January 29, 2015

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the LVPC Conference Room, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

**Members in attendance:**

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**Members absent:** Percy Dougherty, Christina Morgan, Sara Pandl, Stephen Repasch, Lisa Scheller, Charles Fraust, George F. Gemmel, George Kinney, Kevin Lott and Elinor Warner.

**Staff present:** Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, Eric McAfee, Michael Donchez and Sue Rockwell.

**Public Present:** Matt Glennon, Seth Vaughn
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the December 18, 2014 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Diacogiannis. Mr. Howells seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Commissioner Recognition

Mr. Herman said we have a special task tonight of recognizing two of our members who have completed their service with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission at the end of 2014—Seth Vaughn and Matt Glennon. Mr. Vaughn is an elected Northampton County Councilman and has spent two years with the Planning Commission. We appreciate his time and effort. Mr. Herman presented him with a gift in recognition of his service. Mr. Herman said Mr. Glennon started his career as a Plainfield Township Supervisor. He served on the Planning Commission for eight years and chaired during Mr. Kaiser’s retirement and the important task of selecting a new Executive Director. Mr. Herman also presented him with a gift for his service. Mr. Glennon said it was a pleasure and honor to work with the staff and fellow Commissioners.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Allentown Parking Authority (Landmark Tower) – Land Use of Regional Significance – Development Review

Mr. McAfee said this project is located on a parcel that is barely over 5,000 square feet. It is an incredible achievement to put 34 floors, equaling well over 100,000 square feet of space and the vast majority going to offices, on this parcel. The upper six levels will be residential. It is ten stories taller than the current tallest building in the city—PPL Tower.

We didn’t have a great deal of concern in terms of overall compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Generally speaking, due to the lack of parking requirements or height limitations in this portion of the Neighborhood Improvement Zone, this project fits in quite well. The one concern we have is there has been no Traffic Impact Study performed and we requested one be done. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the review letter on pages 9-10 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Herman said his firm has done work for the Parking Authority, so he requested Ms. Dreisbach call for the vote. Ms. Dreisbach said there is a motion on the floor and a second from Mr. Lammi. Mr. Elliott asked about the availability of parking to meet the demands of development. Mr. McAfee said there are provisions that allow for the expansion of the adjacent parking deck. Mr. Hefele said the city just completed an entire downtown planning program, which is essentially a capacity analysis for downtown, and the city found existing surplus parking
downtown, with some garages that are about to be added. Ms. Dreisbach called for the vote. The motion carried, with Mr. Herman and Mr. Hefele abstaining.

**LVIP 7, Phase 5, Lot 81 – Development Review**

Mr. McAfee said this is one of many proposals we’ve seen for LVIP 7, the vast majority of which have not passed the threshold of Land Use of Regional Significance, but certainly are in aggregate. Mr. McAfee displayed a map that shows the phasing plan for LVIP 7. Mr. McAfee said Lot 81 is owned by Triple Net Investments 35 Nazareth Park and sits on 8.86 acres. The proposed building is 150,000 square feet. Over 144,000 square feet will be manufacturing space, and the rest will be office space. The anticipation is that the development will employ 150 people. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the review letter. Mr. Hefele seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Heller abstaining.

**Ordinance Reviews**

Ms. Wright said two summary sheet items are on page 12 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Herman said his firm represents the Borough of Portland, so he requested Ms. Dreisbach call for the vote. Ms. Dreisbach said there is a motion on the floor. Ms. Duerholz seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Herman abstaining on Item No. 2.

**Environment Committee**

**Pipeline Resource Center**

Mr. Reese said the proposed natural gas pipeline is supposed to go through Northampton County from Moore Township all the way down to the southern part of the Valley, transferring natural gas from the production fields to the north to the primary users of the gas. We created a Pipeline Resource Center to find information about this pipeline and what it may mean. We want to make sure the Commission is aware that this information is on our website, and we will update it as we move forward. Mr. Reese discussed the website and how to find information on a variety of topics including pipeline regulations, landowner rights and options, pipeline easements, local government guide to pipeline safety, pipeline construction and environmental issues. Mr. Reese said we get notices from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regarding the pipeline. Mr. Glickman asked what the timeframe is for the pipeline. Mr. Reese said it will be measured in years. There are several public meetings coming up to discuss the pipeline. One meeting will be held at the Northampton Community College on February 10. These meetings start one phase of the process. There will be an environmental impact phase that will be a lengthy process.
Transportation Committee

Long Range Transportation Plan Project Solicitations

Mr. Donchez said the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission is currently engaged in updating the Long Range Transportation Plan. As part of that process, we solicit projects for consideration for inclusion in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Historically, we have done that through the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) process. Project sponsors come before the LVTS Technical Committee for projects to be considered for inclusion in the plan. This year we are doing it a little more proactively. We sent out a call for projects to all the municipalities and received an overwhelming response. We ended up dedicating the majority of this past Monday’s LVTS Technical Committee meeting hearing presentations from project sponsors. We heard 47 different project presentations for consideration. We are still receiving project information sheets for more projects to be considered for the Long Range Transportation Plan. This upcoming Monday at 9:00 a.m. we will be having a Round 2 meeting at the Homewood Suites on Avenue C in Bethlehem to hear additional presentations. As of the close of business today, we had about 35 additional projects to review for inclusion in the Long Range Plan. We will take all of these projects into consideration when we are programming them into the plan. During Monday’s meeting, the total dollar value of all the projects presented to us was $283 million in funding requests for the 47 projects. We heard from the City of Allentown, Upper Macungie Township, Lower Macungie Township and several boroughs, and we are scheduled to hear more this upcoming Monday. This is just an update of our continuing outreach activity for consideration of projects in the Long Range Plan. Ms. Bradley said WFMZ was here the entire time, covering the presentations from 9:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Green Light Go Program Funding – Round 2

Mr. Donchez said, as a result of the passage of Act 89, there will be additional revenue for transportation in the State of Pennsylvania. Since the passage of that Act, there are new programs coming out. Green Light Go is one of those programs. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) funds the improvements to traffic signals on state roads such as signal upgrades, controller upgrades, hardware upgrades, signal coordination and signal retiming. Municipalities can apply for pretty much any hardware or software upgrade related to traffic signals. The first round of funding was held last year. At that time, $15 million was available statewide for applicants, and five Lehigh Valley municipalities were awarded funding under the first round. On December 20, 2014, PennDOT announced through the Federal Register the availability of a second round of funding. This time there is $25 million available statewide for competitive applications. The application period started on December 20 and runs until February 27, 2015. The program funds much needed improvements for Lehigh Valley municipalities and requires a 50% local match. The local match can come from a variety of sources. Mr. Donchez also noted that DCED announced that their application funding cycle for the Multimodal Transportation Program is open through the end of July.

OLD BUSINESS - None
**NEW BUSINESS**

*Lehigh Valley Profile & Trends Report*

Ms. Bradley said we release two reports every year. One is the Municipal Profiles report, which has data on each municipality in the region. The other is the Lehigh Valley Profile and Trends report, which includes some of the same information just aggregated differently, along with much more detailed information. Ms. Bradley said it was inefficient to release these two reports separately, so we combined them into one report. She passed around several draft copies. The final version will be completed by next month. She said Mr. Manhardt, our GIS Manager, created a dashboard that shows where each municipality ranks within the Valley using several different parameters. A map of each municipality is included. We had a chance to gain efficiency and make a better document. It will be an exciting resource that will be more user friendly. Ms. Bradley thanked Ms. Rockwell and the rest of the staff involved in the project. Mr. Herman asked how the report is disseminated to the local governments. Ms. Bradley said we plan on sending one copy to each municipal government. It will also be made available on-line. Ms. Bradley said when she goes out to speak to different groups, she will bring copies of their specific municipal information. It will also be available in PDF format. Mr. Herman asked whether or not it should be sent to administrative officials, such as the Township Manager, or to the Chair of the Supervisors. The consensus of the Commission members was that it should go to the Chief Operating Official. Mr. Glickman suggested it be sent to County Council and Commissioners. Ms. Bradley said they will all receive a copy. Mr. Herman suggested copies be sent to the school districts. Ms. Rockwell said we used to send a copy to the Superintendents.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

*U.S. Congressman Charles W. Dent*

Ms. Bradley said Congressman Dent and his staff chose us to host the Environmental Protection Agency Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Workshop on December 8, 2014. We are the only place in the country where the EPA provided that training. It was fully attended. Mr. Dent sent us a letter to thank us for hosting the event.

*Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council/Trinity Episcopal Church*

The staff Jeans for a Cause fund sends money to local charities. We received thank you notes from the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council and the Trinity Episcopal Church.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

*2014 Web Hits*

Ms. Bradley said, with the agenda packet, you have a list of LVPC web hits by each quarter and a total for the year. She said the amazing thing is we had 659,000 web hits in 2014. Ms. Bradley said that is an incredible number of hits. The Comprehensive Plan is very popular and got over 36,000 hits last year. Lehigh Valley Profile and Trends got 21,000 hits last year. The Return on
Environment document was only on the website for about two weeks and it got 2,331 hits. The Trails Report got 67,000 hits. The Long Range Transportation Plan had 40,000 hits. Our model development regulations had 277,000 web hits. This really speaks to the work of the staff. On the municipal side, the Nazareth Area Comprehensive Plan, created a number of years ago, is still getting 17,000 hits. The One Lehigh Valley document had 31,000 hits. The Regional Housing Plan had 31,000 hits. Our stormwater management reports had 63,000 hits. The Transportation Improvement Program got 43,000 hits. This year we added a suite of hydrologic reports that were done a while ago. We also added seven new reports into the LVPC repertoire: Climate and Energy Element, Energy Profile, Traffic Safety Plan, Regional Housing Plan, Homebuying, Return On Environment and One Lehigh Valley. This shows there is demand for the work we are doing. Ms. Dreisbach asks if we know where the hits are coming from. Ms. Bradley said she believes we can do more of that as we switch to Go Daddy as our host to get better analytics.

Special Edition Newsletter

Ms. Bradley said this will be the 50th year we have been producing our newsletter. We will be creating a Special Edition newsletter. It will be a flashback newsletter that basically explains what we do and why we were founded, showing how we’ve progressed over time.

Local Technical Assistance Program

Ms. Bradley said there is a list of classes in the agenda attachments. We hold these classes in conjunction with PennDOT. We are one of the course providers. They are targeted to municipal road supervisors and engineering staff, municipal officials and local engineers. The classes include presentations on work zones, traffic safety, asphalt road maintenance, roadside vegetation control, liquid seal coat and traffic signs. It is very good information that our municipal employees in the Lehigh Valley need in order to maintain a good road system and provide safety. Ms. Bradley said the meetings are very well attended.

LVPC/Committee Meetings

Mr. Herman asked Commission members to note that, due to the office improvements being done, the meetings will be held at different locations. Ms. Bradley said we’ll send notifications confirming the location of each meeting.

Ms. Wright made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley,
Executive Director
February 26, 2015

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Manufacturers Resource Center, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 200, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

*Members in attendance:*

**Lehigh County**

Norman Blatt  
Steven Glickman  
Armand Greco  
Michael Hefele  
Kent Herman  
Kenneth McClain  
Richard Molchany  
Christina Morgan  
Sara Pandl  
Kathy Rader  
Stephen Repasch  
Lisa Scheller  
Donna Wright

**Northampton County**

Gordon Campbell  
John Diacogiannis  
Liesel Dreisbach  
Charles Elliott  
George F. Gemmel  
Darlene Heller  
Bob Lammi  
Kevin Lott  
Carl Manges  
Thomas J. Nolan  
Pamela Pearson  
Lynn Prior  
Lori Sywensky  
Elinor Warner

*Members absent:* Percy Dougherty, Karen Duerholz, Ben Howells, Edward Hozza, Christen Borso, Charles Fraust and Michael Reph.
**Staff present:** Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Michael Donchez, Sue Rockwell and Gabe Hurtado.

**Public Present:** Laura Eberly and Jim Illigash, Pennoni Associates; David Biddison, Traditions of America; Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

**MINUTES**

After a brief review, the minutes of the January 29, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Wright. Mr. Glickman seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Gemmel, Ms. Pandl, Mr. Lott and Ms. Morgan abstaining.

Mr. Herman welcomed two new members and one former member to the Commission. Ms. Elinor Warner is an Easton City Council member representing Easton and Bethlehem. This is her second term on the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Ms. Lynn Prior is a citizen representative from Northampton County. She is the Director of Buy Fresh, Buy Local in the Lehigh Valley. Mr. Richard Molchany is currently the Director of General Services for Lehigh County. He will be acting as Tom Muller’s representative. Mr. Herman invited the new members to serve on any of the committees where a great deal of our work is done. The staff and Commission members introduced themselves to the new members.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Comprehensive Planning Committee**

*Green Pond (Traditions of America) – Bethlehem Township – 261-Unit Residential Development Review*

Mr. McAfee said this proposed development does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan, but we had a number of concerns. The draft review letter is on pages 7-8 of the agenda attachments. We have a concern about the absence of pedestrian connectivity along the streets. In lieu of that, they have a number of multi-user trails. There is a lack of clarity regarding the delineation of active and passive recreation areas. We are also concerned that the roads are going to be largely private and below township standards. We urge all roads to be public so the municipality is prepared for maintenance of the roads.

