

Alle-Kiski Intergovernmental Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Meeting #6 - February 16th, 2023
New Kensington City Hall

Attendees (*D-Delegate, A-Alternate*)

AK IGC: Ren Steele (D-Allegheny Township), Kristen Sarno (A-East Vandergrift Borough), Barbara Sharp (D-East Vandergrift Borough), Michael Kornis (A-Allegheny Township), Tom Guzzo (D-New Kensington), Melissa Cortilesio (D-Upper Burrell Township), Matt Grantz (D-West Leechburg), Jason Dailey (Lower Burrell), Dennis Scarpiniti (A-New Kensington), George Hawdon (D-Arnold), Marilee Kessler (A-Vandergrift Borough), Jody Sarno (D-Vandergrift Borough), John Andrejczik (D-Lower Burrell)

Westmoreland County Planning: Daniel Carpenter, Victoria Baur

Guests: None **Public:** None

Meeting started at 5:01 PM.

1. Review/approve minutes from Meeting 5

A motion was made by Barbara and seconded by Jody to approve the Meeting 5 minutes. The Meeting 5 minutes were approved.

2. AK IGC Bylaws

a. Formal vote on proposed amendments

A motion was made by Jody and seconded by Melissa to approve the proposed amended bylaws. The motion passed unanimously by formal roll call.

3. AK IGC Blight Inventory and Plan

a. Follow-up on participation and funding

Victoria provided a summary of the blight inventory and plan proposal. She noted that the Local Government Academy (LGA) offered to provide a market analysis component to the project and that the Redevelopment Authority of Westmoreland County (RACW) has offered funds to offset the project costs.

Daniel walked members through LGA's scope of work, explaining that their consultant would use data collected by the Planning Division to perform a market analysis and develop one-page profiles for 3-5 properties for each community. These properties would have specific strategies identified to help redevelop and market them. He said that this work would complement the blight inventory and plan, giving communities a starting point for specific marketable properties. Daniel added that LGA has stipulated some eligibility requirements for communities including adopting a technical assistance resolution and committing at least one local official to participate in LGA's Newly Elected Officials Course and on-going trainings.

Daniel walked members through the project's cost table, noting that LGA is covering the cost of the market portion and that the RACW is committing up to \$25,000 to offset costs for communities by around 50%.

The group discussed the project. John asked when communities need to provide an official answer about participating. Daniel said that answers are needed by March and that agreements could occur in May at the earliest. Jody asked how long the project would take. Daniel and Victoria noted the length of the project would take 1-2 years to complete.

Jody and John asked if all of the costs would need to be paid up front or if they could be broken down over time. Daniel explained that the project costs are typically paid monthly, but that this can be discussed further. The group discussed this and said it would be helpful if the project costs could straddle two budget cycles.

Marilee and Jody asked if the work that the RACW has already completed in Vandergrift, to inventory blighted properties, would impact the project at all. Daniel said that this was discussed with Brian at the RACW previously. He said that the work is not quite the same but that there may still be overlap. Daniel and Victoria noted that they would discuss this with Brian and follow-up with Vandergrift directly.

Barbara asked where the Planning Division would start doing data collection first. Daniel noted that this has not been determined yet, but that the Planning Division may start in the smaller communities. Matt asked if LGA would be doing their work for the market analysis before, during, or after the Planning Division's work. Daniel noted that LGA's analysis would be based on the Planning Division's work so it would be occurring simultaneously and after data collection.

Mike asked what the market piece would look like for the 3-5 properties in each community. Daniel and Victoria explained that these properties would have a one-page market profile developed with specific strategies to redevelop/promote/market them. Daniel noted that council members, supervisors, and identified stakeholders would be able to provide input on these properties and their strategies during the project.

Jason asked if the market strategies would involve engaging with real estate agents. Daniel said that real estate agents, along with business owners and other stakeholders in the communities, could participate in the project's work group. He added that part of LGA's consultant team is made up of real estate agents and people experienced in this field.

