

Memo



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March 31, 2016

MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 31, 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
Steven Glickman
Edward Hozza
Richard Molchany
Steven Neratko
Brad Osborne
Sara Pandl
Kathy Rader
Stephen Repasch
Kevin Schmidt
Donna Wright

Northampton County

Gordon Campbell
Luis Campos
Eugene Clater
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
George Gemmel
Robert Lammi
Thomas Nolan
Pamela Pearson
Hayden Phillips
Michael Reph
Tina Roseberry

Members absent: Percy Dougherty, Karen Duerholz, Armand Greco, Kent Herman, Christina Morgan, Julie Thomases, Christen Borso, Charles Elliott, Darlene Heller, Kevin Lott, Lynn Prior, and Adam Waldron.

Staff present: Becky Bradley, Eric McAfee, George Kinney, Tracy Oscavich, Bruce Rider, Bill Deegan, Teresa Mackey, Mike Donchez, Brian Hite, Gabe Hurtado, Sue Rockwell and Kathy Sauerzopf.

Public Present: Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**MINUTES**

After a brief review, the minutes of the February 25, 2016 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Lammi. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Gemmel, and Ms. Pearson abstaining.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT*Kathy Sauerzopf's Retirement*

Ms. Dreisbach announced the retirement of Kathy Sauerzopf after 17 years. Ms. Sauerzopf was presented with a gift from the Commission. Ms. Bradley read a letter of thanks written by Ms. Sauerzopf to the Commission and staff.

Ms. Dreisbach introduced a new Commission member, Steven Neratko, Chief Planner, who represents the City of Allentown. Mr. Neratko said he was recently appointed as Interim Director of Planning and Zoning.

COMMITTEE REPORTS***Comprehensive Planning Committee****East Allen Township – Comprehensive Plan – Complete Update*

Ms. Wright said the draft review letter is on pages 10-17 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee provided a background on the Township. He said the Township is sizeable but not yet similarly populated. The Township is located north of the City of Bethlehem and Hanover Township in Northampton County. It is bisected by Routes 329 and 512. Bath Borough touches the northeast corner of the Township.

Mr. McAfee said the draft plan leans more heavily towards being inconsistent because it encourages development in areas that are rural or farmland preservation. One of the key issues deals with public sewer and water availability, which is problematic because the draft plan indicates a desire to expand infrastructure into areas that we would not recommend. He briefly identified the key issues in each chapter. He said on page 16 of the agenda attachments, the highlighted text was added based on recommendations of the Comprehensive Planning Committee on Tuesday. While we generally disapprove of what they're planning, we see this as an excellent opportunity for future discussions with the Township as we begin working on the Regional Comprehensive Plan update.

Mr. Osborne said this letter isn't really very complimentary. He asked if there have been any conversations with the Township prior to the issuance of this letter. Mr. McAfee said yes, he's met with the Township manager. Their argument is that they want to see the southern half of the Township be more intensely developed, while emphasizing protection of the northern half. Mr. McAfee said based on the current County Comprehensive Plan, what they are trying to do is overwhelmingly inconsistent. Mr. Osborne said his understanding of this process is that the Township can ignore this letter. He said it would be important to develop a relationship with them so the weight of the letter has some significance and provides potential for improving their plan. He asked if there was potential for that. Mr. McAfee said that is the intent. He doesn't necessarily view the letter as exclusively negative. There are aspects of it that are very strong. He said the

highlighted text indicates that we want to work with them, and we anticipate using this language in the future. Ms. Wright said at the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting they talked about the fact that we will be updating the County Comprehensive Plan. We are currently doing reviews based on the old plan. It could be a different review based on an updated plan. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Diacogiannis seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Clater abstaining.

Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are ten summary sheet items on pages 18-19 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. Ms. Dreisbach called for the vote on each item. The motion carried with Ms. Wright abstaining on Item #1, Mr. Nolan on Item #2 and Mr. Reph on Item #10. Mr. Clater asked Mr. McAfee to comment about the freight-related provisions that are part of Item #9. Mr. McAfee said the provisions related to idling trucks and where they're supposed to go while waiting are excellent. He strongly complemented the Township on them. Mr. Clater said it was worthwhile to mention because the provisions address many of the issues we have talked about. Ms. Bradley said we could bring a copy of the provisions to next month's meeting.

