



**Lehigh Valley Planning Commission**

**LIESEL DREISBACH**  
Chair

**STEPHEN REPASCH**  
Vice Chair

**JOHN DIACOGIANNIS**  
Treasurer

**BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP**  
Executive Director

**LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Thursday, April 27 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, April 27, 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**

Percy Dougherty, Karen Duerholz, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Ed Hozza, Rick Molchany, Sara Pandl, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt, Donna Wright

**Northampton County**

Gene Clater, John Diacogiannis, Liesel Dreisbach, Charles Elliott, George Gemmel, Tim Herrlinger, Bob Lammi, Kevin Lott, Tom Nolan, Pam Pearson, Hayden Phillips, Michael Reph

**Members absent:** Christina Morgan, Steve Neratko, Owen O'Neil, Brad Osborne, Kathy Rader, Julie Thomases, Christine Weaver, Gordon Campbell, Darlene Heller, David O'Connell, Tina Roseberry

**Staff present:** Becky Bradley, Erin Willis, George Kinney, Geoff Reese, John von Kerczek

**Public present:** Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ, Kirk Raup

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:** none

**MINUTES**

After a brief review, the minutes of the March 30, 2017 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Wright. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Gemmel, Ms. Pandl, Mr. Elliott, Ms. Pearson and Mr. Herrlinger abstaining.

**CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT:** Graphic Designer/Publication Coordinator – Craig Kackenmeister

Ms. Dreisbach welcomed Craig Kackenmeister to the LVPC.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Comprehensive Planning Committee

*Bethlehem City/Lower Saucon Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Majestic Bethlehem, Ph. 6-7 Bldgs*

Mr. von Kerczek talked about receiving a proposed Storage Facility project that is over 750,000 square feet in development. This is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan and the LVPC supports the renewal, redevelopment and retrofitting of existing shopping centers, industrial sites and office complexes in preference to the development of new facilities on greenfield sites. The inclusion of a 100 foot riparian buffer along the eastern edge of the property located in Lower Saucon Township is commended, however, the proposed paving and parking impinges slightly on the northern portions of the buffer, so the LVPC encourages the applicant to explore possible design options to retain the full extent of the originally proposed riparian buffer. Mapping provided by the Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of surface depressions on Lot 7, so the LVPC advises the applicant to ensure proper geotech testing prior to any land development. Mr. von Kerczek said the transportation review stated the development will generate an estimated 1173 daily vehicle trips with a projected 89 trips and 105 vehicle trips generated during the AM and PM peak hours respectively. The LVPC stated the City should be aware that two bridge projects are located in the vicinity of this development which might temporarily hinder access to the site. It is also encouraged developers to address the growing need for overnight truck parking, staging, and rest areas, as well as space for idle vehicles waiting to make freight transfers. LANta also reviewed the application and stated the plan proposes two new bus stops, approximately 1 mile apart. The new bus stops include bus pull-overs and accessible sidewalks on the right-hand side of Commerce Center Boulevard. The project site is also located within the Saucon Creek watershed which the LVPC has received a time extension from the applicant for the review of the project's stormwater management plan. Mr. Herrlinger made a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### *Allen Township – Comprehensive Plan Update*

Mr. von Kerczek talked about reviewing the Comprehensive Plan for Allen Township. This was presented to the Comprehensive Planning Committee previously and there has been updates made to the transportation portion of the letter. Transportation recommended mitigation strategies related to the congested corridors be considered specifically for bike and pedestrian improvements. The Township should consider addition of language regarding Automated Vehicle supportive technology to include municipal official education, reconsideration of parking standards, types, and locations. Modern roundabout installation is generally mentioned but there is no reference with respect to the improvements. While working with PennDOT and developers for pedestrian improvement, the LVPC recommends including additional language that incites the Township to proactively pursue regional and state transportation enhancement funding for this purpose as well. The LVPC would encourage the Township to consider additional language with respect to freight routing and movement including developing a freight traffic map depicting routes trucks should utilize, ensure that ordinances address the need for on-site truck waiting areas,

driver amenities, and necessary infrastructure to minimize idling, parking on public roads and impact on adjoining properties, utilize regulatory tools to require bonding and/or reclamation plans related to big-box freight facility structures, create formal process and develop a plan that identifies and prioritizes freight infrastructure improvements and identify appropriate freight corridors and develop a program for road improvements that accommodate truck movements. Mr. von Kerczek also stated that the Township should be aware that the LVPC uses different classification ranges for steep slopes than those that the Township is considering and may wish to revisit its Steep Slopes regulations to ensure consistency with County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Dougherty made a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Clater abstaining.

