

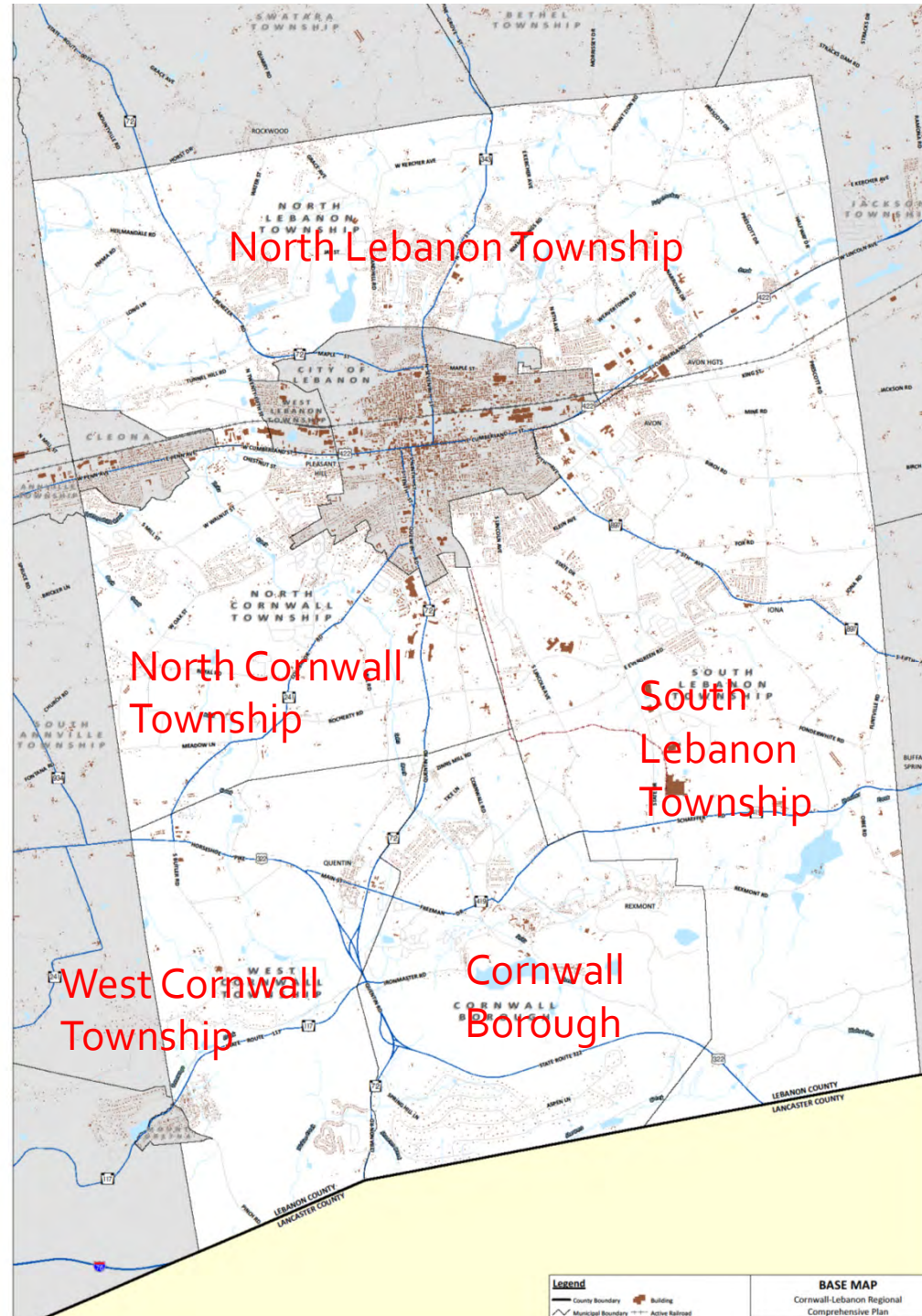
Addressing the So-Called Agenda 21 Conspiracy