Environment Committee – None

Transportation Committee

US Department of Transportation Meetings

Ms. Bradley said we were invited by the US Government to attend a Federal Freight Summit to participate in the development of the nation's first freight plan. They came up with a series of umbrella recommendations for freight mobility and management. This is one of the biggest economic/transportation challenges in the US. Globalization has caused a mass shift in how goods are consumed and also where they are produced and moved around. The US Government hasn't really been prepared for this. Our issues are basically both national and international issues. Mr. Kinney said they also provided a good overview of the FAST Act provisions. Mr. Molchany asked if there was any potential risk from this to our Transportation Improvement Program. Ms. Bradley said there is no risk on the federal side, however, there is a risk on the state side due to the Motor License Fund issue.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery Grant (TIGER)

Ms. Bradley said we are applying for a TIGER grant for the Riverside Drive Corridor project. We went to Washington to meet with the Deputy Secretary of the US Department of transportation's new office of Finance, Innovation and investment. We were debriefed on the TIGER grant application we submitted last year. We scored very competitively. They gave us some tips on how to make our current application more successful. The project will connect Hamilton Street at the Front Street Corridor in Allentown up along the abandoned rail corridor, which is owned by the Waterfront Partners, into Whitehall and close a significant gap in the 162 total mile D&L National Heritage Corridor Trail. It will also be a roadway, bike/pedestrian way and a transit road. It will open opportunities for brownfield redevelopment and protect the floodplain. We are currently working on improvements to our grant application. We are competing with New York City for money, however, they recently changed their requirements to

favor projects in secondary markets such as the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Oscavich identified the various project partners involved in the effort. She said the total project cost is approximately \$33 million. The ask amount is about \$25 million.

Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant (C2P2)

Ms. Bradley said the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources invited us to apply for the C2P2 grant for the sidewalk inventory we're working on. They know we want to move that into a full bike/pedestrian plan, and they want to be part of it since it meets some of the statewide goals for public health and supports connections between rural/suburban/urban trail networks. The Plan wouldn't start until 2017.

Planning + Pizza

Ms. Oscavich said we have two upcoming Planning + Pizza sessions this month. The first is One H2O to be held on April 6. The second one is Technology and Land Use that will be held on April 27. Ms. Bradley said our GIS team presented this topic on a webinar with the Penn State Extension, and we gave the Southwest Lehigh group a preview of it on Tuesday. This is an interactive tool that we will use to develop the General Land Use Plan for the Comprehensive Plan update. It will get people to think about what their community will look like. Mr. Molchany asked if the One H2O is a result of the current news about Flint Michigan and the issues of lead. Ms. Bradley said it's about how the issues of water aren't isolated to one issue. Water issues are looked at comprehensively, and in terms of water quality, it is distantly related. It is not directly about issues of lead. We are not talking about the issues in Flint. Ms. Pandl asked about the assumptions that will be used in the land use model. Ms. Bradley said we create the assumptions that include natural resources and existing zoning, among others. These assumptions will be used to identify different land use scenarios.

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

Mr. Hurtado said the next LTAP session is on Intersections and will be held April 7. The session focuses on safety improvements. We encourage everyone to attend. The sessions are free of charge.

Bethlehem Steel FC

Ms. Bradley said Bethlehem Steel FC is having their first game on Sunday and invited the LVPC to be part of the audience. Ms. Oscavich said tickets are \$15.

CORRESPONDENCE

Meals on Wheels of Northampton County Bushkill Creek Corridor Council of the Arts

Ms. Bradley said we collect money on Fridays for our Jeans for a Cause program that goes to local charities. We received two thank you letters for our recent donations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT*LVPC Committees*

Ms. Bradley said at your place is a list of what each of our committees do. Since we have new members on the board, we wanted to let you know what they did. Committee chairs encouraged new members to serve on one or more committees.

55th Anniversary

Ms. Bradley passed around several draft copies of the 55th Anniversary report. She said we wanted to create a document that talks about our organization, who we are, what we do and the work we've done. The report includes 55 things we've done since we were formed in 1961. Hard copies will be available in April.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by,

Susan Rockwell for
Becky Bradley, AICP
Executive Director