

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Full Commission | Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2024
4 p.m.
The Terminal
42 21st Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

The one hundred and sixty-ninth meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Pat Fabian.

Members: Brian Allen, Darin Alviano, Tony Amadio, Mike Baker, Brad Berlin, Gil Berry, Kevin Boozel, Scott Bricker, Brian Burick, Tom Ceraso, Rich Cleveland, Mark Critz, Amber Davis, Rachel Duda, Scott Dunn, Jared Edgreen, Pat Fabian, Ed Gainey, Kim Geyer, Adil Ginwala, Sheila Gombita, Mark Gordon, Robin Gorman, Kelly Gray, Bob Griffin, Dan Grzybek, Sherene Hess, Mark Hillard, Sara Innamorato, Charles Jones, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Dan Kennedy, Sean Kertes, Brandon Leach, Bob Lesnick, Bob Macey, Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Betsy McClure, Kristin Mulkerin, Don Myers, Leslie Osche, Joylette Portlock, Johnna Pro, Chris Sainato, Chris Sandvig, Anthony Shea, Nick Sherman, Laura Sohinki; John Strate, John Timney, Vince Vicites, Daniel Vogler, Barb Warwick, and Jason Zang.

Others: Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA; Chuck Kolling, Pam Snyder, Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney; Carrie Delrosso, Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney; Alice Hammond, PennDOT District 10-0; Robbie Matesic, Senator Casey's Office; Terri Dean, EPA Region 3; and Dusty Kirk, Reed Smith LLP

Staff: Bel Ayele, Ozzie Benhart, Dan Bernazzoli, Mary Brangan, Kirk Brethauer, Leann Chaney, Faith Collins, Ronda Craig, Tiffany Cummings, Linda Duffy, Rich Fitzgerald, Lillie Gabreski, Ryan Gordon, Chuck Imbrogno, Jenn Lasser, Jen Liptak, Nick Mannone, Caitlin O'Connor, Jeremy Papay, DJ Ryan, Aaron Sims, Russel Singer, Mason Secreti, Ailisa Sobien, Cathy Tulley, Sara Walfoort and Devon White.

1. Chairman Fabian called to order the August 26, 2024 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.
 - a. Quorum – There being a quorum present the meeting proceeded.
 - b. Any Conflict of Interest Declaration on Action Items – None
2. Action on Minutes of the June 24, 2024 Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the June 24th meeting by Commissioner Strate which was seconded by Commissioner Amadio. The motion was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None.
4. Executive Director's Report – Rich Fitzgerald, Executive Director

Mr. Fitzgerald gave details on the DC Fly-In hosted by the Allegheny Conference.

- The Allegheny Conference is hosting a D.C. Fly-In for elected officials (ex: County Commissioners)
 - Wednesday, September 18
 - 5-7 p.m. Reception at Bullfeathers
 - Thursday, September 19
 - 9-10:30 a.m. Legislative Breakfast with Key Stakeholders at the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center
 - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Legislative and Agency Appointments (with specific sector agencies and congressional offices)

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that Chamber of Commerce is hosting a trip to Harrisburg

- Dinner is taking place on Monday, Oct. 7 at the Hershey Lodge
- Serena Williams and U.S. Senator Marco Rubio are the speakers
- Tickets are \$350 dollars (governmental rate for County Commissioners)
- 3 tables are reserved under SPC
- Make reservation directly through Carly Dubetsky at the Chamber (cdubetsky@pachamber.org, or 717.720.5566). You will pay through Carly

AIRPORT TOUR

- Christina Cassotis, CEO, and her team took us on a tour of the PIT Terminal Modernization Program (new landslide terminal).
- 14,300 indirect and direct jobs resulting from this project.
- Generate approx. \$2.5 billion, with \$1 billion in direct labor income and \$700 million in gross regional product/value for the region.
- Contribute around \$27 million in state and local income tax.

STACK AV-TOUR – Westmoreland County

- Westmoreland County Commissioners Kertes, Chew, and Kopas, along with Rich were invited to tour Stack AV's facility.
- Stack AV is developing AI-powered technology to maximize trucks' uptime, optimize existing infrastructure, improve roadway safety, and minimize emissions (driverless tractor trailers).
- The trucks are programmed to go the speed limit.
- Research/testing is being happening at the Westmoreland Advanced Technology Center.