Michelle A. Brummer, AICP

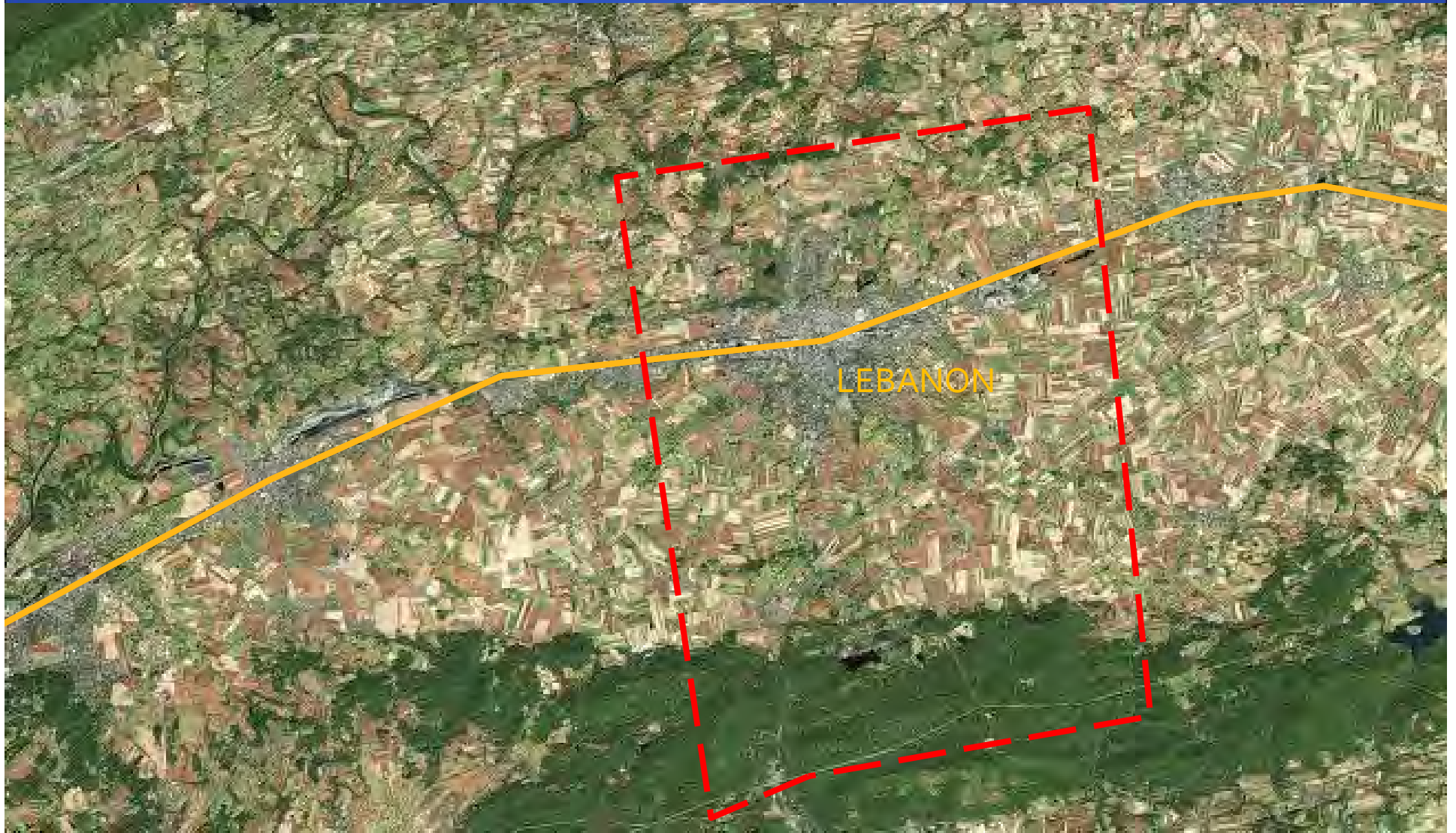
Professor John C. Dernbach

October 19, 2015

5 municipalities of the Cornwall-Lebanon School District



Location along US Route 422



← To Harrisburg

US Route 422

To Reading→

Landscape Characters















