

Memo



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May 26, 2016

MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, May 26, 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
Armand Greco
Kent Herman
Edward Hozza
Richard Molchany
Brad Osborne
Kathy Rader
Stephen Repasch
Julie Thomases
Donna Wright

Northampton County

Gordon Campbell
Eugene Clater
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
George Gemmel
Darlene Heller
Robert Lammi
Thomas Nolan
Pamela Pearson
Tina Roseberry

Members absent: Karen Duerholz, Steven Glickman, Christina Morgan, Steven Neratko, Sara Pandl, Kevin Schmidt, Christen Borso, Luis Campos, Charles Elliott, Kevin Lott, Hayden Phillips, Lynn Prior, Michael Reph and Adam Waldron

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

Public Present: Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ; Ron Dendas, The Dorothy Rider Pool Health Care Trust; Mark Bradbury, Martin, Bradbury & Griffith LLC

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR - None**MINUTES**

After a brief review, the minutes of the April 28, 2016 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Greco. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Rader, Mr. Blatt and Mr. Gemmel abstaining.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Chuck Fraust

Ms. Dreisbach mentioned the recent unfortunate passing of former Commission member, Chuck Fraust. Ms. Dreisbach wanted to take a moment to acknowledge his 20 years of service. Flowers were sent to the family on behalf of the LVPC.

Executive Secretary

Ms. Dreisbach introduced and welcomed the new LVPC Executive Secretary, Jodi Chomicky.

SPECIAL REPORT

Community Health Needs Assessment - Presentation by Ron Dendas, Program Officer, The Dorothy Rider Pool Health Care Trust: "The Road to Health"

Mr. Dendas said the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) came about as part of the 2010 Affordable Care Act that required all non-profit hospitals and health care systems to conduct an Assessment. He said hospitals have to make the report easily accessible to the public. A copy of the report was provided to Commission members. The Lehigh Valley report looks at factors that go into making all people in a particular area healthy, including social and environmental factors like employment, education and air quality, individual behaviors like smoking or healthy eating, and the quality and availability of health care in their area. Mr. Dendas discussed the current health of the Lehigh Valley, stating we are good at treating chronic diseases, but not good at keeping people healthy. According to Mr. Dendas, the best strategy to improve the overall health of the Lehigh Valley is to improve/develop health, education and transportation cross-sector partnerships. Mr. Repasch asked how this fits into the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Bradley said some of the things identified in the report are things we work on. She said we are hoping to continue to engage the Dorothy Rider Pool Health Care Trust and health care networks to work with us as we update the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Lower Macungie Township - Land Use of Regional Significance - Spring Creek Settlement Subdivision (Lot 9)

Mr. McAfee directed the Commission's attention to the 1st folded map (no color) in regards to an 874,000 square foot warehouse proposal in the Spring Creek Settlement Subdivision in far western Lower Macungie Township. The proposal is inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan, as it is proposing a highly-intensive urbanized use on land that is overwhelmingly farmland preservation. We strongly recommend against developing this land. Per the 30-day review period, the review letter on pages 6-8 of the agenda attachments was sent on May 18th. Any additional comments from the Commission will need to be sent in a separate letter.

Mr. McAfee said this proposal is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance, so it had to go through our Memorandum of Understanding and additional review with LANta. LANta often has feedback that is largely tied towards improving its capacity to serve a transit-dependent population through access, usually in the form of either a bus stop or pedestrian amenities on the perimeter of the property. At the same time, these are the kinds of things we don't want to see in an area where we shouldn't be encouraging any sort of urbanization practices. Mr. McAfee said we dealt with this in a letter several months ago where we had to reconcile the fact that LANta understandably wants this land to be prepared for transit access should it be developed, but the fact is, it shouldn't be developed as is.

An in-house study was conducted and found this proposal will generate well over 1,500 vehicle trips per day. Additionally, the LVPC recommends that, as we are experiencing this rapid expansion of warehousing and logistical facilities, there needs to be more careful consideration of overnight parking, staging and rest areas for vehicles.

Mr. McAfee said this location is also host to a number of conditions regarding carbonate geology and Karst features. There are surface depressions and surface mines on site, which are strong indicators of sinkhole activity. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Herman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Slatington Borough - Rentschler LLP (216 Center Street) Land Development Plan - Lehigh County SALDO Application

Mr. McAfee said this County SALDO application takes place in the Borough of Slatington, which is one of the four municipalities across the Lehigh Valley that lacks its own Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. This means the LVPC is not just the reviewer, but also the administrator of the process. We have both review and approval authority. The other municipalities without a SALDO are West Easton, Glendon and Chapman, all in Northampton County.

