

Memo



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April 28, 2016

MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, April 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

Steven Glickman
Armand Greco
Kent Herman
Edward Hozza
Richard Molchany
Christina Morgan
Brad Osborne
Sara Pandl
Stephen Repasch
Kevin Schmidt
Donna Wright

Northampton County

Gordon Campbell
Luis Campos
Eugene Clater
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
Charles Elliott
Darlene Heller
Robert Lammi
Thomas Nolan
Pamela Pearson
Hayden Phillips
Michael Reph

Members absent: Norman Blatt, Percy Dougherty, Karen Duerholz, Steven Neratko, Kathy Rader, Julie Thomases, Christin Borso, George Gemmel, Kevin Lott, Lynn Prior, Tina Roseberry and Adam Waldron.

Staff present: Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Sue Rockwell and Tracy Oscavich.

Public Present: David Mitros, South Bethlehem Historical Society

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Mitros said the South Bethlehem Historical Society is presenting a conference on Thursday, May 5, 2016 titled "Historic Preservation: Respecting a Community's Past While Planning its Future". The conference is co-sponsored by Lehigh University South Side Initiative, Steelworkers' Archives, Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society and the National Museum of Industrial History. Following the conference is a tour of the new National Museum of Industrial History. Registration is \$15, which includes lunch. Mr. Mitros distributed a flyer on the conference.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the March 31, 2016 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Wright. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Morgan and Mr. Elliott abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS**Comprehensive Planning Committee**

South Whitehall Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendments Service pack 1L – Model Regulations for Warehousing and Trucking Terminals (Idling and Overnight Parking)

Mr. McAfee said this presentation is in response to a conversation at last month's Commission meeting with regards to a particular Zoning Ordinance Amendment from South Whitehall Township we reviewed last month. Our review of the Amendment, No. 39 out of 124, addressed and was highly complimentary of the Township's efforts to accommodate vehicle idling and queuing at motor freight terminals and warehousing and distribution. Our review letter is on pages 6-8 of the agenda attachments, and a copy of the Amendment is on pages 9-10. He said the most powerful subsections of the Amendment are Nos. II-IV. Ms. Bradley said we're going to be collecting ordinances like this and taking them to Freight Advisory Committee meetings and some of our various municipal meetings we attend or hold. She said this could be a good topic for an upcoming County Council of Governments meeting if they'd like.

Weisenberg Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – West Hills Business Center Buildings E & F

Mr. McAfee said 500,000 square feet of warehouse/storage space is the threshold for considering a project a Land Use of Regional Significance, which requires a review by the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the Commission. The review letter, dated April 6, 2016, is on pages 11-12 of the agenda attachments and had to go out because of the 30-day review period. A copy of the general site plan was provided to Commission members. Mr. McAfee said both buildings E and F total nearly 800,000 square feet of warehouse/storage space. The project is located at the northeast corner where Keck's Road crosses over I-78. The primary entrance is a nearly quarter of a mile long drive that ends in a cul-de-sac. Overall, the project is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The primary consideration from the April 6 letter is improving access through sidewalks, which are located only along the sides of the buildings. The lack of sidewalks doesn't provide the adequate level of connectivity that we typically promote.

Mr. McAfee said the cul-de-sac is separated by about five feet of space that otherwise would allow for full connectivity with Sunset Drive. A subsequent conversation between LVPC

staff and the applicant's engineer revealed that they are trying to keep traffic off of Keck's Road, which is not designed to handle tractor trailers, particularly the I-78 overpass. He said there are plans to upgrade the overpass with the intention to open the cul-de-sac. This issue was addressed at the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, and the Committee decided to issue a follow-up letter, which is included on pages 13-14 of the agenda attachments. The letter points out the deficiencies in connectivity and safety, due to the length of the cul-de-sac, as well as solutions. The applicant could eliminate the cul-de-sac immediately after the improvements are made or eliminate it sooner and restrict access to non-truck traffic until the improvements are made. He also said that our standard paragraph about truck queuing and day parking should be added to the letter. Mr. Clater said they should at least consider emergency access. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the follow-up letter with the additional language. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are five summary sheet items on page 15 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Clater seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hozza abstaining on Item #1, and Mr. Elliott and Mr. Clater abstaining on Item #3.