The Woods
at



**CORNWALL
MANOR**



For more information
please contact
The Marketing Department
of Cornwall Manor
781-279-2647



An Expansion of
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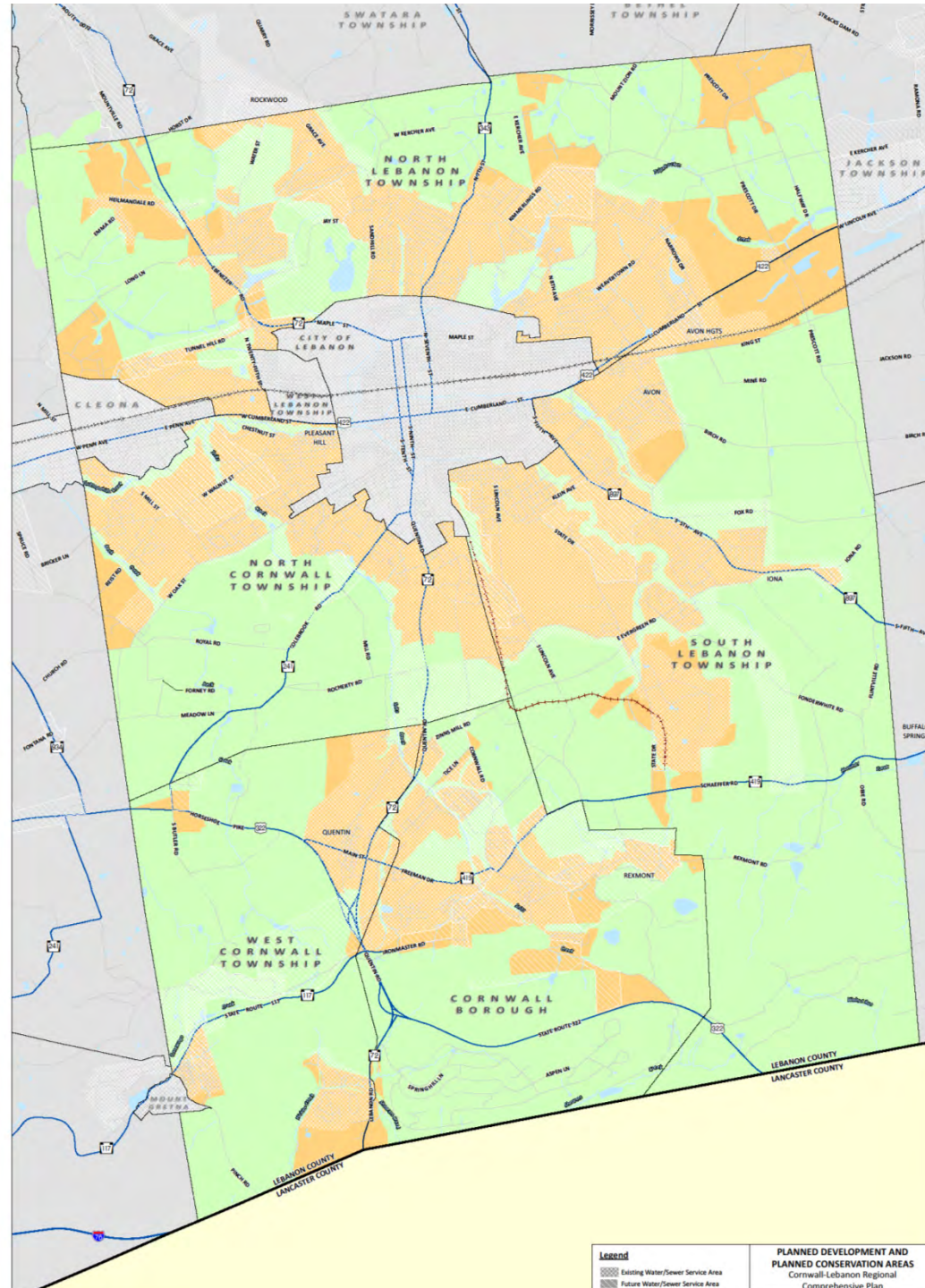
Cornwall-Lebanon Planning Issues