Mr. McAfee said this project involves a parcel next to a car dealership owned by the applicant, Fred Rentschler, who had a house and barn that he demolished to build a parking lot for his cars. The parcel is slightly over ½ acre with two access points, as shown on the 2nd folded map, one to the north and one to the west. It does not involve a structure, but does involve stormwater because it exceeded the 10,000 square feet of impervious surface. Since this is in the Borough of Slatington,

we had to go through the full process of correspondence with the zoning hearing board, who approved two variances, and all the considerations that came under the County SALDO review after the zoning hearing board offered its feedback for those variances.

The majority of the considerations were minor in the sense of issues that still need to be addressed, but the biggest consideration is we are still awaiting a response from the Lehigh County Conservation District with regards to the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan. The District's response will largely determine our capacity to fully approve what is going on. Once we receive their response (their deadline is May 31st), we can use that as a basis for our response.

Mr. McAfee said we proposed conditional approval of the plan at Tuesday's Committee meeting. The main considerations that still need to be fulfilled are listed in the letter on pages 9-10 of the agenda attachments. At the Committee meeting, the applicant requested the following waivers from the County SALDO: the use of curbing for access roads, screen planting on all four sides of the parking lot and the recommended plantings to be used. Ms. Wright said this letter and future letters should include a list of the waivers granted. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter with the addition of the waivers granted. Mr. Clater seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are four summary sheet items on page 12 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee said three of the items are consistent and one is inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. He said Items #2 and #3 are Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC) reviews. PUC reviews are proposals for utility modifications, usually electric, in relation to population needs and expansions due to demand. Mr. McAfee said he reviews these from a geographic standpoint in terms of alterations, modifications and how they are taking place in relation to the County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. McAfee said Item #3 is inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The construction of the new Siegfried Substation would rest 500 feet from the existing substation. The two parcels involved are within farmland preservation. Most of the upgrades to the transmission lines will be crossing floodplains and steep slopes. About 15 acres will be disturbed by the project. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Environment Committee

Lehigh County Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Agricultural Lands Plan

Mr. Reese said that the Livable Landscapes Plan for Northampton County was adopted by the County in January 2016. It takes into account natural areas, greenways and blueways, parks and recreation, farmland and scenic and cultural facilities. He said we are now about to begin the same type of initiative for Lehigh County, also to be called "Livable Landscapes". The plan will talk about parks and recreation, open space and agricultural land.

Mr. Reese said one of the benefits we have as we prepare to begin the Lehigh County Plan is that we just completed a Return on Environment study, which is the first of its kind in the Lehigh Valley. The study documents the economic value of open space, not just their environmental, social or aesthetic benefits, but their real dollar benefit. If we had to replace our Natural Systems Services (what nature provides) with some engineering solutions, we would

need to spend \$154 million/year to replace what nature just gives us in Lehigh County alone (i.e. water supply, water quality, flood control). Air quality is a similar type of measure. It has been separated from natural systems services because it means something completely different. Our natural areas, specifically our trees, remove contaminants from the air, and because they do, Lehigh County residents save \$26 million/year in health care costs. In terms of outdoor recreation, Mr. Reese said we assembled a lot of experts (hunting, fishing, hiking, running) to help us figure out what segment of the population actually participates in those types of activities on our open space resources and how much they spend. Economic modeling suggests \$450 million/year is contributed to our economy from people recreating on our open space resources every year in Lehigh County. He said the value of a single family home increases the closer it is in proximity to protected open space. Across Lehigh County, almost \$1 billion of increased property values are attributed to being next to open space, which breaks down to about \$15,000 per single family residential property.

In terms of the scope of work, Mr. Reese said it is similar to what's been accomplished in the Northampton County Plan. We will review and assess existing resources. We will create a vision and define goals. The plan will include an assessment of needs and opportunities to improve and expand our open space resources in a variety of different categories—parks and recreation, countywide trails network, our sensitive natural resources, water supply, farmland and rural open spaces, protection and restoration of greenways and blueways. We will prepare a series of recommendations based on the identified needs and opportunities and create a priority system associated with it. We will also have significant public outreach and participation.

Mr. Reese said the Return on Environment study looks at three basic elements—health and wellness, open space resources and economic activity. We look to see how these interact and overlap. These elements were also included in the Northampton County Plan and will be incorporated in the Lehigh County Plan as well. He said the Lehigh County Livable Landscapes Plan is set to kick-off in the summer of 2016 and be completed in the summer of 2017.