Mr. Hurtado said staff reviewed a Traffic Impact Study for this development. There are three main access points. There are two along Green Pond Road and one on Church Street. Mr. Hurtado said, as part of the traffic study, nine total intersections were reviewed. The total weekday trips generated would be 1,082. This should be a fairly low impact development. There were two intersections with specific turning movements that, according to PennDOT thresholds, dropped below the recommended level of service. Mr. Hurtado said our recommendation is for the developer and PennDOT to mitigate those impacts. Mr. Hurtado said this development is close to a LANta
Fixed Route Service Area. The developer should explore with LANta the potential for Fixed Route Bus Service to this site.

Mr. Reese discussed the stormwater management aspects of this development. The project site is located within the Bushkill Creek and Nancy Run watersheds. The watersheds have a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. The Bushkill Creek portion of the site retains runoff from offsite areas to the north and west, including from Green Pond itself. The developer is proposing detention facilities in each watershed to address stormwater for this site. Mr. Reese said we have done a stormwater review, but there are a few details to work out yet with the designer. Ms. Wright said the Committee had a discussion concerning the trails running through the middle of the wetlands and also not being really contingent to the housing that is available. Also, trying to get people easily to the LANta bus stops will be difficult. If the water remains in that area as much as we think it will, that trail is basically unusable, unless it is heavily maintained. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion.

Mr. Biddison, representing Traditions of America, said he thinks the first presentation related to the layout needs to be reviewed in light of the stormwater issues. There are obviously a host of stormwater management issues. We are very focused on limiting the amount of impervious coverage. Every time you make those roads wider, there is more water to manage. In regards to the walking path through the wetlands, he received the same comment from the Bethlehem Township Planning Commission. He said they will reroute the path so it does not go through the wetland area. Mr. Gemmel asked if the water that goes from Green Pond to the detention area is factored into the whole stormwater plan. Mr. Reese said yes. Ms. Wright asked if there are plans to make sure that water doesn’t flood the road anymore. Mr. Biddison said they are limiting the occurrences that the road will flood. He can’t guarantee the road will never flood. Mr. Herman called for the vote. The motion carried with Mr. Nolan and Mr. Elliott abstaining.

Hills at Winchester – South Whitehall Township – 246-Unit Residential Development Review

Mr. McAfee said the review letter on pages 9-10 of the agenda attachments was already sent out on February 11 within the time period stipulated by the MPC. This development consists of mixed-uses, mixed housing types, age restricted and non-restricted age housing. The development is laid out with two collector roads, with Walbert Avenue on the south and Huckleberry Road on the north. Brickyard Road is another point of access. This development has some sidewalks, but they are generally only on one side of the street, and the sidewalks actually terminate at points that don’t have any connectivity. Mr. McAfee said we are concerned about the proposed private roads and recommend they be publicly-owned and maintained. This development creates a landlocked parcel, and we encourage an access easement to this lot. Two of the proposed lots are inconsistent with the LVPC Comprehensive Plan. Both lots are proposed for on-lot water and sewer and contain steep slopes over 15%. Lots containing steep slopes that will utilize on-lot water or sewer should have a minimum lot size of three acres. Both lots are less than two acres. Ms. Sywensky asked if we looked at the age restricted units in terms of accessibility. Ms. Bradley said this is actually controlled by the building code, so this does not get reviewed as part of the land development. It gets reviewed as part of the building plans. Ms. Bradley said the developer is required to meet ADA requirements under the statewide building code. Ms. Wright made a motion to ratify the letter that
was sent out on February 11. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Morgan abstaining.

**City Center Flats – City of Allentown – 200-Unit Residential Development**

Mr. McAfee said this proposed development is about two blocks down the street from the Landmark Tower proposal reviewed last month. It is another significant mixed-use development with far more emphasis on residences than Landmark Tower. This is a mixture of ten and eleven stories. Five floors will be devoted to parking, and the upper five will be devoted to apartments. The retail uses will front 8th Street. While we did not see anything conflicting with the County Comprehensive Plan, we did estimate that it will generate enough vehicle trips to warrant a traffic study. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter on page 11 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Manges seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hefele abstaining.

**South Whitehall Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Omnibus Amendment of 31 Items, also Signage (MPC)**

Mr. McAfee said this is an extensive array of amendments. About a week later, we received additional amendments on signage. There are about forty amendments. Generally speaking, they are matters of local concern. However, we do have a few comments on the amendments. Mr. McAfee reviewed the comments on the draft review letter on pages 12-13 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Morgan abstaining.

**South Whitehall Township – Floodplain Ordinance Amendment (MPC)**

Mr. McAfee said considerable amounts of the LVPC model Floodplain Ordinance were reflected in the Township Ordinance. It is overwhelmingly consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. There were a few minor considerations as indicated in the review letter on pages 14-15 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee reviewed the comments provided in the letter. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Morgan abstaining.

**Borough of Tatamy – Official Map and Zoning Map Updates (MPC)**

Mr. McAfee said this is in reference to both an amended Official Map and Zoning Map Amendments. He noted we only received two maps from the Borough. We did not receive official legislative text that should accompany these maps. Our review is based on the maps only. We can continue this review when we receive the additional material. The maps seem to be broadly consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. He said one concern we have is that the Business Overlay District replaces the Medium Density Residential zone. The new zone is called an “Overlay Zone”, but the map does not have any underlying zone indicated. It is unclear how this zone will work. Ms. Sywensky asked if Tatamy is part of the Nazareth Area Joint Plan or if this is a separate effort. Ms. Bradley said we will be preparing a report card for the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. We are not actually updating the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Sywensky asked if they were issued the report card or did they just choose to go ahead with this. Ms. Bradley said the contract
to do the work was just signed by the Executive Committee last Wednesday, so the LVPC work will start very soon. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter on pages 16-17 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pearson abstaining.

**Ordinance Reviews**

Ms. Wright said six summary sheet items are on page 18 of the agenda attachments. She said all the reviews were consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan with the exception of Item No. 4, which is inconsistent. Mr. McAfee said we have been in contact with the Township, and this is just a transitional move as they work to develop far more vigorous and effective regulations. Ms. Wright said Upper Milford is doing this because their current Open Space Zoning Ordinance doesn’t help them at all. They are trying to remove it to get something that will. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Heller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Environment Committee**

**PennEast Pipeline**

Ms. Rockwell said last month the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed PennEast Pipeline Project. The process allows for the opportunity for the public to comment on any issues that they think should be addressed in the EIS. The comment period for this stage of the project ends tomorrow. We have prepared a draft letter we propose to submit to FERC. As the regional planning agency for the two counties, we have a number of resources available that we believe should be considered during the EIS development process. The draft letter provides a list of those resources. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the letter on pages 19-20 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McClain seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Elliott abstaining.

**Reviews**

Mr. Repasch said three summary sheet items are on page 21 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Transportation Committee**

**New Director of Transportation Planning**

Ms. Bradley said George Kinney, our new Director of Transportation Planning, has had a lot of experience working in regional transportation planning. He has helped facilitate the establishment of a light rail system in Orlando, Florida, amongst other things. In addition to his previous position in Easton, he has a significant amount of experience that can help us with transportation planning.
OLD BUSINESS

Lehigh Valley Profile and Trends Report

Ms. Bradley said this document is a combination of the old Municipal Profiles and the Profile & Trends reports making a more comprehensive document. We will be sending a copy to every municipality, all the County Commissioners and County Council members, libraries and school districts. We already have 20 requests. It will be put on the website when it is officially adopted by this board. Ms. Sywensky asked if media contacts will get a copy of the report. Ms. Bradley said no, however; we will be sending out a Benchmark notice about it that will be sent to the media. Ms. Wright made a motion to adopt the document. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS - None

CORRESPONDENCE - None

Mr. Molchany said the Lehigh County Executive and Commissioners have been receiving inquiries about the Rt. 222 bypass project. He knows there was a presentation by Lower and Upper Macungie townships during our two-day transportation meeting. He asked if it was appropriate for this Commission to discuss that, or if it was better to discuss it at the transportation meeting. Ms. Bradley said the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) handles those project pitches, which is a separate board managed by the staff of the LVPC. Ms. Bradley said PennDOT issued an op-ed piece in the Reading Eagle newspaper over the last weekend. This was put in by our PennDOT District representative, Michael Rebert. The Rt. 222 section of Reading is largely two lanes. It has significant intersection safety issues. We do not manage the Reading area. That is managed through the Reading Area Transportation Study, which is the similar organization to our LVTS and has a separate board. They are required by federal law to solicit public input on the expansion of that section of Rt. 222. They are starting that conversation. PennDOT is in the process of preparing a formal response. The op-ed in the Reading Eagle led to a series of form letters that certain people in the Lehigh Valley co-opted, even though those were specifically about the Reading section of Rt. 222, and substituted various township names in Lehigh County. Ms. Bradley said the pitch to the LVTS will be considered under the normal project process, as well as every other of the over $422 million of new requests made through that process. We expect PennDOT to have a formal response very soon. Ms. Bradley said she was also able to set up a meeting with the District Executive and Lehigh County Executive so he could be debriefed on what is actually going on along Rt. 222. The form letters evolved to include projects like Hamilton Crossings that was negotiated a long time ago with PennDOT. Unfortunately, there is confusion around the Rt. 222 improvements in Lehigh County.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

2015 Plan Brands

Ms. Bradley said we have been working on ways to communicate the work we are doing with the whole community. We wanted to create simple, understandable brands for a whole series
of projects we are working on. We want them to be consistent, good quality, clean and recognizable. Many people worked very hard on the HUD Sustainability Communities effort. We wanted to continue the idea of those 31 new goals and carry that into our planning work. We want to explain what we really do. We came up with a series of brands. PLANLV will include the Comprehensive Plan rewrite effort. It will also include things that don’t fit into straight County Planning activities. BUILDLV will brand and market our subdivision and development reporting. MOVELV will include anything that is transportation-related. It will be the name of our Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as the freight planning effort.

**BUILDLV Event**

We are planning to partner with the Urban Land Institute to release the subdivision and land development report on May 4th from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Lehigh County Bar Association in Allentown. This is a really good opportunity to keep our event costs low and partner with a well-respected entity. It will bring together not only planners, but also architects, engineers, bankers and developers to really talk through and build a knowledge base on the idea of development and building. We will have a 15-20 minute presentation of our annual subdivision and land development report, followed by an expert panel including J.B. Reilly from City Center and Traditions of America; David Jaindl as an expert speaker on agriculture, environment, housing development and industrial development; and Scott Fainor, head of National Penn Bank and member of the Federal Reserve Board. It will be moderated by land use Attorney Joseph Fitzpatrick.

**State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interest**

Mr. Herman requested that the Commission members submit the forms provided to the LVPC as soon as possible.

Mr. Repasch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
March 26, 2015

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Manufacturers Resource Center, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 200, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

**Members in attendance:**

**Lehigh County**
- Norman Blatt
- Percy Dougherty
- Karen Duerholz
- Steven Glickman
- Kent Herman
- Ben Howells
- Edward Hozza
- Richard Molchany
- Christina Morgan
- Sara Pandl
- Kathy Rader
- Stephen Repasch
- Lisa Scheller
- Donna Wright

**Northampton County**
- Gordon Campbell
- John Diacogiannis
- Liesel Dreisbach
- Charles Elliott
- George F. Gemmel
- Bob Lammi
- Carl Manges
- Thomas J. Nolan
- Pamela Pearson
- Hayden Phillips
- Lynn Prior
- Lori Sywensky

**Members absent:** Armand Greco, Michael Hefele, Kenneth McClain, Christen Borso, Charles Fraust, Darlene Heller, Kevin Lott, Michael Reph and Elinor Warner.

**Staff present:** Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Michael Donchez, Sue Rockwell and Tracy Oscavich.
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Herman welcomed Mr. Phillips to the Commission. He is an elected member from Northampton County Council. Mr. Phillips said this is his second year on Northampton County Council. Mr. Herman said county government is an important component of the functioning of our organization, both from a financial and cooperating standpoint. The Commission members and LVPC staff introduced themselves to Mr. Phillips.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the February 26, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Repasch. Ms. Sywensky seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Liberty at Mill Creek – Upper Macungie Township (Land Use of Regional Significance)

Mr. McAfee said we have two land uses of regional significance we are reviewing this evening. They are both large-scale warehousing facilities. The first is Liberty at Mill Creek. It straddles Upper and Lower Macungie townships, but the majority is in Upper Macungie Township. The primary streets that frame this are Rt. 22 to the north, Cetronia Road to the northwest, Mill Creek Road to the east and Hamilton Boulevard to the south. The intersection of Hamilton Boulevard and Mill Creek Road is the primary intersection that sits within Lower Macungie Township. It is a proposed 2.5 million square feet of space in this phase.

Mr. McAfee said we have seen previous phases of this proposal. He briefly discussed the previous proposals. This is the third time it has come before us for review. The current proposal is broadly consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The draft letter included with the agenda packet has not been sent out yet and is still within its 30-day review period. We are still learning new things about it. He said this proposal came before the Comprehensive Planning Committee on Tuesday and we noted one of the two new entry points at Grange Road Extension was going to be a roundabout. We learned later that evening that the roundabout was rejected by the Township, but it was still being described in the Traffic Impact Study. He said we are still dealing with a moving target. He said he spoke with Sara Pandl from Lower Macungie Township earlier today and still needed to speak to the Township engineer to better understand what revisions have taken place since this plan was submitted and what level of accuracy the Traffic Impact Study still holds.