1. Planned Development and Impacts
2. Zoning Capacity
3. Economic Development Opportunities
4. Transportation – improvements vs. existing congestion + new demands
5. Cooperation in Public Services
6. Compliance with State Regulations (MS₄)
7. Opportunities for State Funding
8. Consistency with County Planning

Outreach

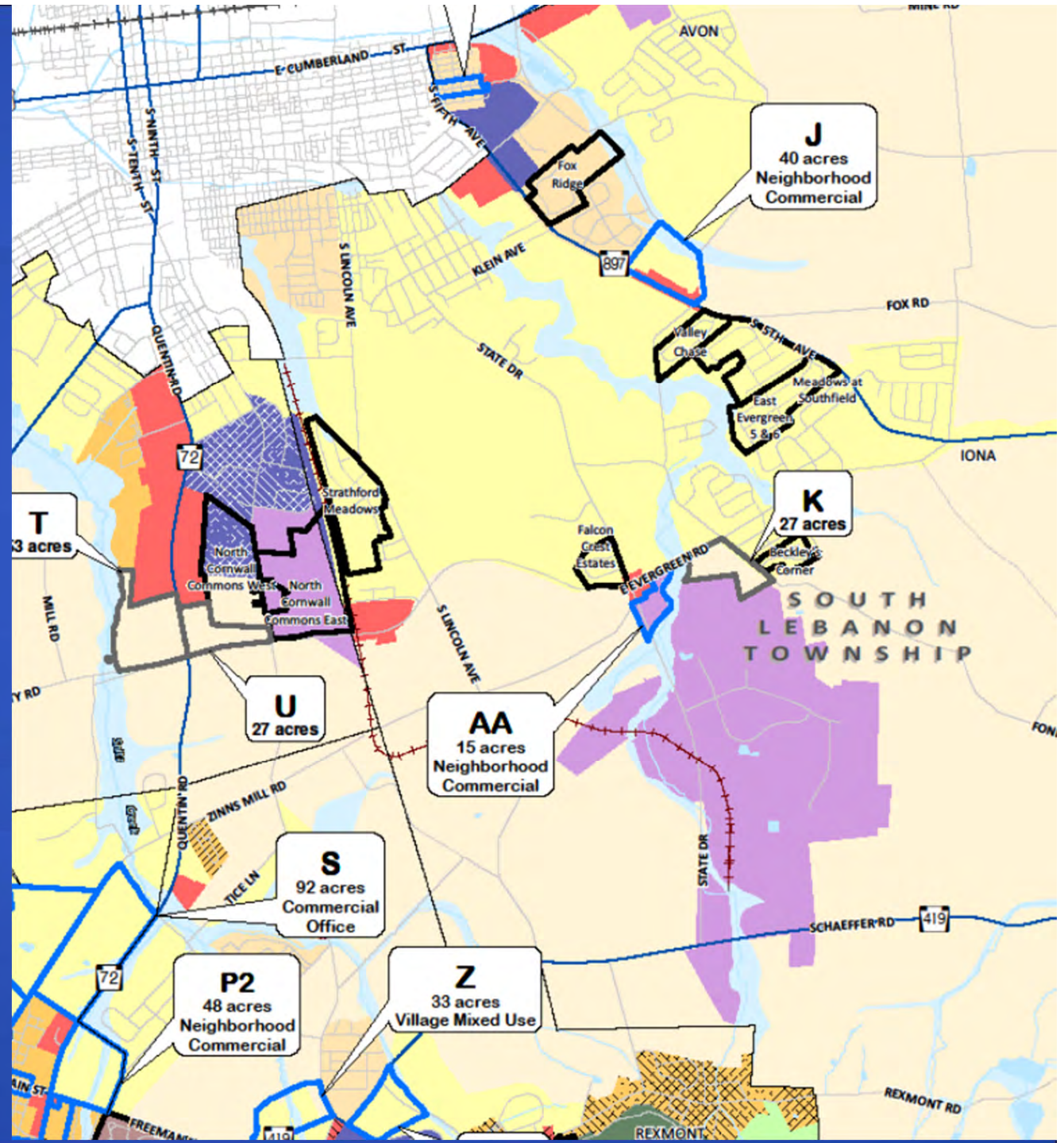


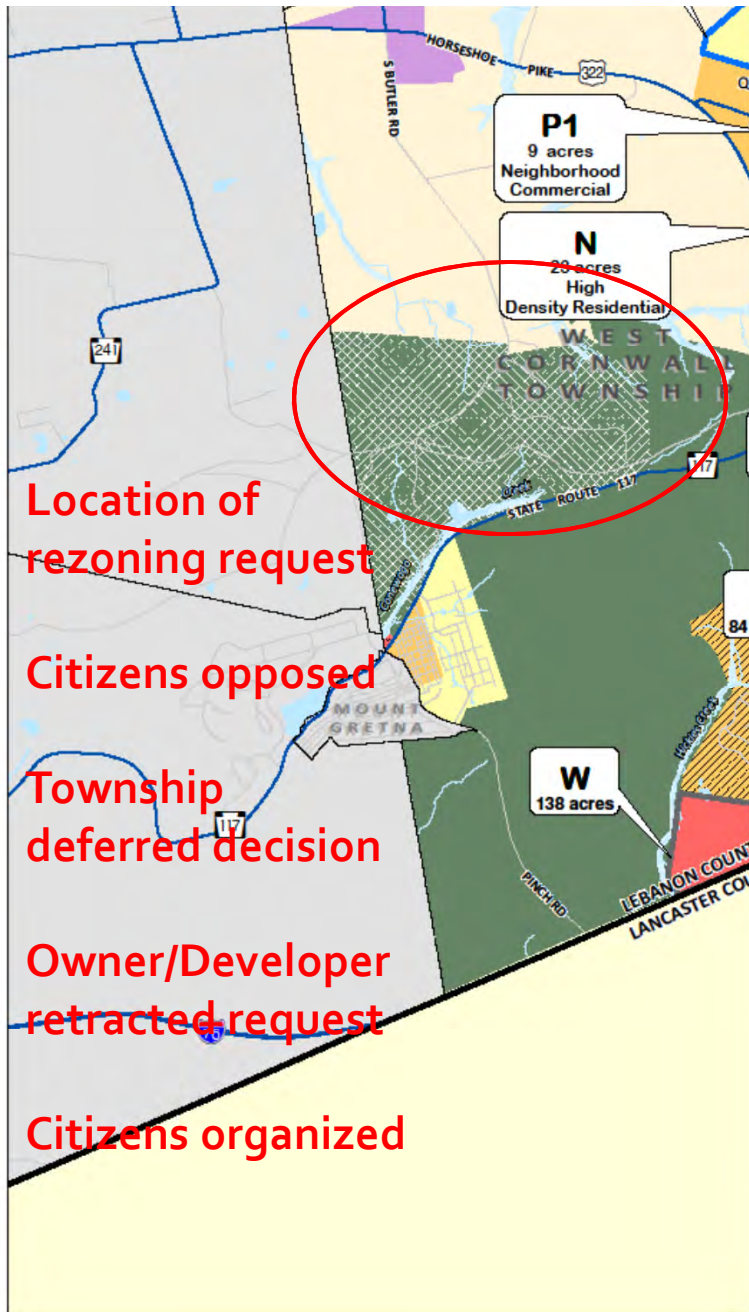
Lebanon County Planned Growth and Planned Conservation Areas



