

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

December 4, 2019 – 7 PM, Weona Park Community Center, 25 S. Main Street, Pen Argyl, PA 18072

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor: James Kresge, Nathaniel Dysard
East Bangor: Susan Ruggiero
L. Mt. Bethel: Susan Disidore, Sandra Newman, Jen Smethers
Pen Argyl: Robin Zmoda
Plainfield: Tom Petrucci, Stephen Hurni, Terry Kleintop
Portland: Stephanie Steele
Roseto: Carl Renna
U. Mt. Bethel: Anthony DeFranco
Washington: Robert Smith, Justin Huratiak
Wind Gap: George Hinton, Louise Firestone

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Judith Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel Township
Bonnie Due – East Bangor
Paul Levits – Plainfield Township
Dave Friedman – U. Mt. Bethel Open Space Advisory Board
Richard Wilford-Hunt – U. Mt. Bethel
Nathiefa Hamilton- U.S. Census Bureau

Planning Partners in Attendance:

Peter Barnard – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC)
Simon Okumu – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC)
Stephen Reider – Slate Belt Rising
Mark Hartney – Northampton County

Minutes:

Courtesy of the Floor

Ms. Hamilton said that she has not received feedback from Slate Belt municipalities regarding the upcoming 2020 Census and asked about ways she can help. Ms. Zmoda said she has not received any requests for feedback.

Roll Call

Mr. Okumu took roll call.

Minutes from the November 6th Meeting

Mr. Petrucci called for a vote on the November 6, 2019 meeting minutes, which are attached to the agenda. Mr. Renna made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Newman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2019**

Issues and Opportunities Report

Mr. Barnard said that the Issues and Opportunities Report is online and encouraged committee members to review the report and provide feedback at the February meeting.

Review of Existing Comprehensive Plans

Mr. Barnard introduced the spreadsheet attachment identifying the goals and policies from existing Slate Belt Comprehensive Plans and asked committee members what they like from their plans. He said the spreadsheet will be emailed to committee members.

Mr. Kresge from Bangor said that the land use and housing plans, safe and peaceful community, business retention and area partnerships are some of the things he likes about their current municipal plan.

Ms. Ruggiero from East Bangor said their plan is outdated, and they need to discuss this with the Borough Mayor.

Ms. Newman from Lower Mount Bethel was pleased that the Township has worked hard to meet plan objectives, such as maintaining rural character and what they've implemented, including soil protection and scenic byways. They would like to identify partnerships with other communities related to shared services, such as fire/police.

Ms. Zmoda from Pen Argyl liked the goals and vision portion of their plan and found the action plan very helpful. She also liked the land use portion of their plan. The plan is dated, but they have made progress, including a regional police force. The issue she has with the plan is that it did not go far enough, especially with zoning.

Mr. Petrucci said he liked the action program and progress checklist and better land use decisions that help to maintain the rural character of the Township. Mr. Kleintop saw the plan as an opportunity to protect the resources they have but disliked the fact that there are too many hurdles they have to go through to protect their resources.

Ms. Stephanie Steele from Portland thought it was a well-grounded plan and would like to do more with it.

Mr. Renna from Roseto said his main concern was maintenance of old buildings, municipal services, and the municipal dam that has deteriorated. Funding and the government approval timeline for renovation is an issue.

Mr. DeFranco from Upper Mount Bethel said their last comprehensive plan was done in 2002. It is on track, but is 20 years behind. He said that they are weak on historic preservation. They are moving forward with open space and Act 537 planning but need to bring the plan into the 21st century.

Washington Township committee members said they did not like the vague goals and would like more measurable details and specific targets. The plan has good intentions, but farmland preservation efforts should be more aggressive. The plan needs to clarify where they want to see what, such as sewers.

Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes December 4, 2019

Wind Gap committee members found the multi-municipal plan very useful. However, the plan needs to explain transportation needs, and they identified the need to work with school districts more.

Ms. Ruggiero asked what the actual use of a comprehensive plan is and how it helps them in real life. Mr. Barnard responded that a comprehensive plan is a legal document per the PA Municipalities Planning Code that dictates public policy on how a community grows or does not grow. While it is not a zoning ordinance that establishes the use of the land, it forms the basis for how to develop an ordinance to achieve the development goals of the community. A good plan looks at community issues and what actions you can take to make improvements. A plan should also be flexible to accommodate changes in the future.

Advertising Steering Committee Meetings for 2020

Mr. Barnard said the 2020 Steering Committee Meeting schedule is attached to the agenda. He said the January meeting will be cancelled. The committee members agreed with the schedule. The LVPC will advertise the meeting schedule.

Draft Press Release

Mr. Barnard said the draft press release on the Issues and Opportunities Report is attached to the agenda. Mr. Hartney said the press release should include quotes. Most good press releases include quotes. Mr. Barnard said quoting every municipality would add another page to the press release. Mr. Hartney proposed getting quotes from Alan Jennings, CACLV; Lamont McClure, Northampton County Executive; Becky Bradley, LVPC and Tom Petrucci, if the goal is broad recognition. Ms. Henckel mentioned the need to broaden the plan into a community plan instead of a committee plan. Mr. Kresge made a motion to approve including quotes as proposed by Mr. Hartney. Mr. Renna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Next Steps

Mr. Barnard talked about developing a quality framework, which is more about committee members providing feedback and talking to their community members.

Adjourn

Mr. Petrucci called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hurni made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Renna seconded the motion.

Attachments

- November 6, 2019 Steering Committee Minutes
- 2020 Steering Committee Meeting Schedule
- Draft Plan Slate Belt Press Release
- Slate Belt - Existing Goals and Policies

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.