

Memo



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September 29, 2016

MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, September 29, 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

Percy Dougherty
Karen Duerholz
Steven Glickman
Kent Herman
Edward Hozza
Rick Molchany
Sara Pandl
Kathy Rader
Stephen Repasch

Northampton County

Gordon Campbell
Eugene Clater
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
Charles Elliott
Tim Herrlinger
Robert Lammi
Shawn Martell
Pamela Pearson
Hayden Phillips
Lynn Prior
Michael Reph

Members absent: Armand Greco, Christina Morgan, Steven Neratko, Brad Osborne, Kevin Schmidt, Julie Thomases, Christine Weaver, Donna Wright, Christen Borso, George Gemmel, Darlene Heller, Kevin Lott, Thomas Nolan and Tina Roseberry

Staff present: Becky Bradley, Erin Willis, Geoff Reese, Eric McAfee, Sue Rockwell, Tracy Oscavich, Tamara Mittman, John von Kerczek and Whitney Burdge

Public Present: Norman Blatt, Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the August 25, 2016 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Dougherty. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Rader and Mr. Diacogiannis abstaining.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Dreisbach recognized Norman Blatt, one of the commissioners who is leaving the committee. She also recognized Erin Willis as the new Executive Secretary.

COMMITTEE REPORTS***Comprehensive Planning Committee******Allen Township - Zoning Ordinance Amendments - Various***

Mr. von Kerczek talked about the zoning amendments for Allen Township. In general Community Planning staff found the changes to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan but identified areas of conflict or unclear language that might cause problems in applying tools. The issues were found in 3 sections – Zoning Provisions, Specific Regulations and Table of Uses. One major issue involved inconsistency with the General Land Use Plan. The area north of 329 Nor-Bath Parkway is categorized primarily for rural and farm land preservation in the General Land Use Plan and includes areas zoned for low density residential, high density residential and neighborhood commercial uses on the Allen Township zoning map. In the residential zones, the proposed zoning amendment would expand permitting uses that generally require public water and public sewer. While this could result in conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan, these conflicts can be resolved through the conditional use review process. However, within the Neighborhood Commercial zones, the proposed zoning amendment would expand permitted uses to include uses explicitly requiring public water and public sewer service, setting up a direct conflict with the General Use Plan. To eliminate this conflict, Community Planning staff recommended that the public utility requirements be removed from the specific regulations for these uses. Another issue was found under the specific regulations for Temporary Shelter which states that residents of Allen Township shall be assigned highest priority when selecting residents for shelter. This provision could potentially run afoul of the federal Fair Housing Act. Community Planning staff therefore recommended the county consult with an attorney with expertise on civil rights matters. Within the specific regulations for four use categories under Industrial Uses, staff noted that the provision requiring that no more than 1/3 of any development site be devoted to any buildings could promote inefficient use of land in rural areas. Staff therefore recommended revision of that language. Finally, within the specific regulations, there were several instances of overlapping use categories and regulations which would likely result in confusion for applicants and conflicts within the table of uses. For example, definitions and regulations for Service Business and Service Store uses overlap considerably, resulting in a conflict in the Table of Uses between what is permitted by right and which is permitted by condition use.

Mr. Repasch asked if there was a motion to accept the letter. Mr. Lammi moved to accept the motion. Mr. Herrlinger seconded that motion. The motion carried with Mr. Clater abstaining.

Ordinance Reviews

Mr. McAfee said there are no major issues with the 3 summary sheet items on page 12. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Prior seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Environment Committee

Monocacy Creek Act 167 Plan – Status Report

Mr. Reese explained the Monocacy Creek Watershed which drains down through the City of Bethlehem to the Lehigh River. The City received a grant from the Department of Environment Protection for environmental evaluation in the Monocacy Creek Watershed. Wildland Conservancy will be doing an environmental assessment in regards to the condition of the stream channel, condition of the flood plain area, etc. Part of the money will also be used for an updated Storm Management Plan for the Monocacy Creek Watershed. The Storm Management Act was created back in 1978 which states that counties are responsible for preparing Watershed Storm Water Management Plans. The first time we did this study was back in 1989 which is very dated. With the new study, we will be looking at the hydrology associated with the watershed. Mr. Reese explained the graphic showing the Monocacy Creek Watershed (12 municipalities). The graphic showcases how long it takes a drop of water to go from north to south. There is a stream gage on Monocacy Creek maintained by the US Geological Survey – which monitors most of the drainage area associated with the watershed and has been collected since 1949, so we have a long record of stream gage data. Out of the 20 peak flows studied for flooding through 1987 – 16 of them were during winter – only 4 of them were during non-winter conditions – which means the Monocacy does not typically flood during non-winter conditions – all happening in the decade of the 1980's. This might have happened because the development activity is beginning to change the relationship a little bit meaning we could have a severe influence even during non-frozen conditions. This analysis will be updating all this information and more through 2015. Act 167 is very useful in terms of working with the City of Bethlehem and surrounding communities because under the program each municipality (12) must be involved to help plan the update of this study. One of the main reasons to have the City of Bethlehem work with this program is, at the end of this process – when you go through the counties to adopt this plan, it gets submitted to DEP and they approve the document – there is then a mandate for all 12 municipalities to adopt the model regulations – which is important to know just we won't be studying this watershed but have an opportunity to have an impact on the engineering standards applied to new development. This will officially be complete by June of 2017.