Select Land Use Examination and Recommendations for zoning alternatives

Approved
Development





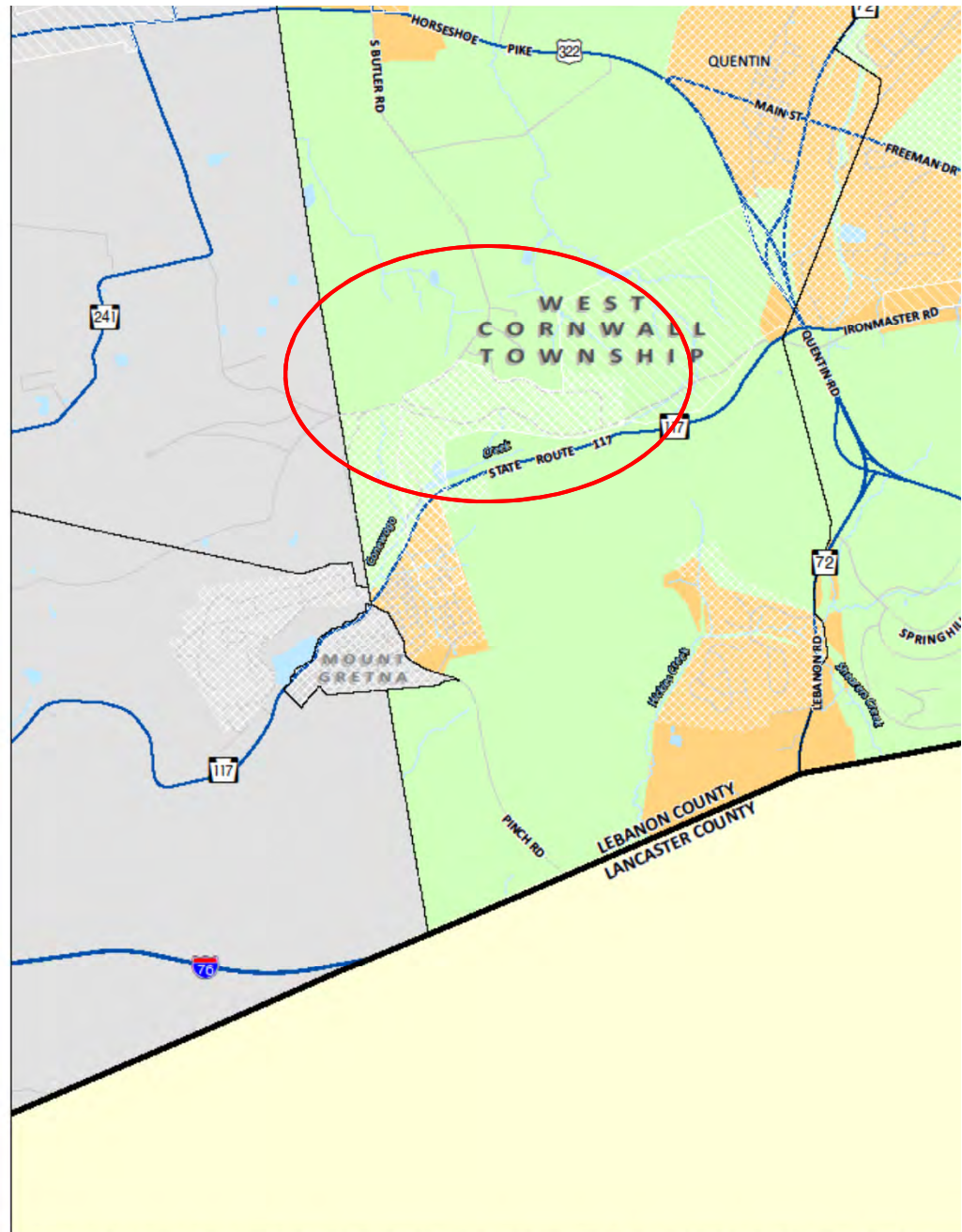
Location of rezoning request

Citizens opposed

Township deferred decision

Owner/Developer retracted request

Citizens organized



Data Sources: City of Lebanon Authority provided updates to their existing and future water service areas in January 2012. Lebanon County GIS provided updates to Gannett Fleming in March 2011. GIS layers outside of the current study area were compiled as part of the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan in 2006.

Response to Request for Conservation Policy

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOAL 10. PROTECT SENSITIVE NATURAL RESOURCES FROM DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACTS AND RESTORE CONNECTIVITY AND QUALITY, WHERE FEASIBLE.

Objectives

- A. Minimize development activity and impacts in ecologically sensitive areas: floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, forested areas and sites of state and local natural significance.
- B. Minimize fragmentation and improve/restore connectivity within and between ecologically sensitive areas.
- C. Link resources with existing communities through contiguous open space, conservation greenways, and recreational paths and trails, where appropriate.



Add'l Plan Purposes added thru Public Comments

8. the protection of natural and sensitive environmental resources, and
9. the preservation of the unique qualities and characteristics of rural villages and towns and significant sites.

With concurrence of (no significant objection by) municipal planning commissions



United Nations Sustainable Development

United Nations Conference on Environment & Development
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992

AGENDA 21

CONTENTS

Chapter	Paragraphs
1. Preamble	1.1 - 1.6
SECTION I. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS	
2. International cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries and related domestic policies	2.1 - 2.43
3. Combating poverty	3.1 - 3.12
4. Changing consumption patterns	4.1 - 4.27
5. Demographic dynamics and sustainability	5.1 - 5.66
6. Protecting and promoting human health conditions	6.1 - 6.46
7. Promoting sustainable human settlement development	7.1 - 7.80
8. Integrating environment and development in decision-making	8.1 - 8.54
SECTION II. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT	
9. Protection of the atmosphere	9.1 - 9.35
10. Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources	10.1 - 10.18
11. Sustainable consumption	11.1 - 11.15

APA Resource

Agenda 21: Myths and Facts

What is Agenda 21?

Increasingly, American planners working with the public on local plans are hearing concerns about Agenda 21, a United Nations report on policies on settlement patterns, poverty and the environment that involved 178 governments attending the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. It is a non-legally binding set of ideas and recommendations to countries, especially developing nations, in support of sustainability and environmental responsibility as part of efforts to combat poverty. The entire document, as well as additional information, can be found here: <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/>

Below are some of the misconceptions, exaggerations and outright mistruths that have been disseminated by opponents of Agenda 21 as it relates to planning and planners in the U.S.:

Myth: Agenda 21 means the same thing as planning.