Mr. Donchez said the first Traffic Impact Study for this project was received in the summer of 2012. Since then, six revisions have been made to the Traffic Impact Study, an Addendum was issued after that and most recently, an Addendum excerpt. With this particular development, they
are looking to have two access points to the highway network. The first will be a signalized, full movement access point on Mill Creek Road. The second access point will be to the north of the site on Cetronia Road. However, that access point would prohibit left out movements from the facility and is proposed to be unsignalized, stop-controlled on the driveway. When we took a look at the Traffic Impact Study we had before, it accounted for two facilities and two structures: one structure being 1.2 million square feet and the second structure being 1.3 million square feet. Mr. Donchez said, based on 2.5 million square feet of warehousing, it would generate about 4,200 trips per day. When you look at the breakdown into a.m. and p.m. peak hours, you are talking about 297 a.m. peak hour trips and about 316 p.m. peak hour trips. Mr. Donchez said all of the intersections that were studied in the Traffic Impact Study operate with the development at a level of service “C” or better, which is a very good level of service. It has come to our attention that the 2.5 million square feet of warehousing may no longer be valid at this point in time. He said we are probably looking more in the vicinity of 2 million square feet. In addition to that, we are in the process of coordinating our review with PennDOT because this particular development ties into Cetronia Road, which is a state road. They are required to go through PennDOT’s Highway Occupancy Permit process. We are in the process of trying to coordinate our review with them to iron out some of the discrepancies that exist between the Traffic Impact Study and the plan we have before us.

Ms. Scheller asked if all peak trips per weekday are considered equal, whether it is a smart car or a semi-tractor trailer, and if most of these coming in and out are going to be 40-50 foot tractor trailers. Mr. Donchez said those trips account for all traffic without regard to the particular type of traffic. Ms. Scheller asked if a motorcycle and tractor trailer are created equal. Mr. Donchez said as far as average annual daily trips is concerned yes, but not necessarily as far as the impact to the highway infrastructure. He said our review comments are draft in nature, and we are still working through the process of finalizing them by working through discrepancies between the Traffic Impact Study and plans. Ms. Rader said she believes the level of service at the bypass and Mill Creek Road is an “F”. She said Liberty is proposing $7 million traffic improvements to that intersection, which would bring it up to a much higher level and that is taking the present traffic into consideration, as well as what they will be adding to that and some of the neighboring proposed traffic. Ms. Rader said she thinks you will see that when you get the revised traffic study. Mr. Donchez said yes, plus the revised square footage is about half a million square feet less. Ms. Rader said they are proposing the improvement there, so that later, more can be added to it. They are making an upgrade access so whatever they do now will not have to be ripped out; they can add to it. Mr. Dougherty said that is similar to what happened at Hamilton Crossings. That whole stretch there is going to be one of our major problems in the future. The whole corridor has developed so quickly that once the Berks County section of Rt. 222 is finished and starts dumping traffic in our area, you are really going to see backups.

Mr. Herman said we have a draft of a letter that probably needs some additional work based on some new information. The crucial piece he thinks the Commission could take action on now is the issue that the overall application does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. However, he noted that there will be additional detail in the final letter based on new information we receive at a later time. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the proposal in concept and whatever the staff comments end up being when the additional information is available. Mr.
Lammi seconded the motion. Mr. Herman asked Mr. McAfee that when the letter is finalized to email it to Commission members. The motion carried with Ms. Rader and Ms. Pandl abstaining.

Spring Creek Properties “Settlement Subdivision” Lots 7-8 – Lower Macungie Township (Land Use of Regional Significance)

Mr. McAfee said this is a sizeable warehousing facility of slightly over 1 million square feet. It is exclusively in Lower Macungie Township. He included a handout map that shows the broader context. Fundamentally this proposal is inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The previous and current proposal both are pretty much entirely in Farmland Preservation and are serviced by rural roads. These proposals are inconsistent with the General Land Use Plan of the County Comprehensive Plan. The date of the letter was March 20th. The 30-day review period already expired, so the letter on pages 8-9 of the agenda attachments has been sent. There is still an opportunity for further consideration. Another review letter can be sent if necessary. He said, for any project that is a Land Use of Regional Significance including Liberty at Mill Creek, the LVPC has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANta), allowing the agency to review the development in terms of transit, connectivity and general circulation issues.

The biggest consideration of this proposal is that it is in very close proximity to an urbanized area, Alburtis Borough. One of the key roads that would intersect with Congdon Hill Road is Spring Creek Road, which becomes the main street of Alburtis. We can expect through this development that Alburtis Borough will endure a significant amount of traffic. Another consideration is that the border of Berks County and Longswamp Township is only about a half mile to the southwest. We did not receive a current Traffic Impact Study, and we believe it meets our threshold requiring one that would look at potential impacts on adjacent communities. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pandl abstaining.

CJERP (Monroe County) – Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

Mr. McAfee said this is the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for five townships (Chestnut Hill, Jackson, Eldred, Ross and Polk) in southwest Monroe County. The draft letter is on pages 10-13 of the agenda attachments. Eldred and Ross share a border with Northampton County, so by virtue of our adjacency, we are obligated to comment. The Comprehensive Planning Committee asked for a little more background on who created this Comprehensive Plan and what some of the fundamentals behind it were. Mr. McAfee learned that Polk Township recently became part of the multi-municipal agreement and will become official upon the adoption of the second version of the Comprehensive Plan. Also, this update was created by the Monroe County Planning Commission.

Mr. McAfee said one of our chief considerations is that the plan is sizeable in length and does use an approach, in terms of its organizational structure, that is much easier to use as a tool for practitioners as a means of necessarily engaging or reaching out to people who might not otherwise be familiar with what comprehensive planning means. It does cover a lot of ground multiple times, nearly word for word, specifically about community facilities, transportation,
historic preservation and natural resources all of which appear multiple times. From a community planning perspective, the biggest consideration is the maps. Although the maps are very clear and of high quality, the existing Land Use Map has so many land use classifications that it becomes difficult to distinguish them on the map. We weren’t sure what they are trying to achieve in many of the sections in their plan.

Mr. Reese discussed the environmental aspects of the plan. He said they have steep slope limitations that don’t exactly mimic the ones that we recommend in our Comprehensive Plan. The second point is they do have some inconsistencies between the mapping and definitions. Also, we recommend Blue Mountain be identified as a natural resource area. Mr. Kinney said, from a transportation perspective, we went through our current Transportation Improvement Program and highlighted projects that were in close proximity to the abutting boundary. We did specify three bridge projects and one highway project. We also looked at a couple of text change suggestions with regard to setbacks and bike/ped lanes. We offered some suggestions to improve that language. We also looked at their transportation impact study review procedures and suggested a threshold be included so they don’t necessarily have to review every project. Finally, we noted there was no mention of either freight/truck traffic, safe routes to schools and bridge conditions. We mentioned those as things they might want to consider. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Duerholz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said five summary sheet items are on page 14 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pearson abstaining on Item Nos. 1 and 2.

Environment Committee

Tatamy Borough Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan

Mr. Reese said, on pages 15-16 of the agenda attachments, we talk about our review of the Tatamy Borough Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. It is generally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. We are offering some suggestions and clarifications for them as they go through the process of considering and adopting this plan. First, in terms of definitions, riparian buffer should apply not just to waterway streams, but to wetlands as well. Regarding facility needs, we suggested they consider what the needs of the residents are as expressed by the residents. Also, they should expand what they consider in terms of land preservation methods and whether or not they provide public access. Development regulations should also be expanded to include SALDO, in addition to zoning, as regulations that should be used to preserve open space. In terms of building setbacks, they should also consider wetlands. We refer to the Chapter 102 requirements regarding riparian buffer setbacks that would apply to this part of the Bushkill Creek watershed. We also gave them ideas for additional financial considerations that should be built into the plan. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pearson abstaining.
Transportation Committee

Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan – Freight Profile

Ms. Bradley said, through the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), we are working on the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan. The Long Range Transportation Plan is a $3.3 billion targeted highway, road, bridge and transit infrastructure funding strategy. We are doing our plan in conjunction with the state’s update to their Long Range Transportation Plan. We are also updating our plan at the same time the Turnpike Commission is updating their plan. This is particularly important as Rt. 22 plans to be widened out moving towards the Turnpike entrance. We need the Turnpike Commission to help us by widening their bridge on-ramp onto the Turnpike itself to allow Rt. 22 to be widened. Our timing is well-coordinated, and our relationships are very solid, not only with the Turnpike Commission but with PennDOT itself. This plan is anticipated to be completed in late June/early July.

Ms. Bradley said the Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan is also being coordinated with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. She said PennDOT is writing their first ever freight plan. We are the only region in the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that is dovetailing with that effort. That will be critically important for us in obtaining additional resources. We are also working with the United States Department of Transportation with some of their freight planning efforts. This plan should also be complete in late June/early July. What it does, particularly concerning the Freight Movement Plan, is it allows us to take technical criteria and tie that in with our economy and economic impact of growth and development so we can invest that $3.3 billion in a smarter way. One of the deliverables that we will have access to is the Commonwealth’s commodity information management tool system. This tool will allow us to look at the value of goods, what goods are moving around in the Commonwealth as it relates to the Lehigh Valley, tonnage, etc. It will help us prioritize truck routes, bridge improvements and help us make better decisions overall. We could not afford this tool on our own.

In terms of tonnage, 90% of the total tonnage of freight in the Lehigh Valley today is moved by tractor trailer. Only 10% is moved by rail, less than 1% is moved by air. In terms of value, 80% of the total value is moved around by truck, 11% by rail and 3% by air. In terms of truck tonnage today, we have over 36.6 million tons of goods being moved by truck throughout the Lehigh Valley. That is anticipated to grow to 73.89 million tons by 2040. In terms of rail, we have 4.2 million tons of goods being moved throughout the Lehigh Valley that is anticipated to grow to only 6.2 million tons by 2040. When you put everything together, trucking is number one in terms of growth. We are going from 40.8 million tons today to at least 80.2 million tons by 2040. We are essentially doubling the tonnage of freight moving in, around and out of the Lehigh Valley. In terms of value, we see a lot of growth in warehousing associated with e-commerce businesses. Those types of businesses require immediate delivery. It is more efficient and cost-effective for those goods to be delivered by truck. Those tend to be higher dollar value goods. Right now we have about $43.679 billion worth of goods being moved by truck. This in anticipated to grow to $115.4 billion in value by 2040. In terms of rail commodities, we have about $5.7 billion worth of goods being moved by rail, and $10.3 billion is where it is anticipated to grow by 2040. Rail is very efficient and cost-effective for longer haul and heavy items, such as cars, construction materials, etc. that don’t need to move quickly. Mr. Glickman asked if these dollars are adjusted for inflation. Ms. Bradley said
she thinks it is adjusted, but she has to check. Mr. Herman said you would think looking at the 2040 numbers it has to be adjusted to 2011-2012 dollars. Ms. Bradley said what our freight profile is saying in terms of value is this $51 billion worth of value in goods is anticipated to grow to $130 billion by 2040. Mr. Phillips asked about the author of this information. Ms. Bradley said we are working with CDM Smith who is the same consultant doing the work for PennDOT, but they are Lehigh Valley numbers. Mr. Herman asked what kind of data they used in the analysis. Ms. Bradley said they looked at trends, population growth, our traffic count data and congested corridor information and tied that in with a whole host of other sources. Mr. Phillips said he would be interested in what economic assumptions they made for the Lehigh Valley.

Ms. Bradley said, as far as percent truck traffic, the map shows the highest percentage of truck traffic is along I-78, and it really gets intense in western Lehigh County and Upper Macungie Township from about Rt. 100 over to the Berks County Line. In terms of tonnage, there is a lot of weight on I-78, ramping up in Upper Macungie Township. We have some on the Turnpike itself and some on Rt. 22 and Rt. 33. In terms of regional bottlenecks, we have Rt. 22, which is also designated as a statewide bottleneck. And there are very few statewide bottlenecks. This is where we have a lot of our money invested now and one of the primary reasons why we are widening Rt. 22. We have plans for that widening from the Lehigh County line moving west to McArthur Road, Fullerton Avenue, 15th Street, Cedar Crest and at the Rt. 22/I-78 merge. Since this area is also a statewide bottleneck, it automatically receives higher priority in scoring for transportation funding. In terms of congested corridors, we have parts of I-78. Rt. 22 is our primary congested corridor and also some connections through South Whitehall, Salisbury, Allentown area and then some minor ones in Northampton County.

Our next steps are to develop goals and policies for infrastructure investment, both through the Long Range Transportation Plan and working with CDM Smith, to take their freight information and roll that into our Long Range Transportation Plan. Ms. Bradley said it has to be fiscally constrained by federal law. This means we only have $3.3 billion for twenty years, and if you think about the cost of the replacement of the Lehigh River Bridge on Rt. 22 being almost $50 million, that tells you that the $3.3 billion will not go very far. We will develop an unmet needs chart of projects we think is regionally significant that do not fit within that $3.3 billion cap. We will identify options for meeting those unmet needs, including public-private partnerships and other innovative transportation funding strategies, and complete and release the Long Range Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan simultaneously in a joint event with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce at their annual transportation summit. We are hoping to get the new Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Secretary, Leslie Richards, to be a primary presenter at the event. We are trying to get that scheduled for June to coordinate with the release of the two plans. Ms. Dreisbach asked if some of that inbound and outbound traffic is actually through-traffic. Ms. Bradley said that is correct.

