

# HRG

Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc.  
Engineering & Related Services

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MEETING MINUTES  
Franklin Park Borough & Ohio Township  
Joint Comprehensive Plan  
KICKOFF MEETING WITH STAFF & PLANNING COMMISSIONS  
Location: Ohio Township Nature Center  
AUGUST 31, 2021

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Company	Email
Laura Ludwig	HRG	<a href="mailto:lludwig@hrg-inc.com">lludwig@hrg-inc.com</a>
Kirsten Primm (KP)	HRG	<a href="mailto:kprimm@hrg-inc.com">kprimm@hrg-inc.com</a>
Chris Sarson	HRG	<a href="mailto:csarson@hrg-inc.com">csarson@hrg-inc.com</a>
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Stephen Winikoff	Franklin Park Borough PC	<a href="mailto:Swinikoff101@yahoo.com">Swinikoff101@yahoo.com</a>
Bob Briecht	Resident, Franklin Park	<a href="mailto:rbriecht@hotmail.com">rbriecht@hotmail.com</a>

## Introductions of Project Team & Staff / Planning Commission Members Present

Laura Ludwig, KP Primm, and Chris Sarson from HRG introduced themselves and then all Township and Borough staff members and Planning Commission members present introduced themselves as well. There was one member of the public present, Mr. Bob Breicht, from Franklin Park Borough.

## Review Role of Steering Committee

Laura Ludwig from HRG gave a brief overview of what a comprehensive plan is. She stated that the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) recommends that municipal comprehensive plans be updated every 10 years. The Joint Comprehensive Plan will be a guide for policymaking and decision making and will include topics such as housing, economic development, parks and recreation, open space and trails, transportation, environmental, natural, and historical resources, infrastructure, housing, and community facilities. Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have agreed to do a Joint Comprehensive Plan among the two municipalities.

Laura from HRG briefly reviewed the expectation of Steering Committee members. The role of Steering Committee members is to attend meetings as needed. And to act as a sounding board to HRG staff by providing feedback on various deliverables and plan elements and components throughout the planning process. Steering Committee members will provide edits, revisions, ideas, thoughts, and other feedback on the Plan as it evolves.

Another big task of the Steering Committee members is to help spread the word on the Comprehensive Plan and to assist with public engagement – talk to neighbors, friends, etc. and let them know about meetings, online surveys, and other opportunities to chime in and participate in the planning process. HRG will work closely with the Steering Committee and municipal staff will really work together throughout the development of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

## Review and Discuss Scope of Work

HRG staff reviewed the scope of work. The project is broken out into three phases. The first phase involves the Determination of Compatibility. The first phase is unique to the RFP and to this project. The second phase involves Visioning, Outreach, and Needs Assessment. The second phase is when we focus on public outreach and engagement, spread the word about the plan, and really drill down on key areas of focus, needs, issues, etc. The third and final phase involves Plan Development, Capacity Building, and Implementation. The third phase focuses on key projects and goals and implementation. We want the plan to be a useful document that gets used by Township and Borough staff regularly and we don't want it to sit on a shelf!

## Phase One Tasks and Deliverables

HRG staff reviewed the Phase One tasks, which include the following:

- **Preparation of MAP grant for funding** – HRG will submit the grant application, assist with support letters, and coordinate with DCED.
- **Review of Existing Plans and Studies** from both municipalities – The Plan review will include previous comprehensive plans, parks and rec plans, capital improvements plans, strategic plans, or any other relevant information the municipalities would like HRG to review.

- **Land Use and Zoning Review** – HRG will review both the Borough and Township Zoning Maps and analyze land use patterns to find similarities and differences and will review the Zoning Ordinances and SALDOs.
- **Update Existing Plan Information and Data (Trends Report)** – HRG will download and review updated, current data from the US Census, SPC, the PA State Data Center, and PennDOT to prepare a demographic analysis of the Borough and Township. It will include statistics on population, households, housing units, employment, transportation, etc.
- **Analysis of Progress Made** – HRG will look at what goals have been achieved since the last Comprehensive Plan and will also examine reasons why certain goals or projects were not achieved.
- **Recommendation to Proceed** – The recommendation to proceed will be in a memo format and will provide HRG's recommendation to proceed with the actual development of the joint comprehensive plan.

## Project Schedule

HRG staff stated they updated the project schedule from what was originally included in the proposal to reflect a September start date. HRG will begin working on the various Phase One deliverables immediately and we should wrap up with the Phase One work by the end of November. We would look to present the recommendations and Phase One results and deliverables to the Borough Council and Township Board of Supervisors sometime between November and December depending on meeting dates.

John Sullivan noted that the last comprehensive plan was funded as a joint plan that included Franklin Park Borough, Ohio Township, and Sewickley Hills. Joint municipal cooperation and coordination during the production of this plan was limited.