Transportation Committee

Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Debriefing

Ms. Oscavich stated that earlier this year we submitted a TIGER grant to the USDOT for the Riverside Drive and Trails project along the Lehigh River in Allentown and Whitehall Township allowing accessibility to neighborhoods historically that did not have accessibility to the river, to jobs or to the other parts of the community – it's also one of the major gaps in the 165 mile trail that runs into the National Heritage Corridor. We were unsuccessful again this year but there was a debrief about why we were unsuccessful. There's 4 different levels – Disqualified, Not Recommended, Recommended, Highly Recommended. Last year we were Recommended and this year we moved up to Highly Recommended. The Highly Recommended go directly to Secretary Fox. We improved upon our application from last year. During the debrief, not a lot of

information was given except that there was nothing negative to say about the application, project or anything that we submitted to them. There was simply just not enough money to go around. We are looking at other avenues for the trail and corridor in Allentown and Whitehall Township – state grants, other federal grants. A portion of the TIGER scope went to Multimodal funds from the PA Department of Community – still waiting to hear about the application that was submitted to PennDOT.

OLD BUSINESS

BUILDLV: Annual Development + Outlook Report

Ms. Bradley said we had a joint event with the Urban Land Institute – asking Tracy how many attendees came. Ms. Oscavich stated around 160 people attended in the Cinema at ArtsQuest. Ms. Bradley presented BUILDLV to 4 different groups this month alone – Eric took BuildLV to the East Penn School District. The information in this is one of the more popular pieces that we have. Ms. Bradley presented this to the LV Association of Realtors – around 200 people – so it gets a lot of use and is very important so we will continue to use these documents going forward for public and private sectors.

NEW BUSINESS

Lehigh Valley Awards + Gala

Ms. Oscavich said on Tuesday we have our annual Gala + Lehigh Valley Awards event. We will be honoring excellence in planning for our 3rd year. There's 8 categories honoring 8 different projects. Becky will be putting on a presentation on turning 55 years old as well as what will be happening in the next 55 years.

Lehigh Valley Government Academy

Ms. Oscavich said we just wrapped up the Community Planning classes which had 32 people. Zoning classes will be held in October. In November Subdivision + Land Development classes will take place, which attendance is very high for.

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

Ms. Oscavich stated that PennDOT offers the classes while we offer the site and also market for them. PennDOT stated that there needs to be at least 10 people in a class or they will cancel it so we are encouraging people to sign up. Bridge Maintenance + Inspection is coming up on Thursday - Project Estimating is on October 7 – Geosynthetics is on October 19 and Full Depth Reclamation is on October 28.

American Planning Association-Pennsylvania Chapter 2016 Annual Conference

Ms. Bradley said the statewide conference is being held October 16-18 in Allentown. All the planners in the region have come together to plan the conference which for the first time in 12 years is being held in Allentown. LVPC will have 5 different presentations. Ms. Pandl stated that it will showcase all 3 cities and their mobile workshops and is a great program.

Planning + Pizza

Ms. Oscavich stated that the Pizza + Planning is a monthly series to discuss the projects we are working on in the hopes to get a broader audience and engage them. Monocacy Creek H2O Study is on October 26 – BuildLV is on November 16 – FutureLV is on December 21.

FutureLV Forum: Regional Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Oscavich stated that Mr. Scott Kinney, Director of Education at the Discovery channel will be speaking at the event. More than half of that will be participatory talking to people about what the future of the Lehigh Valley should be. LVPC plans on using Poll Everywhere, a smart phone interactive live poll, to capture and engage the crowd.

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

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

Submitted by,

Erin Willis for
Becky Bradley, AICP
Executive Director