Mr. Phillips asked where the fiscal constraint figure of $3.3 billion comes from and what the source of the money is. Ms. Bradley said it is both federal and state money. It is managed through LVTS, which Northampton County holds two votes on as well as Lehigh County. Generally, it is 80% federal dollars and 20% state dollars. It is allocated based on population, so as our population grows, we get more money. We have to meet very specific federal thresholds in order to be able to allocate that money to certain projects. Also, even though we may think a project...
is regionally significant, we may find it doesn’t meet certain things like air quality criteria and the federal government will not allow it to be funded. Another piece of that puzzle is, if it doesn’t meet the funding threshold, a project may be ineligible to receive state funding. Mr. Phillips asked if Act 89, the state transportation funds, would be under that. Ms. Bradley said Act 89 was actually passed because you cannot access that 80% federal money without the 20% state match. Act 89 is the 20% state match, or our 80% of money allocated to Pennsylvania would have been sent to other states. We would have had no transportation funding at all. Mr. Herman said it is an important function of this organization to prioritize the utilization of those funds.

Ms. Scheller asked why the bottleneck occurs at the Lehigh-Northampton County line. Ms. Bradley said there is a lot of traffic at the county border. The Airport/Schoenersville Road area is the region’s largest employment center. All of this employment causes more car trips. She said there is still going to be a lot of cars and backups. Even with the widening, our population is increasing by as much as 1% per year, and the number of vehicle registrations continues to increase every year. We will always be having conversations about congestion. Ms. Bradley said under our current Long Range Transportation Plan and the four year funding strategy, which is called the Transportation Improvement Program, we have the preliminary engineering and engineering funded for the widening of Rt. 22 from Airport Road to McArthur Road, including the replacement of the Fullerton Avenue interchange and replacement of the Lehigh River Bridge. Mr. Molchany asked if the Rt. 22 project is part of the $3.3 million, and if so, how much. Ms. Bradley said it is. The bridge replacement alone is about $48 million. Mr. Donchez said the work will be done in phases, with the highest volume phases done first. Overall, we don’t have a total cost at this time. Mr. Molchany said it may not show up today, but if you live in that area with all the projects we are hearing about, it is going to make that corridor in western Lehigh County more congested. Ms. Bradley said we are working with PennDOT Central Office on a study of the Rt. 222 corridor, specifically targeting Upper Macungie Township up to Maxatawny Township in Berks County. That project will begin in April. Ms. Bradley said the important thing for the municipalities along Rt. 222 is to recognize we can’t build our way out of congestion. Rt. 22 is our economic spine, and it has been, for the last twenty years, our major priority for investment. Without investment to Rt. 22, the Lehigh Valley’s economy stagnates. We need to continue to make it a priority in terms of federal funding and how it’s allocated, and being a designated congested corridor, it requires us to invest in that first. Another thing to understand is the federal government almost entirely prohibits us from investing in new infrastructure. Their policy now is to focus on maintaining existing infrastructure because there is not enough money to build our way out of the road and bridge problems we have today. Ms. Oscavich reported, in response to Mr. Glickman’s earlier question, that the 2040 numbers were not adjusted for inflation.

OLD BUSINESS

BUILDLV Event

Ms. Oscavich said we are releasing the Lehigh Valley Annual Development Report at a kickoff event, BUILDLV, with the Urban Land Institute on May 4th. A flyer about the event was provided to Commission members. She said Ms. Bradley and Mr. McAfee are going to present the report and, following that, there will be an expert panel that includes David Jaindl, Scott Fainor and
JB Reilly. Joseph Fitzpatrick will be the moderator. She encouraged Commission members to attend the event.

*State Ethics Commission – Statement of Financial Interests*

Ms. Bradley said we need a copy of the Statement of Financial Interests from every Commissioner as soon as possible.

*NEW BUSINESS - None*

*CORRESPONDENCE*

*Interfaith Food Pantry & MAZON*

Ms. Bradley said we received thank you letters from the Interfaith Food Pantry and the MAZON organization thanking us for our Jeans for a Cause donations.

*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT*

Ms. Bradley said the office renovations will be done for the Committee and Commission meetings next month.

Mr. Gemmel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Nolan seconded the motion. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

**Lehigh County**

Karen Duerholz
Steven Glickman
Kent Herman
Kenneth McClain
Richard Molchan
Christina Morgan
Sara Pandl
Lisa Scheller
Donna Wright

**Northampton County**

Christen Borso
Gordon Campbell
Eugene Clater
Liesel Dreisbach
Charles Elliott
Darlene Heller
Kevin Lott
Thomas J. Nolan
Pamela Pearson
Hayden Phillips
Michael Reph
Elinor Warner


Staff present: Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Sue Rockwell and Tracy Oscavich.
Public Present: Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Herman welcomed Mr. Eugene Clater to the Commission. Mr. Clater said he lives in Allen Township and is a lifetime resident of the Lehigh Valley. He is a retired CIO with an IT background. He has been involved with Allen Township since the late 70s. He has been on the Allen Township Planning Commission for about 15 or 20 years. The Commission members and LVPC staff introduced themselves to Mr. Clater.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the March 26, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Wright. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. McClain, Mr. Reph, Mr. Lott and Ms. Warner abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Draft Lehigh Valley Annual Development Report

Ms. Bradley said we have tracked all of the subdivision and land development activity in the Lehigh Valley since we were founded. We are the only entity that sees every subdivision and land development in the region. Every year we provide this report. She said we developed the BUILDLV brand to speak to the approval process for building, development and subdivision activity. There have been some changes to this year’s report. We have worked in some interesting infographics to explain to people the difference between very basic things, such as a sketch plan, preliminary plan and final plan, which affects how we count various things. We also tried to put as much as we can into charts, graphs and maps to make the document easier to read. It is the only report that tracks legally approved subdivision and land development activity. Mr. Herman asked if the report was online. Ms. Bradley said, once the Commission approves the report, it will be available online.

Prior to presenting the report, Ms. Bradley and Mr. McAfee provided various demographic information on the region, including population, age cohorts and household size through 2040. Ms. Bradley said we look at how things relate to each other—the road and bridge network, water and sewer facilities, housing, parks, recreation and culture—so we can help build a community that functions well.

Mr. McAfee said in 2014 we saw a small decrease from 2013 in the number of total plans submitted. Total lots show a slight decrease as well. Proposed lots saw a significant decrease. However, the number of approved lots increased by 25%. Mr. McAfee said what this means is that a far greater proportion of overall lots are passing into the approval stage. In 2013, about 25.5% of the total lots were approved. In 2014, nearly 40% were approved, resulting in a 10.7% increase in subdivided acreage. Ms. Bradley said we are changing from an environment where you have very high numbers of lots proposed for housing to an era of commercial and industrial
development. We are seeing a substantial switch in the types of development, as well as the quantity of development.

Ms. Bradley said we track the total number of sketch, preliminary and final plans. Final plans are plans that people are moving towards construction. Sketch plans are non-binding and optional. Preliminary phase plans are official and would be legally binding if the municipal planning commission would take action on that plan. If the preliminary plan is conditionally approved, any issues are generally resolved by the applicant before they submit a final plan. Ms. Bradley said the final plan is recorded with the county once approved by the municipality. Final plans indicate what is likely to be built. Ms. Bradley said last year 173 plans made it to final municipal approval.

Ms. Bradley said each county had exactly the same number of plans at 192. Mr. McAfee said there is a slight difference in the composition of the 192 plans. In Lehigh County there were more sketch plans, whereas Northampton County had more final plans. The significant thing is that from 2013 to 2014, a greater percentage of plans reached the final stage. Ms. Bradley said people are more risk averse after the economic downturn. They are not proposing things unless they are serious about it. They are more prepared with financing and to spend money on engineering.

Ms. Bradley said the greatest number of total lots created last year in Lehigh County was in South Whitehall Township with 456 lots. In Northampton County, it was Palmer Township with 322 lots. Mr. Herman asked what the allocation is if it is an apartment or a condominium. Is it unit-based or lot-based? Mr. McAfee said, for our purposes, housing is always unit-based. Ms. Bradley said there are some graphics in the report that explain this.

Ms. Bradley said, in the Lehigh Valley, the number of approved non-residential lots was 119 last year, and the number of approved residential lots was 1,117. In terms of residential dwelling types, last year was largely apartments with 649 dwellings, followed by single family at 215 and assisted living at 191. Mr. McAfee said we are talking about approved lots. In 2013, the number one housing type out of the approved lots was single family. In 2014, it was apartments. Housing types have changed pretty dramatically in the last few years. Ms. Bradley said it really speaks to the growth in the aging population as well and the demand for different types of units as we move forward over the next five to ten years.

Ms. Bradley said, for approved non-residential development square footage, industrial development accounts for about 4 million square feet of new buildings, or 89.3% of the total square footage. Ms. Bradley said there has been a lot of press about new proposed warehouse facilities. She said it often takes a year or more after a project is announced before the development plans are finalized. Figuring out how a building will function on a lot, for example, how many tractor trailers they can park, and to go through the engineering process takes time.

Mr. Molchany asked if we distinguish between what is a warehouse versus manufacturing. Ms. Bradley said it is the same for this study. Ms. Bradley said we are thinking about changing how we track development to accommodate this new era of growth. Ms. Wright asked if we have a way to tell if approved lots were taken off the books. Ms. Bradley said not unless the municipality tells us. Ms. Pandl said, due to the Permit Extension Act, Lower Macungie Township has a number of projects with permits that were extended to 2016, so they haven’t gone away.
Mr. McAfee said, from the chart displayed, there is an inverse correlation between unemployment and approvals. You can see where unemployment spiked at 9.3% in 2010 and how low the approvals were compared to earlier in the decade. While unemployment levels are down to where they were in the previous decade, approvals are still not where they were. Ms. Bradley said, with the population increase, it is telling you the Lehigh Valley is densifying. It is going to be a reality we will be living in. Ms. Wright made a motion to accept the Lehigh Valley Annual Development Report. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Hanover Township (Northampton) – Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Cluster Residential Development Overlay District

Mr. McAfee said Hanover Township (N) is proposing a Cluster Residential Development Overlay District (CRDO). This does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan, but we do have a few concerns about it as shown in the draft review letter on pages 10-11 of the agenda attachments. This amendment clearly states that this development will only be available in the R1-S Residential District. The Township has two other overlay districts that straddle multiple zoning classifications. This proposed amendment is isolated to a single zoning classification. The Township solicitor said this is targeting what little single family residential undeveloped space is left in the heavily built out municipality, particularly those parcels that are 12 acres or greater, and they explicitly wanted it to be directed toward an intersection of two streets—Hanoverville Road and Jacksonville Road. This is right on the line with East Allen Township. According to the solicitor, the goal is for this amendment to help the two townships align their zoning. This represents a change in the General Land Use Classification between the two municipalities. The Hanover Township side is clearly urban, and the East Allen side is in farmland preservation or rural. Any major development proposal straddling the two municipalities would be inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan on the East Allen side. This is not the most effective use of an overlay zoning district. Mr. McAfee said that the introduction of an overlay district is likely to be at its most effective when it extends across more than one underlying primary district. At this point, it is hard to see why it wouldn’t be more appropriate to add these regulations to the R1-S district, especially as a special exception or conditional use.

Mr. McAfee said another concern is they are proposing that all streets within a CRDO development should be owned and maintained by a planned community association, essentially making it a private street. We don’t typically advise this because private street ownership has the potential of inconsistent maintenance, putting the burden of maintenance on the municipality. Another concern is that this specific overlay district does not make powerful provisions for what open space should and shouldn’t entail. This has been a problem. We have seen before times when developments come to the table that meet the open space requirements of the municipality, but much of that open space comes in the form of stormwater management facilities. They don’t have sufficient restrictions to keep these facilities from fulfilling open space requirements. Typically the open space provisions are 50% or greater in a cluster development, with significantly higher density for a housing development than is typically allowed. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the draft review letter. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Duerholz abstaining.
Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are three summary sheet items on page 12 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Heller abstaining on Item Nos. 2 and 3.

Environment Committee

Bethlehem Township Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan – 2015 Supplement

Mr. Reese said Bethlehem Township prepared a Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan Supplement. A draft review letter is on page 13 of the agenda attachments. The Township has a 1995 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan, but they want to freshen it up. They are going to undertake a new comprehensive plan in the next year or so, and after that, they hope to create a brand new update of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. Mr. Reese said there are six basic recommendations:

- To evolve and improve the Community Center and surrounding park
- Install security infrastructure at the Township parks
- Improve and expand the Township’s trail system
- Develop a dog park
- Refurbish the 14th Street Park
- Do a full update of the Park Plan

Mr. Reese said our review letter states the supplement is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and we encourage them to proceed with a full update of the park plan. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the draft letter. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Nolan abstaining.

Northampton County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan – Public Meetings

Mr. Reese said we are working on the Northampton County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan and have recently held a series of public meetings. He said we had 14 people attending a meeting in Nazareth, 20 people in Hellertown and 14 in Wind Gap. We had really good conversations about the open space public opinion survey, the draft goals and the two versions of the vision statement. Mr. Molchany asked if the plan is public yet. Mr. Reese said we are still working on it. It should be ready in the next few months.

Step Outdoors Lehigh Valley Festival

Mr. Reese said the Step Outdoors Lehigh Valley Festival is an event that will be presented by the Lehigh Valley Zoo at the end of May. There will be activities and presentations from more than 25 different organizations, focusing on conservation, wildlife and outdoor recreation for the entire family. Mr. Reese said many of the 25 organizations that are a part of this are partners of the LVPC. We are trying to work out an arrangement to be a part of this event. They have a venue for public meetings and presentations, so we may take advantage of that to talk about our Return on Environment Study or the Northampton County Open Space Plan. There will be a lot of outdoor activities and live outdoor events. Ms. Oscavich said we thought this might be a good opportunity
to get in front of an audience we don’t typically engage with and try to inform them about resources we have here. The responses received from our Northampton County public opinion survey were mostly from an older population. Hopefully we can engage the whole Lehigh Valley community.

