



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

LIESEL DREISBACH
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STEPHEN REPASCH
Vice Chair

JOHN DIACOGIANNIS
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, November 30, 2017 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, November 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

Percy Dougherty, Steve Glickman, Kent Herman, Ed Hozza, Rick Molchany, Christina Morgan, Douglas Stewart, Owen O'Neil, Brad Osborne, Sara Pandl, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt, Christine Weaver, Donna Wright

Northampton County

Gordon Campbell, Gene Clater, John Diacogiannis, Liesel Dreisbach, Charles Elliott, Tim Herrlinger, Bob Lammi, Tom Nolan, Pam Pearson, Tina Roseberry

Members absent: Karen Duerholz, Julio Guridy, Julie Thomases, Darlene Heller, Kevin Lott, David O'Connell, Hayden Phillips, Michael Reph

Staff present: Becky Bradley, Erin Willis, Geoff Reese, Amanda Raudenbush, John von Kerczek, Jill Seitz, Tracy Oscavich, Matt Assad, Sue Rockwell

Public present: Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ; Joanne Guth, Citizen

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR: none

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the October 2017 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Herrlinger. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hozza, Ms. Pandl, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Osborne and Mr. Nolan abstaining.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Dreisbach noted that the Nominating Committee – Tim Herrlinger (Chair), Mr. Clater and Ms. Pearson – will be promoting their list of officers to be voted on for the year 2018 at the next Full Commission meeting on December 21st.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Upper Nazareth Township – SALDO Update

Mr. von Kerczek talked about reviewing proposed Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) update. Overall, the proposed changes address matters of local concern. However, the LVPC commends the Township for including new language explicitly prohibiting flag lots. The LVPC commends the inclusion of this prohibition as it will help discourage such subdivision patterns. Also for adding substantial new sidewalk requirements, including the installation of sidewalks on both sides of streets within developments and along the frontage of all existing streets and concrete sidewalk ramps at all intersections and crosswalks. There is an added requirement that storm drainage systems must “accommodate, receive and convey all runoff from adjacent up-stream properties,” thereby ensuring that such systems take into account potential runoff from beyond the immediate boundaries of the property being developed. Another section established specific recreation and open space land dedication requirements for single-family and multifamily residential developments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Pen Argyl Borough – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Industrial to Residential Rezoning

Mr. von Kerczek reviewed a zoning ordinance amendment which rezones one tract of vacant land from the Industrial Extractive District to the Medium Density Residential District, addresses a matter of local concern. Because the affected tract occupies land designated by the General Land Use Map for Urban Development, the proposed rezoning does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Environment Committee

DRBC Review – Application for a Groundwater Withdrawal Project by Hunsicker Farm, Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County

Ms. Rockwell talked about the proposed application for groundwater withdrawal from four well sources to irrigate, as necessary, the applicants existing 400-acre corn farm. The applicant proposes a state-of-the-art irrigation system that includes a National Weather Service certified weather station to help reduce unnecessary watering. Pump tests were conducted on the four wells, indicating no adverse impacts on nearby observation wells or the Little Lehigh Creek. The applicant will be required to implement a long-term monitoring program with the results submitted to DRBC. The proposed project is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Per DRBC documentation, no adverse impacts are anticipated with this operation. Mitigation by the applicant will be required if the withdrawal is determined to interfere with existing ground or surface water supplies. Approval of this project may be modified or suspended by DRBC based on review of the hydrologic data or other information indicating the action is necessary to protect the water resources of the Basin. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Elliott seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Pandl abstaining.

Transportation Committee

None

OLD BUSINESS

Mid-Point Comprehensive Plan Update – Move Into The FutureLV Event – December 6th @ Lehigh University – Iacocca Hall

Ms. Bradley talked about the Move Into the FutureLV event, which is day-long summit, to learn from key leaders and have a discussion about the Future of the Lehigh Valley which relates to the Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the first half of this year, a lot of good information was learned related to the Lehigh Valley. There will be experts brought in to talk about specific topics and then hope to engage into a more in depth conversation for the Comprehensive Plan update. Some of the specific topics include Transit, Technology, Automated Vehicles and Economics. Ms. Bradley encouraged everyone to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Pennsylvania Senate Bill 843 – Proposal to Amend the Municipalities Planning Code

