

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

The meeting of the Local Government Commission (Commission) was called to order by Senator Scott Hutchinson at 9:03 a.m. in Room 515 Irvis Office Building with the following Commission Members, staff and guests participating in-person and remotely:

MEMBERS

Senator Scott E. Hutchinson, Chair
Senator Cris Dush
Senator Timothy P. Kearney
Senator Carolyn T. Comitta
Representative Christina D. Sappey
Representative R. Lee James
Representative Dan Moul

STAFF

David A. Greene, Executive Director
Kristopher J. Gazsi, Assistant Director
Martin A. Toth, Associate Legal Counsel
Julia Frey, Research Analyst
Karen S. Bear, Executive Assistant
Sonya I. Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator

GUESTS

Matthew Deegan, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Sam Arnold, Senator Kearney's Office
Emily Eyster, Senator Comitta's Office
Ryan Carpenter, Representative Freeman's Office
Teresa Leitner, Representative James' Office
Mary Yoder, Senate Local Government Committee (R)
Jon Castelli, House Local Government Committee (D)
Lindsay Ewing, House Local Government Committee (R)
Dante Jacobelli, House Democratic Legislative Policy and Research Office
Michelle Tarquino, Office of Governor Josh Shapiro
Terri Wills, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
Eric Jespersen, Pennsylvania State Geospatial Coordinating Board
Ron Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Logan Stover, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Holly Fishel, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
Catherine Gavenonis, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
Donna Gentile, Carbon County Recorder of Deeds
Ian Karbal, Pennsylvania Capital-Star

At 9:03 a.m., the Members resolved themselves into executive session to confer about Commission personnel issues. At 9:45 a.m. the Members returned to public session.

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The Executive Director made a statement that the in-person and virtual meeting was being recorded and conducted with both Member and Commission staff participation. On Wednesday, April 24, 2024, notice of the meeting was posted on the committee meeting pages of the Senate of Pennsylvania and the House of Representatives through the Legislative Data Processing Center. The meeting agenda was posted on the Commission’s website, www.lgc.state.pa.us, on Monday, May 6, 2024, and outside of the Commission’s office located at 506 Irvis Office Building. Any questions on agenda items for consideration by the Commission were addressed during the meeting. After adjournment, the recording of the meeting will be posted on the Commission’s website at www.lgc.state.pa.us.

As a result of the Executive Session, the Members voted unanimously on a motion by Senator Comitta, and a second by Representative Moul, to tender an offer of employment to Rex Burman for the position as Commission Research Analyst at a starting salary of \$45,000 a year with a possible added adjustment following a satisfactory six-month evaluation. The Members also voted unanimously on a motion by Senator Dush, with a second by Senator Kearney, to offer employment to Jonathan Baughman as an additional Research Analyst at a starting salary of \$45,000 with a possible added adjustment following a satisfactory six-month evaluation. Members congratulated Mr. Burman and Mr. Baughman on their new positions.

A draft copy of the Commission’s newest report, *Property Maintenance Code Enforcement*, was provided to the Members for their perusal. The report is a product of the ongoing Statewide Blight Task Force chaired by Senator David Argall. The Task Force has regularly discussed the importance of property maintenance code enforcement as a tool in mitigating and preventing blight. That conversation has included concerns raised by municipalities regarding their ability to adequately address code enforcement, in part due to the Commonwealth’s lack of a statewide property maintenance code or related training program for code officers. Additionally, Task Force members discussed feedback they have received from developers and property owners regarding property maintenance code enforcement and what they felt was overly cumbersome and inconsistent standards and enforcement policies. The Task Force has been very interested in learning how municipalities navigate maintenance code enforcement, since Pennsylvania does not have a statewide property maintenance code or related training program for code officers. Therefore, the Commission was requested by Senator Argall to conduct a study on municipal property maintenance code enforcement. Comparative state research was also conducted on municipal property maintenance code enforcement policies nationwide. Commission Research Analyst Julia Frey, who spearheaded the report, highlighted the findings, and addressed questions posed by the Members. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Members voted unanimously on a motion by Senator Dush and a second by Representative James to authorize the public release of the Commission’s newest report. The publication may be viewed on the Commission’s website, www.lgc.state.pa.us.

Due to the Senate and House session starting times, the remaining items on today’s Commission agenda will be addressed at the June 12 business meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____

May 20, 2024