

# Memo



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*January 28, 2016*

## **MINUTES**

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Ms. Liesel Dreisbach chaired the meeting.

### ***Members in attendance:***

#### **Lehigh County**

Norman Blatt  
Percy Dougherty  
Steven Glickman  
Richard Molchany  
Christina Morgan  
Sara Pandl  
Kathy Rader  
Stephen Repasch  
Kevin Schmidt  
Donna Wright

#### **Northampton County**

Christen Borso  
Gordon Campbell  
Luis Campos  
John Diacogiannis  
Liesel Dreisbach  
Darlene Heller  
Kevin Lott  
Thomas Nolan  
Pamela Pearson  
Hayden Phillips  
Michael Reph  
Tina Roseberry

***Members absent:*** Shannon Calluori, Karen Duerholz, Armand Greco, Kent Herman, Edward Hozza, Julie Thomases, Eugene Clater, Charles Elliott, George Gemmel, Robert Lammi and Lynn Prior.

***Staff present:*** Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, Eric McAfee, George Kinney, Sue Rockwell, Tracy Oscavich, Teresa Mackey, Gabe Hurtado and Ngozi Obi.

***Public Present:*** Matt Malozi, Wanda Gruber, Brent Stringfellow, Diana Donaher, Don Heiney, Robert Scott and Keith Zehner.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR****MINUTES**

After a brief review, the minutes of the December 17, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Wright. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pandl, Mr. Lott and Ms. Borso abstaining.

**SPECIAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT***New Commissioner Introduction*

Ms. Dreisbach introduced new Commissioner, Luis Campos, who is representing John Brown from Northampton County. The Commission members and staff introduced themselves to Mr. Campos.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS****Comprehensive Planning Committee***Lower Nazareth Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Route 33 Logistics Center (also Merritt Brown)*

Mr. McAfee said the review letter for the Route 33 Logistics Center is on pages 11-12 of the agenda attachments. The letter had to be mailed out in order to meet the 30-day review period deadline. He asked that LVPC would review the letter since it is considered a land use of regional significance. In the case of industrial/warehouse buildings, anything over 500,000 square feet is of regional significance. Anything that falls into this category goes to the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the LVPC for review.

In this case, we are dealing with a project that is largely of regional significance almost exclusively because of its size, not because there are any other prevailing concerns, issues or inconsistencies. The project does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. If this Board has any comments, or if any issues need to be addressed, we can issue a second follow-up letter pending the Commission's approval.

Mr. McAfee said this project is located just north of Hecktown Road and abuts Newburg Road. It is at the northeast corner of the interchange of Route 33 and Hecktown Road. There are no major points of ingress or egress on Newburg Road.

He said the review letter notes the presence of surface depressions and karst formations. Surface depressions are indicators of potential sinkhole activity and could prove to be a problem. He passed out several copies of a map showing potential locations of surface depressions. The LVPC reviewed the Traffic Impact Study, which didn't show any broad concerns. The LVPC also wanted to make the applicant aware of other development in the area and the installation of another traffic light at Hecktown Road and the northbound ramp at Route 33. Mr. McAfee said, because this is a land use of regional significance, we sent the plans to LANta for their review. LANta does not plan to service this area in the near future. However, they noted that several transit routes are in close vicinity to the project. They encourage additional pedestrian connections in case there may be transit extension in the area.

Mr. McAfee said he has one other review letter to discuss in regards to the Merritt Brown tract. A copy of the letter was provided to Commission members. This subdivision allowed for the creation of the Route 33 project site. The minor subdivision plan notes the possibility of using on-lot sewage disposal, which would conflict with the General Land Use Policies of the County Comprehensive Plan. This subdivision resides within an area suitable for urban development, and anything of this magnitude would typically be provided with public sewer service. There was no further reference to on-lot sewage disposal in the actual Route 33 land development plan, so it could have been a mistake. We wanted to point this out because it is clearly inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. McAfee said one item discussed at the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting was overnight truck parking. A prevailing concern is that all of these large warehouse developments don't have places for long-term idling or overnight parking. It is going to become more and more of a concern as the regulations regarding the number of hours truckers can work may result in the need for more overnight parking or truck stops. As more and more land in this area is used for warehousing, it could lead to widespread illicit parking.