### *Ordinance/Plan Reviews*

Mr. Repasch referred the commission to the summary sheet for an overview of staff comments on other proposed actions requiring LVPC review. Ms. Wright made a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Clater seconded the motion. The motion was passed with Mr. Diacogiannis abstaining #9 – Hanover Township's zoning ordinance amendment for Distilleries, Limited Distilleries, Wineries and Limited Wineries; and Ms. Duerholz abstaining #10 – Slatington Borough's zoning ordinance amendment regarding junkyards and #11 – Slatington Borough's zoning ordinance amendment for residency requirements.

### **Environment Committee**

#### *Monocacy Creek Act 67 Stormwater Management Plan Update*

Mr. Reese spoke about the Monocacy Creek Stormwater Management Plan update and mentioned that there is a draft of the Monocacy Creek Watershed Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance for review. He stated that they discussed this draft ordinance in the latest Monocacy Creek Steering Committee. He noted that there have been updates made to some of the text within certain sections throughout the ordinance that is not in the current Monocacy ordinance. Some additions made under Article 2 – Definitions include Direct Recharge BMP designed to direct runoff to groundwater recharge without providing for vegetation uptake including infiltration trenches, seepage beds, drywells and injection wells. Also Evapotranspiration BMPs designed to provide opportunity for runoff evaporation and transpiration by vegetation and/or surface infiltration of runoff which includes bioretention and surface infiltration basins. Mr. Reese stated that there is a new Section 305 – Green Infrastructure and Existing Water Balance Preservation Standards. Some things this talks about is runoff being captured and treated by either direct recharge or evapotranspiration BMPs; as much proposed impervious area as practical shall be directed to water quality BMPs; and a maximum of 30% of the total annual rainfall for a site may be directly recharged to groundwater using direct recharge BMPs. Some exceptions to the freeboard requirements were also added including Bioretention BMPs with a ponded depth less than or equal to 0.5 feet are exempt from the freeboard requirements. Mr. Reese also went over the changes in Appendix C – C-6 Percent D-RE per Fraction Impervious versus Storage Curve; C-7 Percent D-RE per Fraction Impervious versus Storage Curve Usage Instructions; and C-8 Percent Annual Rainfall versus Evapotranspiration BMP Design Runoff Chart.

## *Project Review – Summary Sheet*

Mr. Repasch refers the commission to the summary sheet with the Bath Borough Authority submitting an application to Renew Approval of Existing Groundwater Withdrawal. This is from three wells to continue to supply the Authority's distribution system. No change in groundwater allocation is proposed which is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Reph abstaining.

## **Transportation Committee**

### *Industrial Development + Transportation*

Ms. Bradley presented a PowerPoint showcasing the Industrial development in the region. She stated that 27% of our total job market is in the freight industries and there is a 38% increase across all sectors. Our average commute time in the Lehigh Valley is under 30 minutes which is considered non-congested. Our freight tonnage is expected to double by 2040. Between 2015 and 2016, industrial development had a significant spike going from a little under 5 million square feet to 8.2 million square feet. That is just in approved plans before the construction even starts. Ms. Bradley then went on to show the different communities where development and construction is taking place. In New Smithville at Exit 45 there is 736,000 square feet in construction right now. This is the location where the new truck stop will reside. Workforce and congestion are the two biggest driving factors on where they locate within our region. In Fogelsville at Exit 49 Route 100 and I-78, there are 175 acres under consideration for new development. There's 479,850 square feet in the process of approval and there's 1,460,160 square feet in redevelopment right now. Another portion of Exit 49 in Fogelsville has 1,928,400 square feet in the process of approval and 1,310,000 square feet in construction today. At Exit 67 at Hellertown off of I-78, there's 2,694,880 square feet in the process of approval and 1,263,040 square feet under construction. There is also 930,800 square feet in expansion or redevelopment. Route 309 at Route 22 has 21.8 acres that are under development and 660,000 square feet in the process of approval. Route 987/Airport Road has 2,024,940 square feet in the process of approval and 798,000 square feet under construction. Route 512 in Bethlehem there is 1,725,200 square feet in the process approval and 275,800 in redevelopment. Route 191 in Bethlehem has 2,332,000 square feet in the approval process. Hecktown Road and Route 33 have 1,391,008 square feet in the approval process. Route 248 at Route 33 there is 899,620 square feet in the approval process and 1,645,540 square feet in construction. Route 512 and Route 33, there is 1,058,248 in the approval process. This all totals 23,613,486 square feet right now across the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Bradley talked about how the private sectors have designated our region the 'Northeast Inland Empire' which goes from the Port of New York and New Jersey to Harrisburg along the I-78 corridor and straight through the Lehigh Valley. Since the second quarter of 2010, developers have added over 64 million square feet of space, increasing the size of the market by over 25% which exceeds the pace of growth in Houston, Columbus Ohio and California's Inland Empire. The Port of LA/Long Beach takes about 15 million shipping containers per year while the Port of NY/NJ takes about 6.3 million shipping containers. The Port of NY/NJ is served by 5 domestic rail intermodals within this market while California only has 1 domestic rail intermodal. In terms of people and places, the New Inland Empire has more access to people, almost 70 million people versus out in Los Angeles with 28 million people. The New Inland Empire's average household income is also higher along with serving more MPOs.

