During the 2020 calendar year, the Planning Commission reviewed and responded to the following items:

1. The Planning Commission noted that it was time for the renewal of New Enterprise Stone & Lime’s NPDES permit #0224499. The 2017 revision of this permit allowed for a change in the amount of water discharged (a 60% increase) and a change in the depth of the mining pit floor (a 75 foot increase). Because of continuing concerns about the negative impact of such changes on the water resources of the Sacony Creek Watershed area, the Planning Commission voted to recommend that the Borough Council submit a letter to the DEP District Mining Office in Pottsville opposing the renewal of this NPDES permit.

2. After reviewing the features of a Multi-Modal Transportation Grant from PennDOT, the Planning Commission was pleased to submit a letter of support for Phase I of the grant. This grant will address some of the items included in the Borough’s Comprehensive Plan which focus on improving the “walkability” of our community for both residents and visitors.

3. Three Planning Commissioners continued participating in the work of the Business District Task Force’s led by the staff of Hailstone Economics. Ms. Shannon Calluori of Hailstone worked directly with the Planning Commission reviewing possible changes to Borough ordinances regulating the number of required parking spaces for businesses, the option of shared non-residential parking spaces, as well as the use of sidewalk cafes and on-street dining.

4. The Planning Commission followed two issues of concern regarding the Sacony Creek area as noted and recorded by the Environmental Advisory Commission Chair, Dr. Todd Underwood. DEP was notified of separate events of heavy sedimentation in the creek and the beginning of bank erosion near the quarry’s discharge pipe.

5. The Planning Commission was informed that AT&T was putting out “feelers” about installing a 5G Small Cell Unit at the intersection of W. Main & S. Whiteoak (C-C zone). The Planning Commission discussed the advantages and disadvantages of such an installation. (This issue continues to be handled by the Community Development Director and is considered a request for a “conditional use”. Borough Council will make the decision when AT&T makes a formal application.)
6. The Planning Commission discussed different issues related to a request by Duke Realty to supply 84,000 gpd of water to a proposed development (trucking hub) eastwardly in Maxatawny Township. Duke Realty’s request was first submitted to the Kutztown Municipal Authority and then sent to the Water/Wastewater Committee. The Planning Commission recommended to the Water/Wastewater Committee and to Borough Council that they both deny Duke Realty’s request due to a concern that supplying such an additional amount of water would overtax the limits of our water resources. (Note: There are currently two additional development projects westwardly in Maxatawny Township that have requested a supply of water from the Borough.)

7. The Planning Commission continues to meet its responsibilities regarding “monitoring wellhead protection issues and maintaining high quality of drinking water” (Borough Comprehensive Plan, 2012) by working together with the Water/Wastewater Committee on water resource issues. At this time, the Water/Wastewater Committee has decided to prepare comprehensive plans for both the Water Department and the Wastewater Department. These new plans may influence the Borough’s decisions about water usage for both the present and the future. And the Borough’s decisions will be taking place within the overall context of competing needs for water, i.e., the continuing new requests to supply water for more customers outside the Borough and the changes in groundwater availability created by the 2017 DEP revised permit for the Kutztown Quarry.

8. The Planning Commission meetings from February through June were cancelled due to the fact that Mrs. Judith Danko, the new Community Development Director, assumed the review of most zoning issues and the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Planning Commission meetings resumed in July via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by the Planning Commission Chairperson,

Lisa Ladd-Kidder

cc: Planning Commissioners
    Todd Underwood
    Judith Danko
    Carolann Moody