## Next Steps

HRG will begin working on the Phase One items, starting first with the MAP Grant Application, Plan Review, and Zoning Review. HRG staff will reach out to the Borough and Township as needed for information. Any plans or studies that you'd like us to review as part of Phase One, please send them our way either via electronic copy or hard copy.

## Q&A

- How many people should be on the Steering Committee? When do we need to choose the Steering Committee members?
  - Ideally, a good number is between 12-15 people on a project Steering Committee. If a plan involves more than one municipality, sometimes that number can go up to 15-20. It should be a representative group from each municipality, perhaps consisting of some staff members, Planning Commission members, Board/Council members, residents that maybe sit on other boards or commissions like Parks and Rec or an EAC, developers, business owners, etc.

- Assuming this group is HRG's main sounding board through most of Phase One, we'd need to appoint/confirm the official Steering Committee members prior to the start of Phase Two. So, by sometime in November.
- What issues will HRG look at as part of the Land Use and Zoning Review and Plan Review?
  - We'll look at the zoning maps and land uses within each municipality and look at how they could be more consistent moving forward. We'll look at the maybe streamlining how certain issues or key zoning topics are handled like accessory dwelling units, ghost kitchens, tiny homes, wireless communication facilities, outdoor dining, etc.
- What is the time frame for recommendation to proceed?
  - We should have Phase One items and deliverables completed by end of November and would anticipate presenting to Borough Council and the Township Board of Supervisors in mid-to late November or early December, depending on meeting dates.

### Key Issues/Potential Multi-Municipal Initiatives (First Ideas)

- Connectivity – Trails, Walkability, Bike-ability
  - Extensions – not just increasing length of trails but reaching other nearby or neighboring destinations or regional systems; Examples include links to potential trails along Rt. 65 and the Ohio River down in Emsworth or the Commodore Perry Trail in nearby Marshall Township.
  - Franklin Park Borough has been working with Allegheny Land Trust and the Land Trust has been buying property adjacent to the Borough's parks
  - Sidewalk extensions using multi-modal grants or greenways and trails funds
  - Allegheny Greenways program – Loralyn Fabian is contact.
- Stormwater
  - Updated standards for older developed areas / updating outdated infrastructure
  - Catching up with stormwater generated by newer developments
  - Lowries Run to Bear Run is the connection / shared waterways between the two municipalities
  - Look at joint MS4 projects and stream bank restoration projects that can benefit both municipalities
  - Failed and aging infrastructure that has not been maintained, not deeded over to the municipality, has no easements, open swales or ditches between homes, lack of buffer zones
- Zoning
  - New proposed uses that are not accounted for in existing ordinances, i.e. popup events like farmer's markets or community events
- Communications
  - Joint use of cell towers and covering some of the "dead zones"

- Parks and Recreation
  - Coordinating schedules and events
  - There is a regional recreation committee that promotes equipment sharing (movies in the park screen is an example)
  - Look at parks systems jointly – main parks are right down the street from one another
- Public Works/Emergency Services
  - Public Works departments already coordinate and help each other out when needed
  - There is good cooperation between emergency services on covering PennDOT roads, accidents in problems areas like the I-79/I-279 split.
- Transportation
  - I-79 Interchange compatibility
  - Working with the Port Authority – outreach during summer to assess community needs; will need to look at upcoming Port Authority plans for bus rapid transit
  - Port Authority Park and Ride in nearby Ross Township is popular to the point of overflowing
- Impact of Remote Work
  - Zoning/Home Occupations/Home-Based Businesses
- Historic Preservation
  - History of two municipalities is linked
  - Franklin Park Borough just purchased an 1830s log house along Big Sewickley Creek Road; hoping to refurbish to create a small events center; believe there is original log cabin behind the siding; need funds for this project
- Joint Mapping
  - Land Uses / Zoning analysis
  - Helpful to know the municipality boundaries better
- Future Development
  - Western part of Franklin Park is very undeveloped and rural while the eastern part is very built-out
  - Finding balance between growth/development and preservation
  - Types of uses desired that aren't as present currently in each municipality
  - Steep slopes/environmental protection areas/undevelopable areas should be noted and mapped

## Next Meeting

The Next Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm** and will be held at the Franklin Park Activity Center at Blueberry Hill Park. HRG will present findings to date and a comparative SWOT analysis will be conducted at the October meeting.

Also, main contacts for HRG will be LuAnn Barna from Ohio Township and Tim Phillips from Franklin Park Borough.

Regular municipal meeting dates are as follows:

- Ohio Township – Board of Supervisors 1<sup>st</sup> Monday; PC is 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday.
- Franklin Park Borough – Borough Council is 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday; PC is 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday.

LL/KP

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