**Transportation Committee**

**LTAP**

Mr. Kinney said we have a program we administer in partnership with PennDOT called the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). We put together a series of six workshops this spring. Generally, we try to draw on public works people, engineers or whoever might be interested in a certain topic. Our last session this spring is going to be held on May 19th to discuss regulatory warning and guide signs placement and maintenance.

**Lehigh Valley Transportation Forum**

Mr. Kinney said we are in the middle of wrapping up our Long Range Transportation Plan Update, and at the same time, we are getting close to wrapping up our first ever Lehigh Valley Freight Plan. The two will hopefully speak to each other as part of the long range transportation planning roll out. We will be doing that Tuesday, June 30th. We are partnering with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce to roll out those documents. We have some high profile speakers for this event headed by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation, Leslie Richards. Ms. Bradley will discuss the Freight Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan. It will be held at the Mack Truck Center, June 30th, with registration beginning at 10:30 a.m. The program will adjourn at 1:30 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**BUILDLV Event**

Ms. Bradley said on Monday, May 4th we will have the formal release of the Lehigh Valley Annual Development Report. We will be presenting it in partnership with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) at the Lehigh County Barristers Club. This event is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are the second location in the state where the ULI is doing one of these events. ULI brings together anyone involved in any aspect of development to have open conversations about building. They asked us to deliver our data report at an event with them, and they typically arrange for a panel of experts in the development professions to discuss how our information would relate or not relate to what they do. Mr. Joe Fitzpatrick of Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba will serve as the moderator. The members of the discussion panel are Mr. Scott Fainor, President, National Penn Bank and member of the Federal Reserve Board; Mr. David Jaindl, President and owner, Jaindl Real Estate; and Mr. J.B. Reilly, City Center Lehigh Valley and Traditions of America. They will be discussing what they do and how it ties back to the BUILDLV data report. Ms. Bradley said the event is sold out.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Web Hits**

Ms. Bradley said we changed our IT services, and in March, we were able to get some new numbers as shown on page 14 of the agenda attachments. She said our Model Ordinances are one
of the most popular things that we do. Also, the Lehigh Valley Trails Report and Stormwater Reports are always very popular. The Comprehensive Plan followed in popularity along with our new Profile and Trends Report and the List of Municipal Officials.

UPENN Event

Ms. Bradley said we have been working with the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Design, Landscape Architecture Program to come up with designs for difficult land, such as quarries and landfills. We asked these graduate students to come up with ways to turn negative situations into assets. They came up with some extraordinary poster documents. They are going to do a one night Pop-Up Exhibit to display their work. The students were charged with making this real and implementable. The event will be held at the Three City Center on May 14th. Mr. Herman asked if part of the process is discussing how these ideas could be funded. Ms. Bradley said some addressed it and some did not.

CORRESPONDENCE

Meals on Wheels of Lehigh County

Ms. Bradley said we received a thank you letter from Meals on Wheels on page 15 of the agenda attachments for the donation from our Jeans for a Cause program.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Local Food Guide

Ms. Bradley said the Nurture Nature Center puts out a Local Food Guide every year. Ms. Prior gave us copies. If you would like any for your municipalities or businesses, please call her at the Nurture Nature Center, and she will have some delivered to you.

Ms. Pandl made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for Becky Bradley Executive Director
May 28, 2015

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, May 28, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

**Lehigh County**

- Norman Blatt
- Percy Dougherty
- Karen Duerholz
- Steven Glickman
- Armand Greco
- Michael Hefele
- Kent Herman
- Edward Hozza
- Kenneth McClain
- Richard Molchany
- Christina Morgan
- Kathy Rader
- Stephen Repasch
- Lisa Scheller
- Kevin Schmidt
- Donna Wright

**Northampton County**

- Eugene Clater
- John Diacogiannis
- Liesel Dreisbach
- Charles Elliott
- George Gemmel
- Kevin Lott
- Thomas J. Nolan
- Pamela Pearson
- Lynn Prior
- Michael Reph
- Lori Sywensky

**Members absent:** Ben Howells, Sara Pandl, Christen Borso, Gordon Campbell, Charles Fraust, Darlene Heller, Bob Lammi, Carl Manges, Hayden Phillips and Elinor Warner.
**Staff present:** Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Mike Donchez, Sue Rockwell and Tracy Oscavich.

**Public Present:** Vince Manter, CDM Smith; Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

**MINUTES**

After a brief review, the minutes of the April 30, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Clater. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Diacogiannis, Ms. Rader and Mr. Gemmel abstaining.

**COMMISSION RECOGNITION**

Mr. Herman thanked Mr. Schweyer for his service on the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Ms. Bradley presented him a gift for his service to the Commission.

**WELCOME NEW COMMISSION MEMBER**

Mr. Herman introduced Kevin Schmidt, a new member to the Commission. Mr. Schmidt said he is President of Neffs National Bank and President of the Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber of Commerce. The Commission members and staff introduced themselves to Mr. Schmidt.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Transportation Committee**

**Long Range Transportation Plan**

Ms. Bradley said a draft copy of the report is at each Commission member’s place. The Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) creates the long range plan. The LVPC is the management entity for LVTS. The LVTS is a federally mandated organization that looks specifically at the transportation features of the region. The LVTS is made up of two committees—Technical Committee and Coordinating Committee. The LVPC has three votes on the Technical Committee and helps create the report. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Central Office and District 5 Office each have one vote. Our three City partners (Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton) each have one vote. The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANta) and the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority each have one vote. The Technical Committee helps create these plans, review them and make recommendations to the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee is made up of all of those individuals but under a different vote count structure. The Coordinating Committee structure is Lehigh County has three votes, and Northampton County has three votes. The cities of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton each have two votes. The LVPC, LANta, Airport Authority, PennDOT Central and District Offices each have one vote. These groups determine where our budget for transportation resources goes.
Ms. Bradley said the Long Range Transportation Plan is a federally-mandated document that tells us where we can or can’t spend the almost $3 billion we will receive over a 20-year period. Eighty percent of the money comes from the federal government, and 20% comes from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The plan is required to be fiscally constrained. We develop a project list as part of the plan. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the four year cash flow model for project design and construction. We try to find options for communities to find other ways to fund projects if they can’t be funded under the TIP. Ms. Bradley gave some examples of projects that received alternative funding. Our new plan also advances mobility and partnerships as part of the funding criteria. A new part of the plan is performance standards. Performance standards are a set of criteria used to evaluate our infrastructure investments over time and allows us to evaluate how well our investment performed. We will use that for future modeling and future project selection going forward.

Ms. Bradley said, since the 1950’s, we had about 380,000 people in the Lehigh Valley. By 2000, we had 580,000 people. Today, we have 650,000. If that trends continues, we will have nearly 875,000 people by 2040. We looked at these trends and other trends to help develop our policies. Ms. Bradley said there is a strong focus on asset management and maintaining what you have now. We have about 4,100 linear miles of road in the Lehigh Valley today. Between 1992 and 2012, we added about 215 linear miles of new road. Of those 215 linear miles, 213 were local roads. LVTS cannot invest in local roads, except in rare safety circumstances.

Ms. Bradley said there are over 13.6 million miles of travel every day. There is an average 24 minute commute in Lehigh County and an average 27 minute commute in Northampton County. Our most intensive infrastructure is along Rt. 22 and I-78, parts of Rt. 33 and the northeast extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. We have arterial roads that come off those roads and then less intensive infrastructure. We also have a significant amount of rail infrastructure.

Ms. Bradley said we look heavily at safety. We want to invest in areas that have safety issues. There has been a significant spike in pedestrian accidents, not as many bicycle crashes. We want pavement on well-traveled roads to be maintained.

Ms. Bradley discussed the status and ownership of bridges in the Lehigh Valley. There are 36 bridges that make up Rt. 22. The section of Rt. 22 from the Lehigh River going west to I-78 is one of only two handfuls of state designated congested corridors. This means that this is an important corridor for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well. Once designated as a statewide congested corridor, we are required to invest in congestion mitigation first. All of this work is integrated with the Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan. Our transportation policies are consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Bradley said, as part of this long range planning process, we are required to do an agency coordination meeting. Ms. Bradley said she went to Harrisburg yesterday with Mr. Kinney and Mr. Donchez to meet with those agencies to present our plan and how it ties in with the National Environmental Policy Act, as well as other rules and regulations set forth by the Federal Highway Administration. The entities we presented to yesterday include the U.S. EPA, PADEP, PA Historical Museum Commission, Fish and Boat Commission and DCNR. They asked us to provide our presentation as a best practice to other metropolitan planning organizations in the state. For example, radio transmitters will be used on bog turtles to find wetlands. As part of federal policy, when a transportation project goes to construction in a wetland area, you have to recreate the wetlands you destroy. One of the things we want to do as part of this planning effort is use the
information from the transmitters to develop a wetland bank and create wetlands where the turtles want to live.

Ms. Bradley provided some of the highlights of the goals and policies in the plan. We looked at highways and bridges. LANta provided policies for the transit element. The Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority gave us air-related goals and policies for the first time. We also include freight and a bike/pedestrian element. Part of the goals are pretty simple: projects have to comply with the plan, projects are required to be on the Federal Aid System. Higher priority is given to projects that have safety and congestion concerns according to federal policy. We will support capacity-adding projects in areas shown urban in the County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Bradley said we developed eight performance standards to be able to track the quality of our investments and how those investments have performed over time. We looked at mobility, partnerships and municipal contributions. We are having more conversations about public/private partnerships related to transportation, which lower the cost to taxpayers and help move projects along more quickly. We are required to look at air quality benefits. We cannot approve or give money to any project that decreases the region’s air quality. We operate a Travel Demand Model, and all the inputs are checked and calibrated to make sure we meet standards for air quality. We look at things like environmental justice and mitigating impacts to distressed areas, as well as our environment and transportation alternatives. As far as data inputs go, we look at congestion management, safety, crash incident corridors, asset management and bridge efficiency.

Mr. Kinney said we spent a lot of time talking with our partners at PennDOT, especially District 5. We also listened to and received input from a municipal standpoint. Almost 90 municipal projects were pitched to us. We also took project listings from PennDOT and listings from the state, as well as projects from our current long range plan. We ended up with about 300 projects to reconcile. The value of the project list is about $2 billion, which doesn’t include transit projects or existing TIP projects. With these pieces added, the total is almost $2.6 billion. Mr. Kinney said we have these 300 projects that are filtered down through the evaluation criteria and the policies and goals. We then filtered these projects down toward the TIP. Mr. Kinney said several projects were removed from the list, but are ineligible for competitive grant opportunities. It is our commitment to help municipalities understand if their projects are eligible and how we can help support moving their projects forward.

Mr. Donchez said the Long Range Transportation Plan is fiscally constrained. It can’t have a value of projects that exceeds the amount of money we could reasonably expect to have available between now and 2040. Mr. Donchez said, for starters, we look at the 2015-2018 TIP Financial Guidance. The guidance takes into account Act 89, the uncapping of the Oil Company Franchise Tax. The funds from Act 89 will be ramped up in years three and five. That fifth year is contained in year 2018 of the TIP. The assumption is the full impact of Act 89 revenues will be realized by the year 2018. Beyond the year 2018, those revenues will be held consistent throughout the year 2040. One other item the plan takes into account is the cost by year of expenditure. The Transportation Improvement Program, PennDOT’s 12-year program, and the projects that we obtained from the Decade of Investment list, all project costs within those documents have to be reflected by the year of expenditure. Mr. Donchez said a 3% inflation index per year is used to escalate costs for when the work on the project is actually done. We had to take into account the municipal projects that were pitched for inclusion under the long range plan and inflate costs by 3% per year. Beyond that, we looked at some state appropriations funds, specifically 582 and 409 funds. PennDOT uses these funds for larger local maintenance projects. When all of this is taken into account, we can reasonably expect to have about $2.5 billion available until the year 2040. In
comparison to the 2011 long range plan, we had nearly $2 billion in anticipated revenues. We are up by about $500 million over the last plan. Mr. Donchez briefly reviewed the project list.

Ms. Bradley said we are officially in a 32-day comment period beginning today. The plan is accessible on our website, and for the first time, you can press a button that takes you to a comment site. We are partnering with the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce on a Transportation Summit on June 30th. The new PennDOT Transportation Secretary, Leslie Richards, will be presenting the state’s Long Range Transportation and Freight Plans. We will also be presenting our plans. This will be a unique opportunity to showcase the Lehigh Valley and what is in our transportation future to those who make the decisions at the state level. On July 9th, we will be having a combined meeting of the Technical and Coordinating Committees of the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study for adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan. We will be holding Policy & Pizza and Data & Doughnuts meetings to get some public feedback and dialogue about the plan. We learned last year that this form of public meetings is very successful and very well-attended. Tomorrow the plan will be released to a number of media outlets. We have already had some press coverage. We also need feedback from Commission Members about the plan. Mr. Repasch asked about passenger rail service. Ms. Bradley said it is in the plan. We are working with the three city mayors and LANta to talk about rail viability. Right now we cannot support passenger rail. It has a lot to do with how we built out, and our densities are too low. If we really do want passenger rail in the Lehigh Valley, we have to determine those things that need to be done to meet federal requirements.