Transportation Committee

Freight Advisory Committee Meeting

Mr. Kinney announced that the second ever Freight Advisory Committee meeting will be held next week on June 1st at 11:30 am. The agenda includes a presentation by Brian Hare, PennDOT Central, on the status of the State Freight Movement Plan, followed by a presentation by Dante Staciokas, Lehigh Carbon Community College, who will present his white paper on tractor trailer parking and CDL shortages and how that affects us locally. The agenda will conclude with a presentation from the State Police Division on the Motor Carrier Enforcement Program.

Transportation Summit with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Bradley said, per the flier at your place from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, the LVPC, LANta and the Airport Authority get together annually for a joint transportation summit. Each year's topic is picked relevant to the transportation system in the Lehigh Valley. This year the speakers include Leslie Richards, PennDOT Secretary, who is going to discuss what's going on at the state level in terms of transportation and make some exciting announcements in regards to multimodalism. Stephanie Cohen, FedEx Ground Vice President of Strategic Planning, will speak publically for the first time on behalf of FedEx as to why they chose

to locate here in the Lehigh Valley and how our location impacts freight and freight-related business development. Ms. Bradley said she will be presenting the LVPC's Transportation Improvement Program. Charles Everett, Executive Director of the Lehigh Northampton Airport Authority, was added to the list of speakers to talk about the real estate side and the Airport's relationship to the FedEx project. Last year, 200 people attended the summit, and 300 are expected this year.

PennDOT Online Resources

Mr. Kinney said we are in the process of updating our Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). We have been trying to help people visualize this program, and PennDOT has given us a head start with respect to their online resource. Mr. Kinney directed everyone's attention to PennDOT's home page (penndot.gov). From here, you will find a link to the left called Construction and Planned Projects. After clicking on this link, you are given three options: Construction Projects, Act 89 Projects and PennDOT's 4- and 12- Year Plans. Clicking on any one of these links will allow you to search via single address, county, PennDOT district, Legislative District, or planning partner to obtain the information you are looking for. From the map, you can see active TIP projects or active construction projects. You can click on a project and get some basic information about the project such as state representation, U.S. representation, project manager with phone number and email, funding and fiscal years of the project. If you happen to be interested in more than one project, you can select Summary Report and get every project for a particular county. Mr. Kinney said this is a great resource to see what's happening in our region.

Show Me the \$: Transportation Funding

Ms. Bradley said we held a Planning and Pizza session yesterday, and we had to add two additional tables to accommodate all attendees— 37 in total. Staff provided a presentation on how to access money that goes into construction on the Transportation Improvement Program and the long range plan and information on various PennDOT grant programs. The power point presentation is on our website.

Bike to Work Day

Ms. Bradley said Mr. Kinney came up with the idea of determining what it would take to ride your bike to work. The LVPC teamed up with the Coalition for Appropriate Transportation (CAT), which provides bike education in our region, and biked the six miles from the west end of Allentown to the LVPC in 38 minutes. Ms. Bradley showed some photos taken along the way. She said the neighborhood conditions were great, with tree-lined streets and not too many cars. Then you start to transition to other local roads where it can get a little tight. Ms. Bradley said they all felt they were able to ride fairly safely in a number of tractor trailer situations. Hopefully this will ultimately lead to the designation of bike corridors, commuter corridors and alternative transportation for our region.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS*Planning + Pizza*

Ms. Bradley said our next Planning and Pizza is titled *WalkLV* and is scheduled for Monday, June 27th. It is the release of our Sidewalk Inventory of the entire region. Special guest Roy Gothie, the new statewide Bike/Hike Coordinator for PennDOT, will be speaking. We are his first big presentation since he started in his new position. Registration is available on the LVPC website.

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

Ms. Bradley said we have two upcoming Local Technical Assistance Programs. We have Pavement Markings on June 7th. Then for our rural communities we have Unpaved and Gravel Roads on June 30th, which is the first time we have offered this program.

CORRESPONDENCE*Turning Point of Lehigh Valley*

Ms. Bradley said we received a thank you letter from Turning Point. The staff wore jeans for a cause last month and raised \$100, which is an all-time high for us. Turning Point helps people who are victims of domestic abuse.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - None**ADJOURN**

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

Submitted by,

Susan Rockwell for
Becky Bradley, AICP
Executive Director