Fact: Planning is a way for all members of a community to be engaged in a local and cooperative process designed to create a blueprint for the future that meets the unique needs and values of the area. Planning in the U.S. dates back to the founding of the nation, long before the U.N. was founded

Anti-Agenda 21 Rebuttal

Agenda 21: Myths and Facts

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Below disse

Myth: The federal government is implementing Agenda 21 through new programs that mandate local planning.

Fact: Comprehensive planning is, and remains, a quintessentially local activity guided and governed by state statutes. New federal programs, like the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, offer federal support for communities seeking to leverage federal funds to enhance their communities in the way they see fit. The federal role in planning is very limited, without mandates, and supportive of local and regional visioning because it is essential to good government and good business.

The whole truth: This APA statement is only half-true and thoroughly misleading. No, the federal government does not mandate local planning. However, local planning often requires funding. When those funds are in the form of grants from programs such as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities or the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant Program, recipients are expected and in some cases mandated, to meet certain requirements.

Joint Public Hearing

Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan

Agenda

Thursday, March 7, 2013

6pm at Cedar Crest High School

Advertised on Thursday, February 21, 2013 and Thursday, February 28, 2013 in the Lebanon Daily News

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Overview of the Draft Regional Comprehensive Plan – December 2012
3. Comments since October 4, 2012
4. Public Comment
5. Discussion of Comments (optional)
 - a. Discussion/Concurrence on Comment Items 1-10
 - b. Discussion/Concurrence on New Public Comments
 - c. Discussion/Concurrence on Proposed Preamble
6. Next and Final Steps:
Final Revisions and Plan Adoption by Resolution

**Hoping
Agenda 21 won't
come up here
←
and we can get to
here**

←

Options

- Individualized adopting resolutions
- A more general preamble stating the non-binding nature of the comprehensive plan

Alternate Preamble

The Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan was prepared, reviewed and adopted in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L. 805, No. 247 as reenacted and amended.

The Regional Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for managing the continuing development of four municipalities of the Cornwall-Lebanon (Cedar Crest) School District – North Cornwall, North Lebanon, South Lebanon and West Cornwall Townships.

...

Alternate Preamble

These municipalities recognize that they have many **common needs and opportunities** as their populations grow and development patterns change. **As willing partners, these municipalities agreed to prepare a regional comprehensive plan to characterize these common issues and identify ways to address them.**

As a **non-binding document**, the Plan offers **guidance** for revising municipal regulations and local government services. The Plan does not change any municipal requirements, standards, or procedures by its adoption.

...

Alternate Preamble

In adopting this plan, the participating municipalities affirm their intent to work toward the Plan's goals through individual and cooperative efforts. **Each municipality maintains its autonomy, has equal opportunity to participate in any effort to implement the plan, and has no obligation to undertake any recommendation or expend funds for implementation.**

Joint Public Meeting

Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan

Agenda - as of June 3, 2013

6pm on June 6, 2013 at the Cedar Crest High School LGI Room

Meeting Purposes:

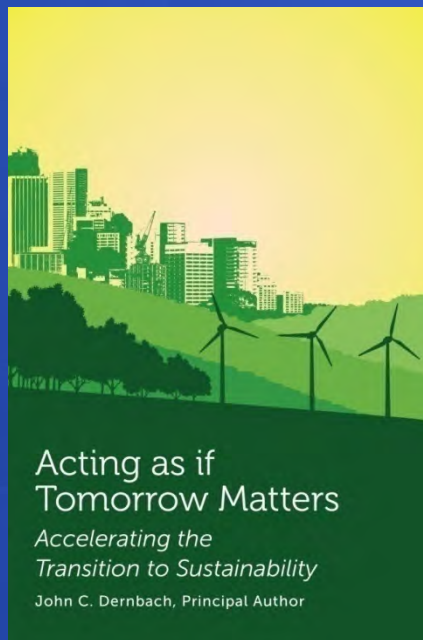
- ◆ Reach consensus in addressing the remaining comments to the December 2012 Draft of the Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan
- ◆ Adopt the Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan

1. Proposed Preambles
2. Comments (Revision) Approved
3. Comment with Consensus, pending approval
4. Comments with Discussion Needed
5. Municipal Adoption of the Regional Comprehensive Plan

“The Final Score”

3 : 1 : 1

Agenda 21: Reality vs. Baloney



*John Dernbach
Widener University
Commonwealth Law School*



Widener University

Why we are discussing this

- *Context:* After months/years of work, several municipalities are ready to adopt propose multi-municipal plan under 2000 amendments to Municipalities Planning Code.
- *Attack:* This plan should not be adopted because it is tainted by Agenda 21.
- *Problem:* The participants have never heard of Agenda 21, and don't know how to respond.

What is really going on

- Sometimes anti-Agenda 21 advocates are attacking sustainable development because they see it as a justification for proposed government activity.
- Sometimes anti-Agenda 21 advocates simply have an anti-government agenda, and they use these attacks to attempt to defeat a garden variety proposal that is based on longstanding law and policy.