Daniel and Victoria noted that this is a very unique project that isn't happening anywhere else in the County. They said that the project would be a big accomplishment for the AK IGC and its member communities, setting an example to others. Daniel added that there is a lot of cost savings with LGA, RACW, and communities working together.

Jody asked if Daniel would be available to answer council member's questions. Daniel said that anyone can reach out to him directly with questions. Victoria said she would follow-up with all of the handouts and information after the meeting. Daniel and Victoria reminded the group that only verbal commitments are needed by the March meeting and that they do not need to adopt a resolutions yet.

4. AK IGC shared code enforcement

a. Sub-committee

b. Draft CEO contact list

Victoria suggested that members form a subcommittee of those most interested in shared code enforcement to advance this effort. She added that the group has discussed this topic and had visitors speak on this topic, but that details for sharing a code enforcement officer (CEO) have not been determined. She asked for someone to take the lead on the subcommittee and that the Planning Division could help provide administrative support to organize meetings, do research, take notes, etc.

Victoria shared a chart from the [AK IGC Shared Services/Joint Purchasing](#) report that was conducted in 2022 that showed which communities were interested in pursuing shared code enforcement. She also provided an example cooperation agreement between the City of Latrobe and Derry Borough for shared code enforcement services, along with a CEO job description. Victoria noted that these items were distributed to give members some resources for getting started.

The group discussed which shared CEO arrangement would work best such as sharing a community's current CEO, hiring a new CEO (being an employee of one of the communities), or working with a third party company. The group indicated that working with a third party company might be the best option, as benefits and insurance are paid by the company.

Tom asked if anyone was interested in joining the subcommittee. Marilee, Kristen, and George said they were interested in participating. Victoria said she would follow-up to get started.

5. Project Management Tracker

a. Discuss priorities and end of year goals

Victoria reminded the group that they were asked to review the online [AK IGC Project Management Tracker](#) before the meeting to revisit the other AK IGC priorities. She asked what other goals members want to have accomplished by the end of the year and how the Planning Division can best support this.

John suggested the group look into jointly purchasing equipment. The group discussed this and agreed that they are interested. Tom asked the group to think of up to 5 items, of any dollar amount, that they are interested in jointly purchasing to discuss at the next meeting.

Jason brought up that he worked with the Butler County Council of Governments when they jointly purchased a crack sealer. He shared that one challenge they ran into was figuring out who would insure the equipment. In this example, one of the member municipalities insured the piece of equipment, but all of the other communities had to be listed on the insurance. John suggested that another challenge would be determining who would store a large piece of equipment.

Victoria brought up that Jason had shared information about the South Hills Area Council of Governments (SHACOG) [Purchasing Alliance Program](#) prior to the meeting. Victoria provided an overview of the SHACOG and noted she had reached out to discuss the purchasing program. She said that the SHACOG contact said they had worked with individual municipalities in the past as far north as Beaver, but that logistics might be a hurdle for working with the AK IGC communities. Victoria said that if there is interest in discussing this opportunity further, the AK IGC could formally reach out.

Jason provided an overview of the SHACOG Purchasing Alliance Program. He said that they do a spring and fall commodity bid and that members enter their information online. He noted that the cost was \$750 to participate, and that this pays for itself when you add up the amount of money a community pays in advertising for bids throughout the year. Jason said communities can purchase things like asphalt, pipe, salt, police vehicles, etc. through the program.

Melissa asked what the difference was between the SHACOG's Purchasing Alliance Program and the COSTARS program. Jason said that the SHACOG program offers a better local vendor pool compared to what is offered through the state program. He said that its an alternative avenue for purchasing items and provides cost and time savings for communities. Marilee asked for Jason to share this information after the meeting. Jason said he would put a summary together and send it to the group.

6. Next AK IGC meeting date: Thursday, March 16th, 2023 @5PM

7. Public comment

None.

Other Discussion

Victoria shared that the Redevelopment Authority of Westmoreland County is having their second annual Blight Remediation Summit on April 21st at the Westmoreland County Community College campus in Youngwood. She encouraged members to register and attend the event to network and learn about the latest tools to address blight.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Barbara and seconded by Melissa to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 6:01 PM