Ms. Rader asked if they have sufficient stacking distance if trucks can't unload right away. This is a problem in certain areas of Upper Macungie Township. They end up parking on the road if they can't get in. Ms. Wright said she brought this concern up at the Committee meeting because this was a big discussion at the Southwest Regional Plan Meetings. The County Comprehensive Plan doesn't address this issue. This might be a consideration in the Transportation section of the County Plan update. She said it was the consensus of the Committee to bring this to the LVPC meeting to consider sending a second letter asking the applicant to consider having a place for trucks to stack up or provide long-term parking.

Mr. Phillips agreed and said they are putting a lot of warehouses along Hanoverville Road. It was okay when there was just one, but now they are stacking these warehouses back to back. He said he actually called up the Colonial Regional Police and told them Hanoverville Road is backed up because they are staging there. In addition, they want to put another Logistics Center on Hecktown Road just west of this, so there will be more demand for staging on that road. We have to address this issue because it is a safety hazard. He said this is the time to address it, not after the fact. Mr. Diacogiannis asked if there is something that could be done in an ordinance to require these developers to have on-site facilities. Ms. Wright said provisions could be included in the municipal parking regulations.

Ms. Bradley said this is exactly why we have a Freight Advisory Committee meeting on February 3rd. A number of these issues were flagged in the Freight Plan that was adopted last year by the LVPC and Lehigh Valley Transportation Study. Ms. Bradley said we want to continue to have these conversations with the municipalities, and we hope you come to that meeting. The private sector also wants to work with the local communities, and this is the appropriate forum. Ms. Roseberry asked if private industries will also be involved with this committee. Ms. Bradley said yes; it is a completely open table with private sector people, all municipalities, etc. She said over 100 private entities were targeted. Mr. Glickman asked if this could be a model ordinance topic. Ms. Bradley said we are talking to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania about including that in our unified work program. Ultimately, they have to decide if they would pay for it.

Ms. Wright made a motion for staff to prepare a second letter that would include a comment for the applicant to consider adding a layover area for trucks on the plan. Mr. Lott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the original letter. Ms. Rader seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

*Ordinance Reviews*

Ms. Wright said there are three summary sheet items on page 13 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee said item #2 should be Lower Saucon Township, not Wind Gap Borough. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments with the correction. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Nolan abstaining on item #1.

***Environment Committee****Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plan Update*

Mr. Reese said, for the past year, we have been providing reports to the LVPC on the Open Space Plan for Northampton County. We have been working with Northampton County to create this plan. As of November of last year, this Commission agreed to forward the document on to Northampton County Council for their consideration and adoption. The County had their first reading back in December. On January 7th, they had a second reading. At the conclusion of that meeting, we are pleased to report that Council adopted the plan.

***Transportation Committee****Freight Advisory Committee Meeting Announcement*

Mr. Kinney said we developed our first ever Regional Freight Plan last year. The Freight Advisory Committee was one of the recommendations that came out of that Freight Plan. The Freight Advisory Committee has been formally adopted and implemented by the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS). We had them adopt a set of by-laws and resolution for the Committee. As Ms. Bradley mentioned earlier, these by-laws weren't intended to create a concrete committee. It was intended to be very open. We are patterning that process after our sister communities, including the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. We attend their meetings regularly and hope they will attend our meetings. They run their committees like a soft committee that has some membership input into it, but is also open to anyone that wishes to attend and participate. Mr. Kinney said hopefully you have all received an invitation regarding next Wednesday's meeting.

