

**LIGONIER VALLEY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**Focus Group Summary – Community Design**  
**January 17, 2017 – 6:00 PM**

A total of eight (8) persons attended the session facilitated by Mark Lazzari (EADS). Suggested topics as per input received from field work, the prior workshop and the community survey included the following, but these were noted for guidance only:

- Walkability issues
- Design standards
- Development regulations
- Dealing with blight

After a brief introduction on the process and the purpose of this session, input on issues and recommendations were welcomed.

Representatives from the Ligonier Weeders and Seeders Garden Club attended the meeting and provided an update on the Club, its membership and current projects.

Walkability Issues

The discussion focused on improvements that could be made in the Borough area that would improve the pedestrian network. The following suggestions were made by attendees:

- Redesign the signage used to identify the existing walking/bike route in the Borough. It was suggested that not a lot of residents know where the route is located.
- Attendees noted that street lighting in Alleys is not a high priority.
- Suggestion was made to create a way that residents can electronically report to the codes officer an issue with a sidewalk, curb ramp, on-road issues (potholes), etc. for follow up.
- Identify suitable pedestrian crossing point(s) across US. Rt. 30. Crossing at Walnut Street was suggested – it has a traffic light and would connect pedestrians to the LWA Natural Trail

Design Standards

A brief review of the purpose of Design Standards, how they can be implemented and the anticipated need to develop different sets of standard to address the unique form/functions associated with Main/Market Sts. and the residential areas in the Borough and for the US Rt. 30 and 711/271 Corridor in the Township was conducted prior to discussion amongst attendees. The following summarize the key points of the discussion.

- There was consensus amongst the attendees that developing Design Standards in the Borough and Township would help to maintain the visual quality of the Ligonier Valley.

- Mr. Jim McDonnell expressed a willingness to expand the Design Standard elements in the Borough's zoning ordinance and language that strengthens the Borough's ability to enforce.
- It was suggested that Design Standards should also be considered for Villages in the Township.

### Dealing with Blight

The discussion here focused on property maintenance and the preservation/reuse of abandoned (or currently unused) properties in the Borough and Township. Concern was raised over the negative impacts these types of properties are having on the visual quality of the area. An overall goal is to encourage property reuse/rehabilitation before demolition is necessary. Suggestions for achieving this goal were identified:

- Prepare an inventory of blighted properties that the Zoning & Code Enforcement Officer can focus on. For properties identified, have the Officer identify the property owner, their future use of the property and any assistance the owner may need in rehabilitating the property. (Note: potential connection with the Ligonier Township Blight Report web application recently prepared by EADS.)
- The attendees believe that stronger code enforcement would be beneficial.
- Identify the role that the Westmoreland County Land Bank can have on preserving abandoned properties in the Ligonier Valley.
- Develop an inventory of local contractors, service providers, school students needing service hours and other volunteers that would be willing to help property owners that need assistance to rehabilitate and/or to just clean up their property. Suggested that the Ligonier Valley Council of Churches could lead this effort.
- Identify alternative funding sources (other than banks) that property owners could access to rehabilitate their property.

### Ligonier Garden Club

Garden Club members in attendance noted their desire to complete beautification projects in the Ligonier Valley that could help address some of the topics discussed during the Session. However, they currently only have 19 members and no capacity to take on additional projects at this time. The Garden Club will provide to the planners their annual report which identifies all of their current projects.

At the conclusion of the session, the attendees asserted that the overall vision of the Ligonier Valley should be to maintain the visual quality of the Ligonier Valley.