



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, March 30 at 7:00pm

LVPC Conference Room

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Minutes

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 7:00pm in the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's conference room located at 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Ms. Dreisbach chaired the meeting.

Ms. Willis took roll call.

Members in attendance:

Lehigh County

Karen Duerholz, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Ed Hozza, Rick Molchany, Christina Morgan, Steve Neratko, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt, Christine Weaver, Donna Wright

Northampton County

Gordon Campbell, Gene Clater, John Diacogiannis, Liesel Dreisbach, Bob Lammi, Kevin Lott, Tom Nolan, David O'Connell, Hayden Phillips, Michael Reph, Tina Roseberry, John Brown

Members absent: Percy Dougherty, Brad Osborne, Sara Pandl, Julie Thomases, Charles Elliott, George Gemmel, Darlene Heller, Tim Herrlinger, Pam Pearson

Staff present: Becky Bradley, Erin Willis, George Kinney, Geoff Reese, Tracy Oscavich, John von Kerczek, Sue Rockwell

Public present: Stan Rugis, Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR: none

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the February 23, 2017 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Clater. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hozza and Mr. Lammi abstaining.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Allen Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Rockefeller Lehigh Industrial Development Lot 5

Mr. von Kerczek stated that the proposed square footage for this development is over 1,000,000 sq. ft. which exceeds the threshold of 500,000 sq. ft. over which the LVPC considers Storage Facilities projects to be Land Uses of Regional Significance, so the plan and review letter must be presented to the Comprehensive Planning Committee along with neighboring municipalities receiving this letter. The subject application is generally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Allen Township recently developed a zoning ordinance amendment that included detailed regulations to minimize the impact of freight facilities on public health and welfare to protect surrounding neighborhoods from excessive dust and light generated by these facilities. The projects property line is located near residential property and a golf course so the proposed development includes small evergreen trees and large deciduous trees along the properties perimeter. It is recommended that Allen Township work with neighboring municipalities on buffering and screening. Mapping indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of sinkholes on the site. The LVPC advised the applicant to ensure proper geotech testing prior to any land development. LVPC's Transportation review states the project should include sidewalks along the entire perimeter of the property and a defined internal pedestrian network, which would serve to meet the regional policy for multi-modal improvements. LANta recommends including an accessible pedestrian path along the entrance driveways of the project site to provide a safer sidewalk network. This project site is also located within the Catasauqua Creek watershed which has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. The LVPC has received a time extension for the review of the project's stormwater management plan until additional materials are submitted. Ms. Wright asked about the sinkhole map that was provided in the packet. Mr. von Kerczek said there are sinkholes at the site. He referred to the map provided showing approx. locations and stated the LVPC always points out sinkholes activity. The LVPC recommended they employ geotechnics analysis to prevent any damage. Ms. Wright made a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Rader seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Clater abstaining.

Ordinance/Plan Reviews

Ms. Wright refers the commission to the summary sheet for an overview of staff comments on other proposed actions requiring LVPC review. Mr. von Kerczek noted that Bangor Borough ordinance amendment for uniform standards for the siting, design, permitting, use and maintenance of Wireless Communications Facilities are matters entirely of local concern and includes specific regulations addressing potential impacts of Wireless Communications Facilities on the Blue Mountain and historic buildings and districts which is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wright made a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion was passed with Mr. Nolan abstaining #4 – Bethlehem Township's resubmission of their Comprehensive Plan update; and Mr. Diacogiannis abstaining #10 – Hanover Township's four land use definitions.

Environment Committee

Project Review – Summary Sheet

Mr. Repasch refers the commission to the summary sheet for Lower Nazareth Township's Municipal Waster Permit Renewal Application for an existing East Penn Sanitation transfer station which does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Lott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation Committee

Northampton County's Public-Private Partnership (P3) Program – Presentation by John Brown, Northampton County Executive

