrew Flynn, Mt. Lebanon

- Important for CONNECT to be visible in communities and gets opportunities to connect with your councils
- Looking to engage, give a summary of CONNECT, how can CONNECT help in your communities?
- Gauge council interest on Working Groups, need councils to engage and looking for ways for them to participate to expand the discussion
- How is connect engaging and communication with constituents, how is Connect creating visibility as an organization and on the issues being raised

#### **Action Items: Get CONNECT on council agendas**

#### **Closing Remarks**

Patricia DeMarco, Forest Hills

- Money coming into the region from passed legislation
- CONNECT is a place to focus grant funding for communities together as we are focused on common problems and solutions
- Working Groups are our tools
- Invite new members to join a working group that aligns with your interests
- Promoting CONNECT to the outer world – elected to the PA municipal league board. Their annual meeting is in Pittsburgh this year and CONNECT will be on the agenda to speak about CONNECT to the statewide leaders