*Lehigh Valley Regional Freight Plan*

Ms. Bradley introduced Mr. Vince Mantero from CDM Smith, who is our Freight Plan consultant. He is the same consultant that PennDOT is using for the state freight plan. Mr. Mantero said we have been working on this plan for over a year and are developing some recommendations that hopefully will be integrated into the long range plan. Some of the key topics he will be discussing include: How is freight moving through the region? What are the major commodities? How much is truck, how much is rail, what are the assets looking like? What are some of the conditions and performance issues we are looking at? Most importantly, what are the trends, needs and issues? What is going to happen in the future that the region needs to be prepared for and what steps need to be taken? What are the current policies in place at the national, state and regional level, including the Long Range Transportation Plan? What are the specific freight-related goals and policies that the region needs to look at? Also, what are some of the key recommendations?

Mr. Mantero said freight tonnage in the region is about 90% trucks, by value, 85% of it is trucks. He noted that the data does not include through freight. It is very difficult to capture that data. When you look at inbound freight, 86% of the tonnage is trucks. When you look at the value, rail does better. Also, air cargo is important. It is low weight, high value goods such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, etc. That is where air is critical. Internal freight is 99% trucks. Outbound freight is 94%-95% trucks, by tonnage and value. When we begin to look at 2040 projections, we will be seeing double the tonnage from about 36 million to 74 million. We expect to see as much inbound freight as outbound freight. The challenge of growth is a lot of it will be happening with trucks. Mr. Glickman asked what the capacity of rail and truck is. What is it now and what will it be in 2040? Mr. Mantero said you don’t necessarily look at capacity issues, you look at how the freight is moving through the trucking and rail industry. When you look at some of the congested corridors, they are already at level of service D, E and F. If we are talking about doubling and tripling freight at a certain point, something is going to have to give. There has to be some improvements or that
Mr. Mantero said the challenge with the rail industry is they will say it is all private investment. The government does not help, so they are left alone to do their own capacity and maintenance improvements. There are opportunities here for some really good public/private partnerships. Mr. Clater said you can increase freight, but that is going to have a significant, higher effect on vehicle traffic. How are we going to handle all of that traffic? How does that factor into the plan? Mr. Mantero said this is where the recommendations come in. The projections don’t take into account capacity. It gives you a reality check. If everything was at 20% capacity, the increased freight would be fine, but that is not the reality. He said hopefully the freight plan will encourage modes to shift. Mr. Clater said he’s just not seeing it. What is the planning for this? We have to get in front of it. Mr. Molchany said the expansion of one or two lanes on Rt. 22 is not going to meet the future traffic demands, especially at peak hours. These are significant issues for the Valley. The plan we saw today deals mostly with maintenance of existing roadways. Mr. McClain said with any capacity-adding transportation improvement, PennDOT has a standard design rule that makes consultants look at growth factors. They have to project out 20 years. Any projects on the TIP that add capacity, like Rt. 22, you have to look at current day average daily traffic and project traffic volumes 20 years out in the future. This design criteria has to be met. That is standard design practice in Pennsylvania. Mr. Mantero said hopefully this plan will get the conversation started. It won’t solve a lot of those issues. We hope there will be further talk about where are those alternate routes. It’s the first step of many steps to be taken down the road. Mr. Mantero said the roadway system is about 25% owned and controlled by the state, but it carries 80% of the traffic. As those areas become more and more congested and more bottlenecks, you will probably see more truckers taking off from those areas and going on local roads.

Mr. Mantero said a key part of what we are trying to do is to look at how all these infrastructure links connect to intermodal facilities. Improving the corridor is essential, but how do you get to that intermodal site? We have to make sure we identify those key facilities. Also as part of this work, we looked at active rail in the region. We looked at roadways, weight restrictions, pavement conditions, truck parking, bridge conditions, corridor congestion, freight bottlenecks and safety. The truck drivers are finding it harder and harder to find places to park to comply with hours of service restrictions. It could cause some safety issues. We looked at at-grade rail crossings. They are not just a safety issue. He said at-grade crossings cause issues for moving freight. Finally, we looked at where statewide freight bottlenecks occur. Rt. 22 is one of the top six freight bottlenecks in the state. Ultimately, this makes us think about what are the major issues in the future.

Mr. Mantero said the key policies in the Regional Freight Plan involve safety, maintenance, mobility, cost-effectiveness and stewardship. Some of the key recommendations are eliminate at-grade railroad crossings, continue to look at new truck parking locations, maintenance plan, and rail corridors may be in danger of being abandoned. Once these are gone, they are hard to bring back. Where possible, they should be retained. Finally, mobility and looking at alternative routes. We should work with the private sector and educational institutions about truck driver shortages. Truck driving is not thought of as a career. The trucking industry needs to look at this, too. They are not getting new drivers. Stewardship is already being done by incorporating freight issues in the long range plan. Data on freight is difficult to obtain. A data warehousing area would be helpful. Coordination is critical. Mr. Repasch asked about air quality goals and increase of vehicle and truck traffic. Mr. Mantero said the congestion and bottlenecks will lead to air quality issues. When we can remove those bottlenecks, it will help the air quality. It’s not an easy answer. Ms. Bradley said once the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study officially adopts the Long Range Transportation Plan, which will refer back to the freight plan, we can use it to inform the comprehensive plan.
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

*Step Outdoors Lehigh Valley, May 30th (10 a.m.–5 p.m.), May 31st (10 a.m.-4 p.m.) @ SteelStacks*

Mr. Reese said there is a two-day event all about outdoor activities presented by the Lehigh Valley Zoo at SteelStacks in Bethlehem. There will be a lot of demonstrations and hands on activities. LVPC staff will be providing a one hour presentation on Return on Environment and the Northampton County Open Space Plan at 10:30 am on Saturday, May 30.

Reviews

Mr. Repasch said there are three summary sheet items on page 8 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Duerholz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

*Chrin Commerce Center, Lots 2 & 3- Palmer Township – Land Use of Regional Significance*

Mr. McAfee said this is a 1.6 million square foot warehousing structure that is proposed in the northern portion of Palmer Township. It is in close proximity to the Borough of Stockertown and Upper Nazareth Township. There are very few major concerns, as shown in the letter on pages 9-10 of the agenda attachments. It is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The biggest consideration is that the road configuration has changed through this process. This is reflected in one of the summary sheet items. There is a proposed rezoning from Transportation Industrial 2 (TI-2) to TI-1 to accommodate the new Chrin Commerce Center. Van Buren Road will now end in a cul-de-sac. The Traffic Impact Study showed no major concerns. Another consideration is that this could generate a large employment base, and the two LANta routes are 1.5 to 2 miles away. The developer should contact LANta for the possibility of integrating another route and pedestrian connectivity. Ms. Wright made a motion to ratify the staff letter previously sent to Palmer Township. Mr. McAfee said, due to the review deadline, the letter was sent out, but another letter can be sent another if there are any new comments. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

*Williams Township – Zoning Ordinance – Complete Rewrite*

Mr. McAfee said this is a comprehensive rewrite of the entire ordinance. The vast majority of the ordinance was fully consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. He briefly highlighted some of the comments in the draft letter on pages 11-16 of the agenda attachments. There were only a few sections that we discussed in the May 29th letter. He also noted the good points of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

*Ordinance Reviews*

Mr. Wright said there are five summary sheet items on page 17 of the agenda attachments. She said the South Whitehall Zoning Amendment was added after Tuesday’s Committee meeting. Mr. Gemmel requested a separate vote for Item No. 3. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments for Item Nos. 1-2 and 4-5. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion carried with...
Ms. Morgan abstaining on Item No. 5 and Mr. Clater abstaining on Item Nos. 1-2. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments for Item No. 3. Mr. Greco seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Duerholz and Mr. Diacogtiannis abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS

Lehigh Valley Transportation Forum

Ms. Bradley said the Lehigh Valley Transportation Forum will be held at the Mack Truck Customer Service Center, 2402 Lehigh Parkway South, Allentown on June 30th, with registration beginning at 10:30 a.m. She encouraged Commission members to attend the event.

NEW BUSINESS – None

CORRESPONDENCE

Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center

Ms. Bradley said we received a thank you letter from the Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center, shown on page 18 of the agenda attachments, for the staff donation from our Jeans for a Cause program.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

BUILDLV Event

Ms. Bradley said the event was very well attended, with about 150 people. We partnered with the Urban Land Institute to sponsor the event. The Annual Development Report was released at this time. We heard some very interesting thoughts and comments from David Jaindl, Jaindl Land Development Company; J. B. Reilly, Traditions of America & City Center; and Scott Fainor, Head of National Penn Bank and Philadelphia Federal Reserve Board. Joe Fitzpatrick, a land use attorney, was the moderator for the panel discussion.

UPENN: Re-Visioning Overlooked & Undervalued Assets in the Lehigh Valley

Ms. Bradley said about 50-60 people attended the Pop-up event. It was such a successful partnership with the Graduate School of Design that we are looking at ways to continue to work with them on multimunicipal comprehensive plans and other projects around the Lehigh Valley.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 25, 2015 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:

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

Public Present: Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Ms. Dreisbach introduced Mr. Bruce Rider, the new Director of Administration, and welcomed him to the LVPC staff.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the May 28, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Sywensky. Mr. Greco seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pandl abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Edwin Ziegler – Slattington – Lehigh County SALDO

Mr. McAfee said this development application uses the Lehigh County SALDO. It was given conditional approval last summer, pending several conditions, most of which dealt with off-site stormwater management that was still being worked out with a nearby property owner. However, the applicant decided to manage all stormwater on-site. The general proposal is the same from last year except for the stormwater management aspect. Our current review is an additional conditional approval as seen in the draft review letter on pages 9-11. Mr. McAfee said we looked at the new submission in terms of fulfilled and unfulfilled conditions and the conditions that arose from the changes in stormwater management. Most of the unfulfilled conditions are minor administrative concerns. In addition, infiltration test data for the proposed underground infiltration bed to be used to retain runoff from the proposed roof area was not provided with the application. The County SALDO requires this data. We also need a full signature block on both pages of the record plan. Pending the fulfillment of these conditions, we are recommending approval. Mr. McAfee said several minor changes were made to the letter since the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday. One was a correction of the nearby property owner’s name, highlighted on page 9 of the letter. The other change is on page 11 of the letter, showing the date the applicant must sign and return the agreement form. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Clater seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Allentown – Rezoning – Medium High Density Residential (R-MH) to Limited Business/Residential (B-I/R)

Mr. McAfee said this rezoning proposal is a minor consideration that we received after the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting. It is a very straightforward review, going from one relatively high density mixed use to another. The draft review letter is on page 12 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Greco seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are nine summary sheet items on page 13 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee said all of these comments came before the Comprehensive Planning Committee. The vast majority are either consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan or are matters of local concern, with the exception of Item #1. He said it is fundamentally consistent, but it supports a shift from rural development to commercial in the southern part of the township. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Gemmel abstaining from Item #1, Ms. Rader abstaining from Item #3, Mr. Reph abstaining from Item #4 and Ms. Pearson abstaining from Item #7.

Environment Committee

Lehigh Valley Greenways Landscape 2015 Mini Grant Award: Return on Environment Promotion and Outreach

Mr. Reese said we applied for and received a $2,500 Mini Grant from the Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape Program for promotion and outreach of the Return on Environment report. We will be looking at ways to promote the document. Ms. Bradley said she did a television interview yesterday with Channel 69 News about the Return on Environment document, and it will air on Monday.

Transportation Committee

TIGER Application Submission

Ms. Bradley said we submitted a Transportation Investment Grant for Economic Recovery (TIGER). This is a public/private non-profit partnership. Ms. Bradley displayed the project location on a map. It falls between the City of Allentown and Whitehall Township. The project includes the removal of the R. J. Corman rail line and a new two lane road having a 24 foot cartway, with an additional 12 foot bike/pedestrian-way with some innovative stormwater management. The new protected bike lanes would be built following FHWA guidelines, assuming the project would be realized. You can’t apply for the TIGER grant unless it is a multimodal project.

Ms. Bradley said the partners in the project are the City of Allentown, Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, LANta, D&L National Heritage Corridor, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and PennDOT. The LVPC, on behalf of LVTS, applied for the grant because we could be an applicant for this federal program. If the money comes to the Lehigh Valley, we would essentially manage the grant, and the other entities would work together to help realize the various portions of the project. It is really an innovative new way to help realize some of these bigger facilities and programs. The roadway and trail multimodal facility would also open up emergency service opportunities. It would open up former brownfield sites to additional investment and reuse and allow for environmental cleanup of those sites and economic recovery in those areas. One important piece of this project is the entire match is private. We are asking for public money, and it is being matched by private money. To manage everyone’s expectations, the majority of these grants have been given out to very large areas, such as New York and Philadelphia. They are usually in the $50 million range or more. We asked for $33 million. We won’t know if it will be funded until September or October. However, if it is not funded, the partners could collectively
apply for the Pennsylvania DCED Multimodal Fund. We understand that PennDOT may also have another multimodal fund round to be released in the fall.