Mr. Kinney said the by-laws have a small authority section. In the authority section it talks about what the Committee will do. It is advisory to LVTS. The intent of the discussion and outreach is to ultimately help us with our planning and funding decisions. The Committee will be an information and technology exchange forum where we are going to be able to sit down with industry and public sector professionals and talk about both public and private interests and initiatives. It is also intended to promote intermodal capabilities and capacity and to develop a regional goods movement strategy. The focus is movement of freight to and from manufacturing sites. How are we doing this now? How can we better do this? Do we need to think about a methodology that talks about first and last mile improvements? What kind of infrastructure improvements do we need? How do they move freight to and from downtown? We will discuss intermodal facilities, warehouse facilities and other facilities that will impact our regional freight network, including our roads, rail and air transportation. The geographic area we intend to cover includes Lehigh and Northampton counties, but it is also meant to go beyond that. We hope to develop connections regionally, statewide and possibly internationally.

Mr. Kinney said the Committee is going to meet four times over the course of 2016, starting on February 3rd at 11:30 a.m. It will follow the normally scheduled LVTS Coordinating Committee meeting. Our Committee Chairs are Chris Kufro from the Pennsylvania Department

of Transportation (PennDOT) District 5 and Brian Hare from Central Office. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission staff will support the Freight Advisory Committee as it does with LVTS.

The meetings will include staff presentations, guest speakers and member updates. The Committee is open to everybody and consists of LVTS members, Truck Drivers, Law Enforcement Officials, State Officials, Local Officials, CDL Training Organizations, Insurance Risk Management Providers, Freight Warehouse Distribution Shippers and Receivers, Railroads, 3rd Party Logistic Supply Chain Companies, Industrial Development Organizations, Federal Agencies, Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association, Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce and Regional Bus Operators. This is just a start, and we hope to have this build over time.

Mr. Kinney said some of the presenters we want to have include FedEx and UPS, especially to discuss their downtown delivery logistics. What kind of technology do they use? How do they deliver to downtown businesses? Also, we want to have supply chain logistics presentations. Mr. Kinney said at the first meeting on February 3rd we are going to have Dan Walston from Federal Highways, who will talk about freight initiatives at the state and federal levels. Mr. Kinney said we received a suggestion to set up a tractor trailer in our parking lot and set up obstacles. You sit in the truck and see what the truck driver can't see. We want to do something like that as an educational opportunity. Upper Macungie is rolling out a program called The Good Neighbor Coalition. We want to have them talk about that program and how it can transfer to other communities. LANta could talk about their Bus Rapid Transit Initiative. The Airport Authority has a lot of things going on, including their Master Plan Update. PennDOT might talk about their State Rail Plan. The State Police have expressed interest in doing a motor carrier enforcement program.

Mr. Kinney said at our first meeting we will talk about the purpose of the Freight Advisory Committee, its authority and by-laws. We will talk about the Lehigh Valley Regional Freight Plan, what it says and what the task of this Committee will be moving forward. Again, we will have Dan Walston here to talk about both national and Pennsylvania rail freight and motor freight initiatives. We will finish with a brief discussion on other topic and meeting ideas. Mr. Kinney concluded his discussion.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *PlanSWL Comprehensive Plan Charrettes and Public Meeting*

Ms. Bradley said during the first two weeks in January we met with about 200 people from the Southwest Lehigh communities. Southwest Lehigh is made up of six communities: Alburtis, Emmaus and Macungie boroughs and Lower Macungie, Lower Milford and Upper Milford townships. This is an update to their existing multimunicipal comprehensive plan that was done in 2005. Mr. Bradley said, during the information gathering sessions, we had amazing discussion with great turnout and participation. The plan is moving very quickly. We are now going to release a statistically valid survey. We will ask the communities to prioritize what we heard and ask if we missed anything. We will then start drafting goals, policies and implementation tools. Ms. Bradley said the implementation tools are a key piece to this plan so the communities have something they can use and build upon. Then, by April or May, we should have a draft plan together. In June we will be finalizing that plan and working with the communities on adoption and their Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement. We have been experimenting with some community engagement strategies with significant success. We will bring you updates as we move along.