Mr. Brown talked about owning 119 bridges in Northampton County and a study that was completed several years ago showed that 99 of those bridges are functionally obsolete with the average age being 61 years and the life expectancy is 61 years so Northampton county was in a critical state. They discussed how to move this process along in bidding out bridges so they are current and up to date. They looked at what PennDOT did under their Rapid Replacement Program, under Act 88, then modified it for Northampton County's needs. Northampton County entered into an agreement in January of 2017 where 33 of the bridges will be repaired in four years with the cost of the project coming in at \$38.5 million dollars. Instead of the County putting the money out up front, they entered into a public-private partnership to have this complete. The bid requests included design, build, finance and a 10-year maintenance contract within the proposal. The winner will finance from their own cash flows and used a local bank as their back stop in a line of credit for \$30 million which guaranteed the project. Northampton County specified in the RFP that they could afford \$4-6 million per year as payment against the project. It is estimated that 1,000-1,800 jobs will be created over the four years. PennDOT approval was acquired in November of 2015 for this bridge project. Northampton County had to transfer the deed of 33 bridges to the General Purpose Authority in order for the project to begin, under Act 88. The 10-year maintenance term starts at the bridge completion. Of those 33 bridges, 27 are being replaced while 6 are being rehabilitated. The General Purpose Authority is the contracting entity with the contractor. The County then entered into a Service Agreement with the General Purpose Authority and transferred bridge ownership which will then be transferred back to the County once complete. Mr. Brown noted that this is a repeatable model so once these 33 bridges are complete, we can repeat the same process for the next 33 bridges so essentially over the next 20 years, we could have over 100 bridges replaced and paid for.

OLD BUSINESS

Statement of Financial Interest

Ms. Bradley noted that if Commission members haven't completed the State of Financial Interest, they have until May.

NEW BUSINESS

Population & Employment Projections

Ms. Bradley stated how we do these projections every 4-5 years for the transportation program. This information is fed directly into our travel demand model so when we do have proposals to add to the Transportation Improvement Program for funding through LVTS, we have to model the effects of those projects. We have just finished revising those using Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) which is the industry's standard for economic projections. The Morning Call is preparing an article related to the Population. Ms. Bradley then went on to show the Projections website which showcases the data from the study as well as interactive maps detailing the population and employment density per municipality. For the first time, all three cities will be adding more people with an overall growth for the Lehigh Valley at a 25.6% increase. Top growth for Lehigh County is the City of Allentown, Upper Macungie Township, Upper Saucon Township, North Whitehall Township and Whitehall Township. Top growth for Northampton County is the City of Bethlehem (both LECO + NOCO), Bethlehem Township, Forks Township, City of Easton and Palmer Township. Ms. Bradley also spoke about the employment projections with an overall increase in the Lehigh Valley of 31%. Top growth for Lehigh County is Upper Macungie Township, City of Allentown, Whitehall Township, Lower Macungie Township and Upper Saucon Township. Top growth for Northampton County is the City of Bethlehem (LECO + NOCO), Bethlehem Township, Lower Nazareth Township, Fork Township and Palmer Township. Projected Growth per Industry Sector is suggesting that Transportation + Warehousing (81%) along with Health Care + Social Assistance (62%) as the largest growth. With the Projected Job Increase – Health Care + Social Assistance (31,764) is shown as the largest growth with Administrative coming in at (12,924). Ms. Bradley encouraged everyone to read through the Population + Employment Projections report along with going to the Projections website and utilizing the interactive maps so you can go back to your municipality to discuss how you want the future to be within that community.

FutureLV Strategy Labs @ LVPC Office

Ms. Bradley noted that the Strategy Lab for Housing was very well attended with about 40 attendees and Public Health had about 30 attendees. There were great discussions with both groups with a lot of information gathered. Ms. Bradley stated that the next set of Strategy Labs on April 13th will be Technology + Future Forces at 8:30am and Urban Design + Historic Preservation at 10:30am. On April 20th will be Land Use at 8:30am and Economy at 10:30am.

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) @ LVPC Office

Mr. Kinney stated the next LTAP class, Equipment + Worker Safety being held on Wednesday, April 12th at 8:00am and Pavement Maintenance on Tuesday, April 18th at 8:00am.

CORRESPONDENCE

Meals on Wheels

Ms. Bradley spoke about how our Jeans-for-a-Cause donated \$48 to Meals on Wheels of the Lehigh Valley which will help provide nutritious meals to homebound seniors and adults with disabilities. They sent us back a nice thank you note for the donation.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Leslie Richards Presentation – PennDOT Connects – Leslie Richards PennDOT Transportation Secretary

Ms. Bradley talked about Secretary Leslie Richards presenting at the LVTS Technical + Coordinating Committee on Wednesday, April 5th at 10am. We have a room capacity of 60 people so it is encouraged to rsvp asap to get a seat. Ms. Richards will be making an announcement on how PennDOT intends to evolve and how it works with the municipal governments.

ADJOURN

Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Diacogiannis seconded that motion. Ms. Dreisbach adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,
Erin Willis, Executive Secretary for
Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director