Ms. Rader asked if there is a chance you may not get the $33 million, but you could get a lesser amount, or is it all or nothing. Ms. Oscavich said they could fund certain line items only, but we could still apply for other grants to make up the difference. Mr. Phillips asked if the developer has committed to matching that $33 million. Ms. Bradley said yes, over $12 million. Ms. Bradley said we went to a meeting about the grant and learned we didn’t have enough money for the match requirement to apply for the grant. We told Mr. Jaindl we couldn’t apply for the grant, so he agreed to $10 million, with the City of Allentown agreeing to $2 million to meet the match. Mr. Phillips asked, if we are requesting $33 million and the partners promised $12 million, doesn’t it have to be a one to one dollar match? Ms. Oscavich said no; the minimum requirement is 20%. We have more than the 20%.

Mr. Molchany asked if Mr. Jaindl is purchasing the entire R. J. Corman rail line. Ms. Bradley said he did purchase it. She said Mr. Jaindl sees this as a whole revitalization of that area, which ultimately supports his businesses. Mr. Phillips asked if he would turn over the rail line. Ms. Bradley said yes, it would have to become a public facility. Mr. Molchany said both municipalities would have to accept the gift and take over the management of the roadway. Mr. Glickman asked if purchase price is part of the match. Ms. Oscavich said no. Ms. Oscavich said, from the non-profit side, the D&L intends to work with the County on the northern section. Mr. Campbell asked if this will become part of the D&L Trail. Ms. Bradley said yes. This is for information purposes only; no action is needed.

Statewide Freight Plan Available for Public Review

Ms. Bradley said the Statewide Freight Plan is dovetailing with our effort. We are using the same consultant. They have sent a copy of the Statewide Freight Plan to at least the Metropolitan Planning Organizations statewide for a 30-day review period. We don’t believe it has been released for overall public review and comment since we could not find it on the PennDOT website. We as a staff are currently reviewing it. As soon as we know it is open for broader public comment, we will let you know.

OLD BUSINESS

Lehigh Valley Transportation Forum

Ms. Bradley said next Tuesday, on June 30th, registration starts at 10:30 a.m. The program will begin at 11:30 a.m. at Mack Trucks Customer Service Center in Allentown. We are partnering with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce for this Annual Transportation Summit. The new Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation, Leslie Richards, will be speaking about the transportation direction for the state. We will also be presenting our Regional Freight Plan. It is the first time it will be released in draft form, along with the MOVELV Long Range Transportation Plan, which was released for public comment on May 29th.

Summer Information Series

Ms. Bradley said, over the last several weeks, we have held Data & Doughnuts and Policy & Pizza meetings. Last night we held a Reports & Refreshments meeting where we had open
discussions and dialogues with people about some of the work we are doing, and we got some good feedback. We held two meetings on the Long Range Transportation Plan. We are discovering that the Policy & Pizza meetings at lunch time are very successful, with large attendance. The morning and evening meetings are not as well-attended, but we are having significant discussions. It’s a good opportunity to have one to one interactions with the people in our community.

NEW BUSINESS – None

CORRESPONDENCE

ULI Philadelphia

Ms. Bradley said we received a letter from the Urban Land Institute thanking the LVPC for participating with them at the Build LV event and encouraging us to continue to work with them further.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

State Transportation Commission Director’s Award

Ms. Bradley said we received an award from the State Transportation Commission. We won the Director’s Award for our public participation effort for PennDOT’s 12-Year Program. We didn’t apply for it. We attended the Spring Planning Partners Meeting, and they announced that we won the award.

Governor’s Advisory Committee on Community Development

Ms. Bradley said she has been officially appointed to Governor Wolfe’s Advisory Committee on Community Development. Ms. Bradley said she was recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Ms. Bradley said she is excited to be representing our region.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, July 30, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

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<th>Lehigh County</th>
<th>Northampton County</th>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Duerholz</td>
<td>Gordon Campbell</td>
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<td>Steven Glickman</td>
<td>Eugene Clater</td>
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<td>Liesel Dreisbach</td>
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<td>Kent Herman</td>
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<td>Richard Molchany</td>
<td>George Gemmel</td>
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<td>Sara Pandl</td>
<td>Darlene Heller</td>
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<td>Kathy Rader</td>
<td>Kevin Lott</td>
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<td>Stephen Repasch</td>
<td>Carl Manges</td>
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<td>Kevin Schmidt</td>
<td>Pamela Pearson</td>
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<td>Donna Wright</td>
<td>Hayden Phillips</td>
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<td>Lori Sywensky</td>
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Staff present: Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Sue Rockwell, Bill Deegan and Tracy Oscavich.

Public Present: Lou Gombocz, Jr., WFMZ
MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the June 25, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Glickman. Mr. Greco seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Lott abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

City of Bethlehem – Zoning Map Amendment – High Density Residential (RT) to Institutional (I)

Mr. McAfee provided the draft review letter to Commission members. Modifications were made to the letter as shown based on Committee comments. He said the proposed rezoning is for a single block in the southeast corner of the Moravian College campus. The proposed rezoning is fundamentally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The property is already owned and used by the College. The three structures on the block to be rezoned have been student housing for Moravian College for many years. The proposed rezoning will simply extend the Institutional District to the intersection of Main and Laurel streets. This rezoning is not part of the Historic District, but the LVPC has a responsibility to note when structures may be of a certain age. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the review letter. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. Ms. Heller said the city had a historic preservation plan done a few years ago and determined the property is not historic. She said, for the record, that it was awkward to say this in the review letter when it was already determined to not be historic. Ms. Dreisbach asked if we have a responsibility to make this kind of comment. Mr. McAfee said, in his interpretation of the County Comprehensive Plan, we have a responsibility to inform the counties and municipalities of historic features that may be worth preserving. Mr. Herman called for the vote. The motion carried with Ms. Heller abstaining.

Fair Housing and Inclusionary Zoning in Light of SCOTUS “Inclusive Communities” Decision

Mr. McAfee said the biggest emphasis on this is in light of the recent Supreme Court decision. He said we have been working on the topic of Fair Housing for some time. Within the upcoming months, we intend to provide an extensive educational document that will largely involve an update of an existing model ordinance on inclusionary zoning. One of the key concerns we’ve noticed is a tendency to conflate the terms inclusionary zoning or affordable housing and fair housing. They are fundamentally different concepts. The Fair Housing Act is fundamentally a civil rights consideration that deals with the provision of housing and enforcement of non-discriminatory practices against the key protected classes of individuals protected by the Fair Housing Act. Affordable housing is about housing availability for persons of lower and moderate incomes. There are many reasons that the two become conflated, not the least of which is the presumption that the protected classes are themselves low or moderate income individuals. The protected classes are race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability status and familial status. Age is protected in the Pennsylvania version of the Fair Housing Act.

The Supreme Court decision on the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs versus the Inclusive Communities Project, Inc. from late June essentially deals with the concept of discriminatory effects. It deals with those municipal actions, regardless of the intention, that can elicit a discriminatory effect. What this means is that a zoning or subdivision and land development
ordinance amendment may not intentionally be discriminatory, yet its enforcement still results in a discriminatory impact on one of the protected classes.

Mr. McAfee said the example that was addressed through the Texas Supreme Court decision had to do with a generally affluent, large suburb of Dallas. A low income or affordable housing advocacy group known as Inclusive Communities Project, Inc. was trying to locate some additional affordable housing or partner with someone to find additional affordable housing. The overriding tendency that this nonprofit saw was that all of the affordable housing was taking place in a very small sector of this suburb. It was further concentrating the low income population in what ultimately was about 5% of the overall suburb’s land area. This was perceived as a discriminatory effect. However, the argument the Texas Department of Housing had was that this was the area that had the greatest need for funds for the revitalization of its now substandard housing. The ultimate goal was to improve the living conditions through investment in upgrading the affordable housing.

The Supreme Court still determined this as fundamentally not achieving the goals of integration and ultimately shedding light on what would be communities most likely to be affected by the Fair Housing Act. That is one of the two primary ways in which the Supreme Court decision had its impact. The other way was the group homes provisions, which in many municipalities have a requirement that there be a certain setback distance between one group home and another. In a smaller municipality, this could effectively prevent any other group homes from being constructed. Since group homes overwhelmingly are there to serve individuals with developmental disabilities, this is fundamentally violating the Fair Housing Act. The general intent of the zoning ordinances with the setback distances are to avoid extreme concentration and to foster and promote integration of the population that might live in a group home with a regularized community. This is most likely the scenario where we are seeing municipalities, through their zoning ordinances, running afoul of the Fair Housing Act. Ms. Bradley said we have been working with the two counties as well as the three cities and North Penn Legal to put together a municipal officials training event sometime this fall to help them meet their obligations for obtaining Community Development Block Grant funds. She said more information will be coming soon on this event.

Mr. Repasch asked what the impact of this is. Ms. Bradley said possible zoning changes. Mr. Elliott asked if the County Comprehensive Plan includes any reference to fair housing requirements and if that is something we would be obligated to review as far as applications that come before us. Ms. Bradley said not directly, but through our work on various housing plans it does. Ms. Bradley said we will have that discussion as part of the comprehensive plan update process. Ms. Sywensky said there have been some references in some of our reviews that have already touched on this subject. Ms. Bradley said the Comprehensive Plan gives us the umbrella to be able to add more detail but may not have the strength of other policies that the Commission may want going forward. We need to reopen that discussion. Mr. Elliott said, if it is a matter of a zoning amendment review, he could see the LVPC saying there can’t be unacceptable setbacks. That would be pretty clear. However, he’s just imagining us trying to evaluate the impacts of a subdivision application. That could be very difficult.

Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are three summary sheet items on page six of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee briefly reviewed Item No. 2. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
**Environment Committee**

**Reviews**

Mr. Repasch said there are two summary sheet items on page 7 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Rockwell said they are both applications by the City of Bethlehem to the PA Public Utility Commission for a water service territory expansion in two areas. She briefly reviewed Item No. 2. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Repasch abstaining.

Mr. Repasch said that Item No. 1 is a little more complicated. The application is for the expansion of water service in Allen Township and Hanover Township, Lehigh County to serve FedEx, Wayne A. Grube Park and several adjacent areas. The proposed expansion is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan with the exception of several parcels adjacent to the Park that are recommended for farmland preservation. Ms. Sywensky said we’ve had previous discussions about certain areas currently designated as farmland preservation that may not be appropriate with the next iteration of the Comprehensive Plan and asked if we think the recommended land use for this area will be changed. Ms. Bradley said the counties have to adopt any changes to the General Land Use Plan and Comprehensive Plan. Right now, we have to write that these parcels are inconsistent. Mr. Clater said these areas will not likely change. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Repasch and Mr. Clater abstaining.

**Transportation Committee**

**Long Range Transportation Plan Schedule**

Mr. Kinney said the plan was completed and sent out for 30-day public review and comment. We are in the process of preparing responses to the comments. We are still waiting for the air quality modeling results for projects that are significant enough in nature to constitute capacity expansions and need to be modeled to make sure air quality won’t be impacted. The majority of the projects have been modeled, but there is an interim step where we have to take the modeling results to an intergovernmental review group, which is a PennDOT group on the environmental side. We are waiting for their response to the model runs. When we get those back, we can incorporate them into the plan and bring it back to the full Commission for review. Mr. Molchany asked if the comments will come before us for approval before the plan is sent out. Ms. Bradley said they come before the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS). Staff will bring the LRTP to the Commission for recommendation to the LVTS for adoption.

**MOVELV: Regional Freight Plan Implementation – Policy & Pizza**

Ms. Bradley said we have a Policy & Pizza meeting on freight scheduled here for August 13th at noon. We are going to be working on implementation of the freight plan. We are also in the process of becoming an official provider for the Federal Highway Administration webinars. We had one event last week on reshoring overseas manufacturing and its impact on transportation systems. We plan on having several others that include improving freight system performance in metropolitan areas, measuring life cycle implications of freight transportation emissions, and the growth of e-commerce and its transportation impacts. There is a big push from PennDOT and the
Federal Highway Administration for this area in particular, since freight has grown so much, for us to have a more active role in engaging not only the community, but businesses in the region as well.

**OLD BUSINESS - None**

**NEW BUSINESS**

_Southwest Lehigh County Comprehensive Plan_

Ms. Bradley said we want to give a progress report on a project we are working on with Lower Macungie, Upper Milford and Lower Milford townships and Emmaus, Macungie and Alburtis boroughs. We are in the process of updating their multimunicipal comprehensive plan, and we are working with them to develop an implementable plan. This is the first time Pennsylvania said they want comprehensive plans to accomplish something. So they gave us funding to figure out what that is. This will allow us to use some scenario modeling tools and test them. We will also look at the fiscal impacts of land use decisions. We hope to use these tools in the update of the regional comprehensive plan as well. Ms. Bradley said, as far as the schedule, we’ve been meeting since the beginning of the year. The Steering Committee put together a list of stakeholders. We’re working with the communities to gather socio-economic data, housing data and ordinance reviews that will become a baseline information report. We also developed a brand and are working on the public participation strategy now. Mr. Deegan described how the brand was developed. He also showed the shell of a website that will provide information on how people can get involved, reports and plans that will be available, upcoming events and contact information, among others.

_Lehigh Valley Planning + Development Gala & Awards_

Ms. Bradley said our Lehigh Valley Planning + Development Gala & Awards event is going to be held on October 1st at DeSales University. We have been accepting nominations through the end of today and received a good response. This is the second Annual Awards, so please mark your calendar. If you know anyone who would be interested in sponsoring the event, let us know. Also, we have a keynote speaker, Ignacio Bunster-Ossa, who is a famous Landscape Architect. He is a Fellow of the American Association of Landscape Architects. He has done considerable work on parks, recreation and open space development as it relates to community development and sustainability. He also designed the Hoover-Mason Trestle in Bethlehem.