Environment Committee

Reviews

Mr. Repasch said there are three summary sheet items on page 16 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Hozza seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Elliott abstaining on Item #3.

Transportation Committee

Transportation Alternatives Program Awards

Mr. Kinney said the Transportation Alternatives Program provides enhancement dollars on top of the road and bridge dollars. The funds are used for mobility projects, such as bike/pedestrian facilities and conversion of abandoned railways, among others. There was \$1.27 million to award. We received 23 applications with a total ask amount of over \$9 million. A review committee was formed that included LVPC staff, Liesel Dreisbach and a representative from both the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority and Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority. The key to making a decision on award winners is how close the project is to being shovel-ready. Also, we look at how innovative a project is. On April 6, a celebration was held to identify the winners and present their checks. Mr. Kinney briefly discussed the award winners. He said, to make the process transparent, we will be taking photographs of the award winning projects as they progress and post them on our website.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

55th Anniversary Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Report

Ms. Bradley said we sent out about 4,000 copies of the annual report/55th anniversary celebration document. Everyone should have received a copy in the mail. She said the LVPC has been around since 1961. We represent the two counties and are the federally-designated

Metropolitan Planning Organization for infrastructure planning and investment. We also unite the community around regional planning issues.

Ms. Bradley provided a power point presentation of the document. She discussed several slides that provide a snapshot of what's happening in terms of development in the Lehigh Valley that also speak to the future of development in our area. In 2014, one million square feet of industrial development was proposed, while in 2015, 3.4 million square feet was proposed. She said we anticipate that to grow through 2018. Ms. Bradley said last week she attended a ULI product council for commercial and industrial development. The former head of Goldman Sachs and Wells Fargo Bank and a number of real estate interests spoke of us as being the new inland empire because of our access to markets being much better than southern California in many ways. Mr. Repasch asked if the industrial component is mostly warehousing. Ms. Bradley said it includes some warehousing, but there's a lot of manufacturing coming into the Lehigh Valley.

Ms. Bradley said the document includes a timeline that identifies 55 events and projects. She briefly discussed some of the events and projects, including new public engagement tools, a comprehensive rebranding and working and collaborating with others on projects and events. She said we're about to start on the public piece of updating our *Regional Comprehensive Plan* called FutureLV. We will have a big kick-off of the project during the last quarter of the year.

APA-PA Conference – LVPC Presentations

Mr. Kinney said the APA-PA conference will be held in the Lehigh Valley in October 2016. We've been preparing for the logistical components of the conference, including the sessions and funding. He said the LVPC submitted eight project proposals, and six were accepted. Ms. Pandl said there were good proposals received from around the state. They received 85 proposals for 36 spots.

Planning + Pizza

Ms. Bradley said we held a Planning + Pizza session on Wednesday. The topic was Technology and Land Use. Another session is scheduled for May 25 titled Show Us the \$: Transportation Funding. The sessions are free.

Local Technical Assistance Program

Ms. Bradley said we have three workshops scheduled during May. She briefly discussed the workshops.

Quarterly Web Hits

Ms. Rockwell said we received over 270,000 hits on our website during the first quarter of 2016. The top 25 downloads included our steep slopes model ordinance at almost 46,000 hits and continues to be the most popular of our ordinances. The *Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plan* came in second with almost 29,000 hits having just been released in December 2015. Other popular reports included the *Return on Environment* study with almost 7,500 hits and the *Housing Market Report*, which was also just released in December, with almost 5,700 hits.

CORRESPONDENCE - None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - None

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by,

Susan Rockwell for
Becky Bradley, AICP
Executive Director