Ms. Bradley stated that the proposed PA Senate Bill 843 would require counties to include in their comprehensive plans the name and physical location of residential and mixed-use condominiums, cooperatives and planned communities, as well as the total land area, lot size and number of units of each. The bill also requires, "to the extent available" information in the plan about the infrastructure of each community, including presence and condition of sanitary sewer, water and storm water systems, recreation facilities and roadways. If this bill is moved forward, it would substantially change the Municipalities Planning Code, especially as it relates to county planning commissions with a series of unfunded mandates that would also trickle down to the municipal government. Right now in Lehigh County, there are 123,976 individual parcels and in Northampton County, there are 120,060 individual parcels. A lot of this information and data is the individual responsibility of our municipal governments, a variety of sewer and water authorities, PA Dept. of Transportation, PA Dept. of Conservation + Natural Resources, etc. The County Comprehensive Plan is a general plan that sets out the goals and policies for a region as a whole. It is not a zoning ordinance or a specific data layered set. So this requirement actually defies professional planning recommendations for the development of comprehensive plans of any sort. Another note is how to tell the condition of a sanitary sewer line that is buried. The Commissioners wondered what is driving this amendment. Ms. Bradley said that she talked to Senator Scavello who said there is a group of people that believe that because they pay a homeowners association fee, that they are being double taxed because they consider a homeowners association fee a tax. When Ms. Bradley talked to Lori Dabbondanza at the Counties Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, she said that that movement of people that believe it is a double tax is very real and think that if this passes, it will create a state-wide data set that they can use to create their own smaller units of government in the Commonwealth. Discussions were held between the Commission members. It was decided that the letter should include an understanding of the fallout of this amendment and point out that this would require resources to acquire the information that some municipalities do not have. Also stress the unfunded mandated portion of this amendment stating that the LVPC does not have authority to make the municipalities gather and give this information which will then make the LVPC reliable to get this data. The LVPC does not have the funds to gather all the data they are looking for. Ms. Wright made a motion for staff to write the letter taking into account the statements made during the discussion to include in this letter. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Full Commission Annual Meeting + Commission Photo

Ms. Bradley noted that some meeting times and dates have changed for December due to the Holiday. Environment Committee will be on Tuesday, December 19th at 11am with Comprehensive Planning Committee following that at noon. Transportation Committee will be on

Thursday, December 21st at 9:30am with the Full Commission following that at 11am. Once Full Commission is adjourned, we will then have the Commission photo taken with lunch to follow. Ms. Bradley encouraged all Commissioner to attend.

Second Harvest Food + Supply Drive – Last Donation Date is December 21st

Ms. Bradley mentioned that the LVPC is taking donations again this year for the Second Harvest Food Bank. This will provide food and supplies to those in the Lehigh Valley who need it. Last year, we were able to collect 127lbs in donations and we are hoping to exceed that for this year. Donations will be accepted through December 21st.

CORRESPONDENCE

NCC's Fall 2017 Update Program – Thank you note

Ms. Bradley mentioned that a group of 200 people got together to learn about different things in the region and in Northampton County, hosted by Northampton County Community College. Ms. Bradley was able to talk about the comprehensive plan and what is happening in land development along with the transportation program. There were some great discussions on these topics. NCC invited Ms. Bradley back to present in the spring of 2018.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Downtown Allentown Wins Global Award for Excellence

Ms. Bradley noted that 2 out of 4 years, communities in the Lehigh Valley have won international awards from the Urban Land Institute. ULI brings together planners, architects, engineers, real estate professionals and bankers to really talk about issues of land development in all sorts of context. The Downtown Allentown Revitalization District was one of 13 real estate development projects worldwide to win the Urban Land Institute's 2017-2018 Global Award for Excellence.

EVENTS + INFORMATION

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) @ LVPC Office

The upcoming Local Technical Assistance Program classes are Roadside Vegetation Control on December 12 from 8am-3pm, Work Zone Temporary Traffic Control on January 30 from 8am-12pm and Stop Signs + Intersection Traffic Control on February 6 from 8am-12pm – all at LVPC.

ADJOURN

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

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