**NEW BUSINESS***Lehigh Valley Government Academy Course Completion Recognition*

Ms. Bradley said we have been offering the Government Academy courses for about 20 years. We were only offering Subdivision and Land Development and Zoning courses. These courses are offered through the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute's training program. Over the last few years we have been offering more opportunities for people who serve on planning commissions and local zoning hearing boards. This year we offered a course in Community Planning, as well as Subdivision and Land Development and Zoning. Ms. Bradley said you can become a Certified Citizen Planner if you complete all three of the courses.

Ms. Dreisbach and Ms. Bradley proceeded to give out the certificates to the people who completed all three classes.

*Publications*

Ms. Bradley said Alice Lipe, our Graphic and Publications Coordinator, manages the master list of publications that the Commission has available. The list identifies whether a document is available on the website. The list is now updated and current.

*Planning + Pizza*

Ms. Oscavich said over the last two years we started doing some informal information sessions. They have been successful, so we have eleven planned for this year. The first two to be held are the Housing Market Report on February 24th and Integrated Water Resources Management on April 6th.

*Local Technical Assistance Program*

Mr. Hurtado said this year we will provide 16 Local Technical Assistance Program courses in partnership with PennDOT. These are free transportation training courses for public works employees, engineers, local planners, etc. There will be a spring session and a fall session. The first two courses are listed on the agenda.

**CORRESPONDENCE – None****EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT***2016 Development Outlook*

Ms. Bradley said the Lehigh Valley Business Journal asked a number of people in the Lehigh Valley to write about what is happening in the region. A few weeks ago, she submitted an article, and it was published.

Ms. Bradley said the housing market has substantially changed. In the past, we had seen primarily single family detached dwelling proposals. Now we see higher density proposals, such as apartments and age-restricted communities. One of the biggest issues we need to talk about in terms of long-term housing sustainability is that in the future we may not have enough people to occupy the 55 and over developments that are on-line now or proposed for development. This is a conversation we need to have as part of the update of the regional comprehensive plan. There is also definitely a strong demand for modern apartments in our urban areas and the suburbs. Ms. Bradley said, in our recently released Housing Market Report,

we analyzed every housing transaction over the last five years in Lehigh and Northampton counties and found out our housing sales values are flat.

Ms. Bradley said, in terms of transportation, the passing of the Fast Act will continue to bring federal funding resources into our region. She said 80% of all the road, bridge and transit money used in our region is federal; 20% is state. There is no local contribution through the Long Range Transportation Plan required as of yet, but our needs far exceed the resources that come into our region. We have already started partnering with a number of municipalities including Upper Macungie Township on some potentially exciting public/private partnership projects, as well as rolling out some transportation alternative programs, which should help with crosswalks, last mile trail connections, etc. We continue to follow the federal requirements for investment, which are not always politically popular. Another important piece is that there are three pots of money that come to us. There is a transit pot, a highway pot and a bridge pot. This money cannot be moved around. It is against federal law. Ms. Bradley said in the future we are going to have to look at the resources available to us and again continue to assess those investments and what that means to land use and economic development.

#### *Web Hits*

Ms. Bradley said, in terms of things that are popular, the population and employment forecasts are some of the most popular items. In terms of reports and plans, our model development and environmental ordinances are the most popular. We had over 93,000 hits in over a three month period on just that information alone. The Comprehensive Plan always sees a fair amount of activity, as does the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Regional Housing Plan has gotten a lot of activity with over 17,000 hits. Our stormwater management reports had over 13,000 hits. This is what people are interested in. Ms. Rockwell said, at our December meeting, we released the Housing Market Report and Livable Landscapes Plan. In just a few weeks, the Housing Market Report had almost 1,000 hits and Livable Landscapes had about 4,300 hits.

#### **ADJOURN**

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

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for  
Becky Bradley, AICP  
Executive Director