Suggested response includes:

- Agenda 21 is not relevant to this proposal. If there are real problems with this proposal, let's fix the proposal.
- Even if it is relevant,
 - Agenda 21 was intended to foster development and environment at the same time, a longstanding feature of U.S. conservation, land use, and environmental policy.
 - It calls for widespread public participation in government decisions—exactly the kind of process employed in local land use and other decision making.
 - Attacks on Agenda 21 are based on internet and published claims that are false—but which are believed by people who read them.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development--1992

- Nations of the world endorsed sustainable development
 - Agenda 21—comprehensive action plan
 - Rio Declaration—statement of principles
 - Forest Action Plan
 - United States participated actively and agreed.



Agenda 21

- Urges actions to make environment and development work together in all sectors
- Detailed description of the role that many nongovernmental entities, including business and industry, farmers, unions, and others, should play in achieving sustainability.
- Repeatedly counsels respect for individual “freedom, dignity, and personally held values.”
- Not legally binding.

- Agenda 21 contains an almost encyclopedic description of the best ideas for achieving sustainable development that existed in 1992.
- Many of these ideas were from U.S. conservation, environmental, and land use law.
- Agenda 21 says nothing about new ideas like green building, smart growth, and smart meters.
- Agenda 21 specifically counsels respect for private property rights and endorses economic growth.

U.S. negotiated and agreed to Agenda 21 under President George H.W. Bush

- “The American way of life is not up for negotiation.”
- U.S. filed statement of several items in Agenda 21 with which it did not agree, including commitment of 0.7% of GDP for official development assistance.



Agenda 21 was never taken seriously by most sustainability advocates

- Long, boring document
- Very abstract
- Few people have actually read and understood it, including (it appears) opponents
- Americans have never had much enthusiasm for following international agreement

Sustainable Development Goals (2015)

- Adopted Sept. 2015
- Replace Millennium Development Goals
- 17 very broad goals for 2030
- Effectively replaces Agenda 21

The false story about Agenda 21

- Opponents include Tea Party, Glenn Beck, and the John Birch Society.
- They say that Agenda 21 is opposed to democracy, freedom, private property, and development, and would foster environmental extremism, world government, and even perhaps totalitarianism.
- There is no textual basis in Agenda 21 for such claims.
- No country would have agreed to Agenda 21 if it had said such things.

Absence of evidence is not a problem for Agenda 21 opponents

- They are attacking a document that is not well known, and so they count on not being contradicted.
- False version of Agenda 21 fits a well-known narrative that is based on fear of global governance and a perceived threat of totalitarianism, and on distrust of the United Nations.
- Absence of information to support such fears only deepens their perception of a conspiracy.
- For them, people who talk about sustainable development without mentioning Agenda 21 are simply masking their true intentions.

Example 1

- “In a nutshell, the plan [Agenda 21] calls for governments to take control of all land use and not leave any of the decision making in the hands of private property owners.”
 - --Rosa Koire, Behind the Green Mask: U.N. Agenda 21, p. 13

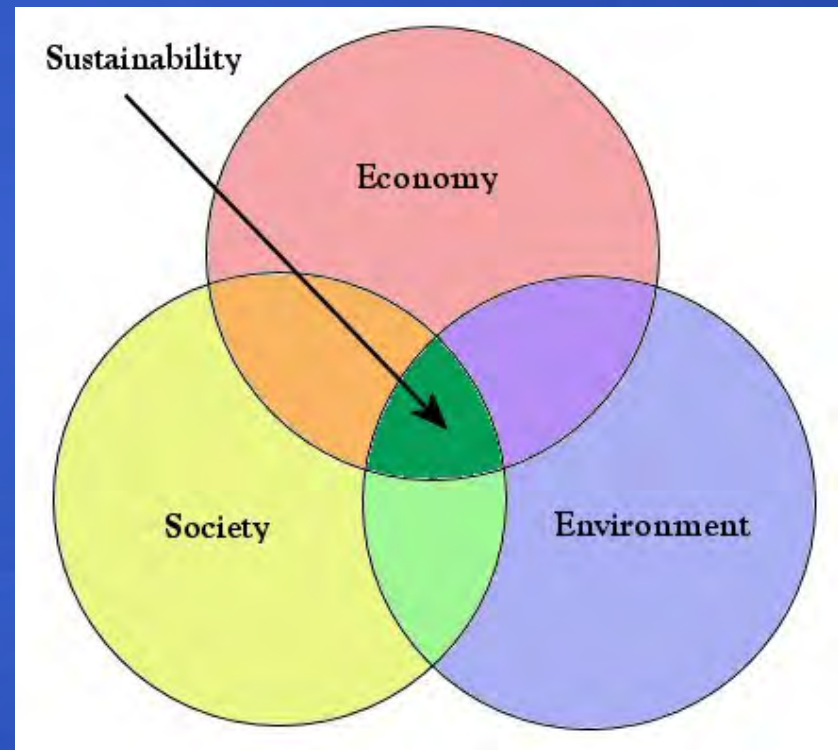
Example 2

- Real purposes of Agenda 21 include the following:
 - “Move citizens off private land and into high-density urban housing.”
 - “Create vast wilderness spaces inhabited by large carnivores.”
- Glenn Beck, Agenda 21, p. 281.