Mr. Kinney spoke about impact on the Lehigh Valley from an infrastructure and freight standpoint. He went on the show the National Highway Freight Network with the major connectors that are going into New Jersey, in particular I-78 and I-80 to the north. The Intermodal site off of I-78 handles 8% of the statewide rail units with Norfolk Southern estimating 200,000 freight units annually. Mr. Kinney then talked about the average rent, cost of labor, drayage and tax advantages in the Lehigh Valley along with the surrounding areas. The Lehigh Valley has the average Rent \$5 per square foot, Labor \$15.19/hr., Drayage \$650 and Real Estate Taxes \$.075-\$1.25 per square foot. At the Meadowlands facility, their Rent is averaging \$9.50 per square foot, \$18.67/hr. in Labor, \$350 in Drayage and \$2.00-\$2.50 per square foot in Real Estate Taxes. The rates get a little lower as you move south in New Jersey. Mr. Kinney moved on to talk about the assessment values in real estate. Through the CBRE website, three properties from New Jersey and three from Pennsylvania were assessed. Then one from each was compared that had similar square footage measurements. The 1200 Valley Brook Avenue property in New Jersey has a land value of \$11,776,000, Improvements at \$5,224,000 with a total assessment of \$17,000,000. Taxes come to \$466,990. The 2200 S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street property in Allentown, PA has a land value of \$1,778,100, Improvements at \$821,900 with a total assessment of \$2,600,000. Taxes come to \$93,200. This shows that not only is the Lehigh Valley strategically located to the major markets but also have cheap land and available land along with good infrastructure and quality of life. Mr. Kinney wanted to make note of the Supply Chain Evolution and where the Lehigh Valley is at right now. The E-commerce Distribution shows the retail outlets being taken out of the equation and going directly to the consumer. It is still only at about 9% but is growing exponentially.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *Statement of Financial Interest*

Ms. Willis made note of those Commission members who have not submitted their completed State of Financial Interest. She stated they have until May 1<sup>st</sup> to send them in.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *Quarterly Website Report*

Ms. Bradley noted the many web hits we are getting throughout the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's website. The LVPC's home page had 46,768 hits within the first quarter. Some of the biggest hits were the Legal Notices, Lehigh Technical Assistance Program, Contact Information, Meetings, Commission Members and the Map Gallery. Total Page Views were at 123,275. The LVPC can keep track of downloads as well. Some of those biggest downloads were the Steep Slope Model Ordinance at 62,116 followed by Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plan at 30,406 and the Southwestern Lehigh County Comprehensive Plan (2005) with 19,780. Total downloads were 409,090.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### *County Animal Response Team (CART) – Thank You Note*

Ms. Bradley spoke about our Jeans-for-a-Cause donating to the non-profit Lehigh Valley County Animal Response Team which will help provide fresh pet food and supplies to those animals who have been displaced due to fire, floods or other natural disasters.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

*Business Matters: Monday, May 8 – 7:30pm – Channel 69*

Ms. Bradley mentioned that she filmed a Business Matters episode with Don Cunningham from LVEDC, Nancy Dishnot from Workforce Investment Board and Charles Everett from the LNAA talking about an overview of what's happening in the region and what all of the agencies are doing.

Ms. Bradley also mentioned that the House of Representatives struck down the MPO Reform earlier in the day and it is now waiting for President Trump's signature.

Lastly, Ms. Bradley wanted to congratulate Mr. von Kerczek on his promotion to Principal Community Planner.

## **EVENTS + INFORMATION**

*FutureLV Strategy Labs @ LVPC Office*

Ms. Dreisbach made a quick mention of the Strategy Labs coming up and encouraged everyone to attend.

*UPENN – Slate Belt Future – Pop-Up Exhibition: Friday, May 12 – 5:00pm-8:00pm*

Ms. Dreisbach also mentioned the Slate Belt Futures – Pop-Up Exhibit needing registration for their May 12<sup>th</sup> event and encouraged everyone to come out to support the UPENN students work.

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. Repasch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wright seconded that motion. Ms. Dreisbach adjourned the meeting.

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