IRISE LANDSLIDES

- Our Executive Director, along with members of our transportation and comms teams met with IRISE staff members at the University of Pittsburgh.
- IRISE is a program within Pitt's Engineering School and the team is studying innovative solutions that can help the issue of landslides on our region's infrastructure.
- This was a follow-up meeting to one that we had back in the spring.
- We're supportive of the work they do and want to help in ways that we can (specifically, connecting with local township/boro officials).

IUP – DO SCHOOL

- Recently had a meeting on July 9 at IUP
- Met with President Mike Driscoll, Dr. Miko Rose, Dean of the DO School, and Hillary Creely, Assistant Provost of Innovation
- Discussed the ways that this DO school will invest in rural health care and support the region's needs
- Received support from Sen. Pittman (\$2M in state funding), \$IUP Foundation (\$20M), and Tim & Debra Cejka (\$2M from alumni, retired President of ExxonMobil Co. and VP of ExxonMobile Corp.)

5. Transportation Report—Ryan Gordon, Manager of Transportation Initiatives

Mr. Gordon gave a Transportation-Initiatives update.

- **Program Development**
 - 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Plan finalized and submitted
 - STIP Adoption
 - Current TIP administration
- **Operations and Safety**
 - Safe Streets for All Grant, Allegheny County Comprehensive Safety Plan
 - Road Safety Audits
 - Regional Traffic Signal Program, Cycle 4 completed.

- **Transit**
 - Human Services Coordinated Plan Update, anticipate draft in September
 - Freedom Transit in Washington County grant award
- **Transportation Demand Management**
 - Active Transportation Plan update
 - Rideshare Program and TDM promotion

6. Background Report on Transportation Performance Management, System Performance and Reliability Measures—Chuck Imbrogno, Manager of Models and Data Analysis

Mr. Imbrogno gave a report on Transportation Performance Management System.

Process Established in Federal Rules:

State DOTs / MPOs to Cooperatively

- Calculate baseline performance
- Set performance targets
- Monitor / measure progress toward targets
- Report to USDOT
- Revise / update targets on regular schedule

CMAQ Performance Measures:

- Excess Peak Hour Delay Per Capita – (MPO Target)
- Percent Non-SOV Travel – (MPO Target)
- Total Emissions Reduction – (MPO/State Target)

MPO target setting/tracking - even numbered years - Oct 1

Report to PennDOT / USDOT

SPC developing status report on 2023 and 2025 targets

Draft report to PennDOT – Late September

SPC action at October 2024 meeting

7. Strategic Initiatives & Policy Report—Dj Ryan, Director of Strategic Initiatives & Policy

BROADBAND

- Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority Appointment
 - Direct follow-up from our Harrisburg Visit
 - First meeting is September 12th
- Digital Equity Grant – presentation at Policy Committee

CPRG

- CPRG Implementation grants announced
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania application awarded \$396M for Industrial Decarbonization
 - RISE PA Program
 - Projected to remove 5.2M tons of CO2 by 2050
 - SWPA to receive a significant portion of funds
 - Specifics on program forthcoming

Planning process for SPC's CPRG Planning Grant will continue! Public meetings begin late winter.

WRDA

- Successful paddle-through last Friday
- WRDA bill has passed the senate with the following language:
 - to the maximum extent practicable, the lockage levels of service at locks and dams along the Allegheny River should be preserved until after the completion of the study authorized by section 201(a)(55).
- Bill is now in the House with further amendments expected

PA SITES

Governor's Budget awarded \$500M to PA SITES

Thanks to commissioners for their advocacy during our Harrisburg Visit
Initial discussions taking place in the next couple weeks
More information coming soon on this
SPC will work with partners to ensure SWPA gets its fair share of this funding

DC FLY-IN September 18th and 19th in DC

Meetings confirmed with several Members of Congress and agency officials

We need a strong showing from county commissioners! Please consider joining us

HIGHLY encourage you to book travel and hotels ASAP

8. Workforce & Economic Development Report—Jenn Lasser, Director of Workforce & Economic Development

PA RRT MEMBERSHIP

Hgf gtrci gpeigu: EPA (Region 3 Lead); DOE; ED (Education); DOI (OSMRE); USDA; DOL; DOT; HUD; SBA; HHS; ARC; Federal Reserve; EDA; NTIA

Hgf gtrci Grgevf 'Qffleku: Staffs of Senator Casey and Fetterman; Staffs of Congresspersons
Uvcy'Ci gpeigu: Department of Community and Economic Development; Governor Shapiro's Office of Critical Investments; Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