Agenda 21 is not same as sustainable development

U.S. bottom-up approach to sustainability

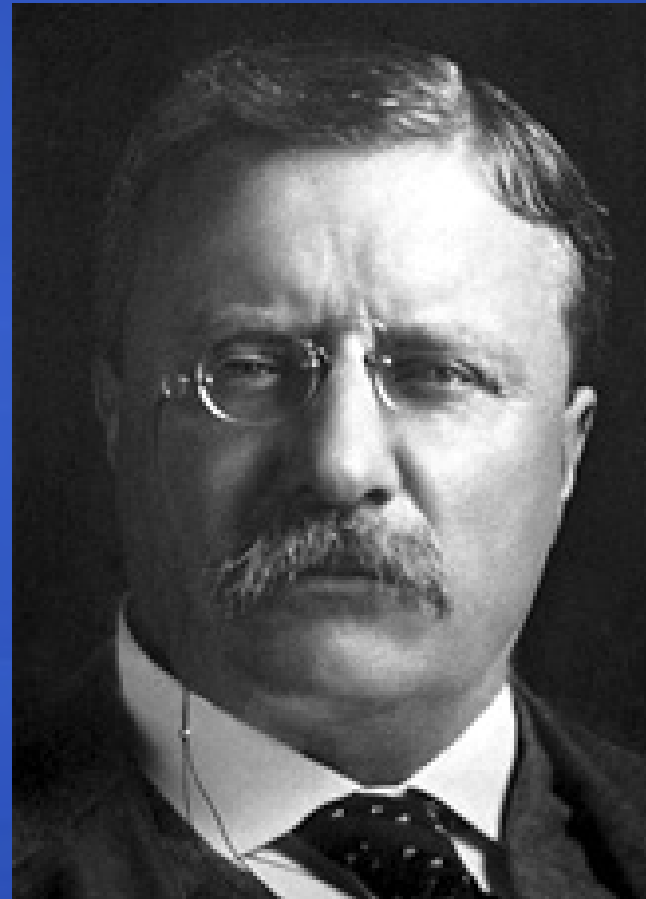
- Business and industry
- Local government
- Higher education
- Green building
- Brownfields redevelopment
- Agriculture
- Etc. etc.



Sustainability is anchored in conservation

“This nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

- --Theodore Roosevelt (1910)



Sustainable Development

- *The iconic definition: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*
 - *World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future (1987)*

Conventional Development

PROGRESS:

- Peace & security***
- Economic Development***
- Social Development/ Healthy Communities***

PRICE OF PROGRESS:

- Environment & Natural Resources***
- Living people who are harmed (health, property, etc.)***
- Future generations that are harmed***

Sustainable Development

PROGRESS:

- Peace & security*
- Economic development*
- Social development/healthy communities*
- Environmental protection/restoration*
- Supportive national governance*

Purposes

- *Development—*
 - Freedom
 - Opportunity
 - Quality of Life

- *Sustainable Development—*
 - Freedom
 - Opportunity
 - Quality of Life

For this and future generations

**Sustainable development is not a
brand new idea**

Sustainability is anchored in U.S. law

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 states “the continuing policy of the Federal government” to “create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans” (42 U.S.C. § 4331).

Sustainability is anchored in the Pennsylvania constitution

- The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustees of these resources, The Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all people.
- Article 1, Section 27 (1971)

Sustainability is anchored in Municipalities Planning Code of 1968

Section 105—purposes of act are to:

- accomplish coordinated development....
- provide for the general welfare by guiding and protecting amenity, convenience, future governmental, economic, practical, and social and cultural facilities....
- promote the conservation of energy through the use of planning practices and to promote the effective utilization of renewable energy sources....
- to promote the preservation of this Commonwealth's natural and historic resources and prime agricultural land....

When participants raise Agenda 21

- Agenda 21 is a shared idea. Developed in 1992. Comprehensive planning was authorized by PA in 1968.
- Planning as a local voluntary activity and should be scoped for what a community wants to plan. If some topics or approaches are off the table, make that known and clear from the start.
- Revisit and reaffirm the common goals.
- Focus comments on specifics in the plan, not general appearances.
- Be confident.

Suggestions for Planners

- Be prepared to answer Agenda 21 attacks directly.
- Focus on the real issues.
- Embrace sustainable development.
- Make sure your proposal has tangible community benefits that can be easily explained.

Suggestions, continued

- Use a fair, open, and inclusive process, and respond to reasonable criticisms.
- Be firm in your overall approach.
- Focus on the middle 60-80% of your constituency.
- Be aware that anti-Agenda 21 representatives serve on various governmental boards and commissions.

Path Ahead

- There is no magic formula for reconciling environmental protection with social and economic development.
- Public participation and involvement are essential, and people of good will can disagree over the right way to approach particular problems.
- Conspiracy theories about Agenda 21 produce only fear and confusion, not better decisions.
- People who are creating the conspiracy theories are generally not the same as the people who come to your meetings.

For more information:

- John C. Dernbach, *Facing Down the So-Called Agenda 21 'Conspiracy' Lessons for Planners*, *PLANNING*, Feb. 2015, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2520593

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