NqecrQti cpk cvqpu'cpf 'Grgevf 'Qffleku: Southwestern PA Commission (Local Development District); SWPA Municipal Project Hub (funded by the Heinz Foundation); County Commissioners; Mayors; Economic Development/Planning Leaders; Non-Profits; Higher Education; United Mine Workers; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; AFL-CIO; Concerned Citizens

Strategic Partnerships

- Southwestern PA Commission
- Southwestern PA Municipal Project Hub

Engagements

- In-person/virtual June listening sessions
- Federal, state, and local representatives
- Elected officials/Economic Development Directors
- Press coverage due to Media Engagement Plan

In-person meetings were held in:

- Fayette County on June 11 with over 35 attendees
- Indiana County on June 12 with over 100 attendees
- Washington County on June 13 with over 30 attendees

Virtual meetings were held in:

- Armstrong County on June 25 with over 40 attendees
- Beaver County on June 26 with over 35 attendees
- Greene County on June 27 with over 30 attendees

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT:

- **Coordinate:** Three Rivers Task Force with DOE
- **Establish:** Schedule of quarterly visits to six counties
- **Host:** Virtual Office Hours and "Opportunities Conference"
- **Create:** Dashboard with metrics from the SPOCs and SWPA Hub
- **Convene:** State Officials Leadership Team (PADEP, PA DCED, Office of the Governor, PA L&I) to coordinate with federal agencies
- **Execute:** Ongoing media engagement plan

- **Evaluate:** Timing for expansion beyond Western counties

PREP SPOTLIGHT

Business Finance

- 3 Loan Applications Received and Approved
 - Mancinis Bread (2)
 - Jadco

Procurement

- 3M in contracts awarded
- 2 Events held

Export

- Fancy Food Show – NYC
-

FANCY FOOD EVENT

- Rena & Jackie – Export (PREP/REN)
- SPCs 3rd year at event
- Held in June 2024 – New York City
- More than 29,000 in attendance
- 2400+ companies
- SPC sponsored 6 businesses to attend
 - My Favorite Sweet Shoppe
 - The Toffee House
 - Two Ugly Muggs
 - Uncle Jammy's Sauces & Seasonings
 - Gosia's Pierogies
 - Bumbleberry Farms

ARC DEVELOPMENT

- Last week closed out round one of FY 25 ARC Area Development
- Faith Collins talked with over 20+ regional projects
- 13 projects overviews/summaries in SPC region submitted to DCED
 - Projects including Local Access Roads, Community Development, Healthcare, Workforce and Economic Development
- Next Steps – DCED Review and Invite to apply for Full Application
- Projects notified of status late September – Early October
- Grant technical assistance is available to all applicants via SPC
- SPC continues to lead the state in applications submitted - 3rd year in a row

USDA VISIT

- SPC hosted USDA in July 2024
- Discussion of regional and rural needs
 - New Program Ideas
 - Attendees Included
 - Cindy Axne, USDA Senior Advisor
 - Bob Morgan, State Director for USDA
 - Gary Reed, USDA Area Director
 - Daniel Blottenberger, Public Affairs
 - SPC Commission Members
 - SPC Staff

9. “Community Chronicles”—Caitlin O’Connor, Director of Public Relations & Communication Initiatives

KAYAK EVENT

- Led by Friends of the Riverfront with Port of Pittsburgh Commission and our organization with support from DCNR, PA Fish & Boat Commission, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

- About 50 attendees. Sen. Lindsay Williams, Rep. Mandy Steele, Armstrong Co Commissioner Pat Fabian. Staff from Sen. Casey, State Rep. Powell, U.S. Reps. Lee and Deluzio.
- Purpose was to demonstrate the potential for economic and recreational development along our rivers AND how important maintaining the lock and dam system is on the Allegheny River.

COUNTY FAIRS

- Rich and members of our team have been attending the county fairs throughout the region
- Had County Commissioners on the KDKA radio show to promote the fairs and other positive events happening across SWPA
- Spotlighting the great recreational opportunities and economic impact that the fairs have on local residents, county, and small business owners

OPEN STREETS – PITTSBURGH

- Members of our Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program attended Open Streets Pittsburgh earlier this summer.
- A free community event that opens miles of City streets for people to walk, run, bike, and explore spaces across the City that would otherwise be used by motor vehicles.
- Engaged with participants and educated them about SPC and our TDM programs.
- It's an annual event that is hosted by BikePGH and sponsored by UPMC Health Plan.

10. Reminder of the next meeting date

Next Meeting Date – October 28, 2024

11. Adjourn – 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy McClure
Secretary-Treasurer