_Lehigh Valley Government Academy: September-November 2015_

Ms. Bradley said there is a flyer at your place with the course schedule. She said we have held these classes for over 20 years. We are now offering a more general course on Community Planning along with the Subdivision and Zoning courses. If you do all three courses, we will be offering a certificate in planning. We are hoping to get as many as possible of our participants at the local level and our local government officials trained on the Municipalities Planning Code and how it works.
CORRESPONDENCE - None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Lehigh Valley Transportation Forum

Ms. Bradley said the Transportation Forum was held on June 30th, and it went very well. PennDOT Secretary Richards complimented us on our work. They want to use our LRTP and Freight Plan as models for other MPOs around the state.

Governor’s Advisory Board on Community Development

Ms. Bradley said she attended the first meeting this morning at the Governor’s mansion. Many of the department heads were in attendance. She said her group was chosen because they were seen as leaders in their field. The Governor is interested in finding out about community development issues and how they can work better at all levels of government. She’ll continue working with this group probably for several months. Ms. Sywensky asked if the Governor has any specific goals he wants to address. Ms. Bradley said no, he is looking for information from the group so he can develop an agenda. She said he did have topics he wanted the group to cover such as land use strategies, parks and recreation development, ecotourism opportunities, public safety and modern infrastructure, among many others.

ADJOURN

Mr. Repasch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, August 27, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

Lehigh County

Norman Blatt
Percy Dougherty
Karen Duerholz
Steven Glickman
Michael Hefele
Kent Herman
Edward Hozza
Richard Molchany
Christina Morgan
Kathy Rader
Stephen Repasch
Lisa Scheller
Julie Thomases

Northampton County

Christen Borso
Gordon Campbell
Eugene Clater
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
Charles Elliott
George F. Gemmel
Michael Reph
Lori Sywensky


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

Public Present: None
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Herman welcomed Julie Thomases to the Commission. The Commission members and LVPC staff introduced themselves to Ms. Thomases.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the July 30, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Ms. Sywensky. Mr. Clater seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hozza, Mr. Blatt, Mr. Dougherty, Mr. Reph, Mr. Diacogiannis, Ms. Morgan and Ms. Thomases abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

IESI PA Bethlehem Landfill - Southeast Realignment - Lower Saucon Township - Land Use of Regional Significance

Mr. McAfee said that two years ago the applicant sought to rezone some adjacent parcels it had purchased. We found those requested rezonings were inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. They were deemed inconsistent because they would have involved the collision of two contradictory land uses: rural residential with industrial. The land development currently taking place here has nothing to do with those rezonings. This land has been zoned appropriately for industrial land use. The project would extend the life of the landfill by 5½ years through some additional vertical development. This plan does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hefele said there is a review letter on page 7 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Hefele made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Rader seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Elliott and Ms. Sywensky abstaining.

Ordinance Reviews

Mr. Hefele said there are nine summary sheet items on page 8 and 9 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Hefele made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Elliott abstaining on item #7.

Environment Committee

Reviews

Mr. Repasch said there are two summary sheet items on page 10 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Reese provided updated information on Item #2 since the Committee met on Tuesday, based on a conversation with DEP. The L’il Wolf Mobile Home Park has existed for many years. It has had a history of significant infiltration and inflow (I/I) issues, meaning there is not just sewage being treated by the plant, but there is water either from ground or surface water sources. The property changed hands several years ago. Prior to that, the owner had made a number of improvements to the system. The permitted capacity for the plant is 38,000 gallons per day. The current application is to expand that capacity to 70,000 gallons per day. They already have a 70,000 gallon per day plant they built several years ago, but they never got it permitted by DEP.
Mr. Reese said when the mobile home park was being sold, DEP informed the buyer that there were I/I and compliance issues with this. They have been working towards a consent order to get this fixed up. They are trying to figure out if there are still ongoing I/I issues. The plant is doing better because of work done by the new owner and a new operator. However, the owner needs to obtain a permit for 70,000 gallons per day. DEP is going to process a permit for 70,000 gallons per day then work on finalizing a consent order, because even the 70,000 gallon per day plant needs significant further investments to make sure the plant can treat the 70,000 gallons in the proper way. Ms. Morgan asked if that changes our comments. Mr. Reese said no. Mr. Herman asked when this might be connected to a public facility. Mr. Repasch said it will take some time due to the political issues of building a regional facility.

Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments for Item Nos. 1 and 2. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Morgan abstaining on Item #1.

Transportation Committee

Catasauqua Borough Race and Front Street Project

Ms. Bradley said this project started when Congressman Dent obtained an earmark for Race Street. But, due to national environmental protection act compliance issues, the project never progressed. Ms. Bradley said they couldn’t agree on how to signalize Lehigh Street at Race Street. However, with the onset of the FedEx proposal and other proposals in Catasauqua Borough, the project was revived. PennDOT approached us to help with the project. LVPC staff started working with the Borough and Benesch Engineering, the subcontracted engineering firm for PennDOT.

Mr. Deegan said this power point presentation will be presented to the community, and we will be doing a walk-through with Benesch. The goal is to engage the community and help them understand what it would be like to be a pedestrian or driver. Ms. Bradley said, with Mr. Deegan and Mr. Manhardt, we mapped out the area. She discussed the existing developed conditions in the Borough. Mr. Deegan said this is an adaptive reuse project—no new land will be acquired to widen the roads. He said they verified the measurement of the roads curb to curb to make realistic recommendations. He said our proposal is to create two-way traffic on Front Street from Race Street to Pine Street and from Union Street to Race Street. He said the left turn there will no longer exist. There will be one lane of parking on the north side, and a 20 foot sidewalk in the Commercial District. We are also proposing that zoning be switched so that commercial uses will be on the ground floor and residential on the 2nd floor. Mr. Deegan provided an animated view of the project to show what it’s like to be in the space. He said we want to show a range of ways to revitalize downtown. We will be using this tool to talk to the Borough and residents. Mr. Gemmel asked if traffic counts were done as part of this project. Ms. Bradley said yes; Benesch had done the counts.

MAP-21 Reauthorization Letter of Support

Mr. Kinney said, at last month’s LVTS meeting, staff was asked to draft a letter to Congress, urging a long-term funding solution in lieu of 30+ extensions since 2009. The draft letter is attached on pages 11-13 of the agenda attachments. The letter was presented to the Transportation Committee this evening, and the recommendation was to forward the letter to the LVPC for consideration. Mr. Diacogiannis added that the letter may be slightly modified by LVTS. Mr. Diacogiannis made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Rader seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
Lehigh and Northampton County Roundabout Pilot Studies

Mr. Kinney said PennDOT has conducted a series of pilot projects on roundabouts throughout the state. Both Lehigh and Northampton counties were selected for studies. RK & K, the PennDOT consultant, conducted the studies. Both county studies include ten possible intersections for roundabouts and three possible corridors for roundabouts. A presentation by PennDOT will be provided at the LVTS meeting on Monday, August 31 at 9:00 am. More details on the studies will be provided at the meeting. Mr. Kinney briefly reviewed the projects in both counties. Ms. Bradley said the studies were commissioned and managed by PennDOT. We notified all the affected municipalities about the studies by email and phone.

Long Range Transportation Plan/Freight Plan Comment & Response

Mr. Kinney said we received more than 100 comments on the Regional Freight Plan. He summarized them into eight main categories:

1. Local road and neighborhood impacts
2. Air quality and health impacts
3. Infrastructure requirements – costs and responsible entities
4. Truck signage and routing
5. Truck parking
6. Congestion and safety mitigation needs
7. Tax base benefits and burdens
8. Regulatory and permitting for both trucking and manufacturing industries

Mr. Molchany asked if anybody talked about plans to utilize extended, tandem trailers. Are there any concerns locally? Ms. Bradley said yes. The additional weight will adversely affect our bridge infrastructure and will significantly decrease the life of many of our bridges. There is already not enough money to address our current bridge issues. Mr. Molchany said we didn’t actually address that in our study. Ms. Bradley said that is correct, the issue came up later because of the transportation bill reauthorization possibility, and one of the proposed bills would have allowed the piggyback in additional load weight for tractor trailers. Ultimately, the bill didn’t pass at the federal level. Mr. Repasch asked if we looked at the impacts of self-driving cars and trucks. Mr. Kinney said no, but going forward, that’s is something we’d probably look at.

Mr. Hozza said he received a comment from a resident asking if Route 329 was included in the analysis due to the warehouses proposed in the Township. Ms. Bradley said the entire Lehigh Valley was studied. She said the real success of the study was that we now have data on freight, where neither the state, nor the Lehigh Valley, had data before. We dovetailed our effort with the state. This is a good first step in the freight planning effort, and we intend on continuing since there is a need and demand for it.
OLD BUSINESS

Lehigh Valley Planning + Development Gala & Lehigh Valley Awards

Ms. Oscavich said invitations to the October 1 event have been sent out to each Commission member and to please call if anyone has any questions.

NEW BUSINESS

Event/Training Update

Ms. Oscavich said a list of upcoming events/meetings is at each Commission member’s place. She briefly reviewed the list of events. Ms. Bradley mentioned the September 14th LTAP course. We worked with PennDOT to offer a course on Stormwater Facility Operations and Maintenance. Mr. Glickman asked what the Safe Driver course was about. Ms. Bradley said it’s when road crews are out working and the safety measures to take to improve their safety while on the road and to reduce their personal liability and that of their community. Mr. Hozza asked who will be conducting the Fair Housing seminar. Ms. Bradley said it will be staff, the two counties, the three cities, North Penn Legal and maybe the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley. She said we would like representation from each municipality. Because of the recent Supreme Court decision, it’s critically important for communities to know how they can address the need to provide for fair housing while avoiding or mitigating lawsuits. Even if they don’t intentionally set out to discriminate in housing, it could be interpreted that way. That is why we want to explain it to the municipalities and why it’s important for them to amend their zoning ordinances.

Mr. Herman asked if any Commission member had new business or old business they wanted to discuss. Ms. Sywensky said some of their funding comes through the state. She asked if there are any concerns because she’s heard from a number of agencies that payments are beginning to be held. She asked if we are in any position that we need to advocate or be aware of. Ms. Bradley said no, our funding from the state is, by and large, a pass-through from the federal government. We’ve been assured that money will continue to come to us. Mr. Herman said we talked about it at last month’s Executive Committee meeting. It hasn’t been an issue so far.

CORRESPONDENCE

Community Services for Children

Ms. Bradley said staff participates in a Jeans for a Cause program. Donations are made to local charities. We sent a donation to Community Services for Children, and we received a thank you letter on page 14 of the agenda attachments.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Contact Information Update

Ms. Bradley said each Commission member has a contact information update sheet at their place. She asked each member to fill the sheet out so that we can have their correct contact information.

ADJOURN

Mr. Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Duerholz seconded the motion. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MEMO

961 MARCON BOULEVARD, SUITE 310
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 18109
(610) 264-4544

September 24, 2015

MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

Lehigh County

Karen Duerholz
Steven Glickman
Michael Hefele
Kent Herman
Edward Hozza
Sara Pandl
Kathy Rader
Kevin Schmidt
Julie Thomases
Donna Wright

Northampton County

Christen Borso
Eugene Clater
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
Charles Elliott
George F. Gemmel
Darlene Heller
Bob Lammi
Kevin Lott
Thomas J. Nolan
Pamela Pearson


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

Public Present: Bruce A. Haines, Hotel Bethlehem; Bruce E. Haines, Aardvark Sports Shop; Dana DeVito, Moravian Book Shop.
MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the August 27, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Gemmel. Mr. Glickman seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Lammi, Mr. Nolan, Ms. Pearson, Ms. Wright, Mr. Lott and Ms. Pandl abstaining.

SPECIAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Herman said that Ben Howells is leaving the Commission. He has been a valuable member since 1975. Mr. Herman also announced Mike Hefele’s retirement from the City of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. He thanked him for his invaluable years of service to the city and the LVPC. Mr. Hefele thanked Commissioners for their service and the LVPC staff for their professionalism and support. Mr. Herman said Ken McClain is also leaving the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission after about 5 years of service. Mr. McClain is going to be the District 6 PennDOT Executive. Mr. McClain has been the Chair of the Transportation Committee, and his service to the LVPC will be missed.

Mr. Herman introduced a new LVPC staff member, Mr. Ben Holland, who is our new Senior GIS Planner. Mr. Holland said he is happy to join the LVPC staff.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Nazareth Area Council of Governments (NAZCOG) Comprehensive Plan Implementation Report

Mr. McAfee said we previously had an agreement with NAZCOG to prepare an assessment on how well they were doing on meeting the objectives of their 2006 comprehensive plan. We had prepared an annual report documenting municipal progress for 2007, 2008 and 2009. No progress reports were prepared after that until now. The LVPC, under a new contract with NAZCOG, looked at a five-year period from 2010-2014. Several draft copies of the report were passed out to Commission members.

Mr. McAfee said the first topic in the report is a discussion on ordinances, plan adoptions, and amendments. Essentially we looked at all of the different plans, ordinances or amendments to zoning, subdivision, whatever the case may be, that have been adopted by these municipalities. We looked at whether or not they are generally consistent, consistent, generally inconsistent or inconsistent with the NAZCOG Comprehensive Plan, or are they a matter of local concern. Local concern means the municipality is addressing a subject not covered in the comprehensive plan. Mr. McAfee said we concluded that most of the plans were consistent with the NAZCOG Plan in terms of changes in zoning and SALDO administration, as well as stream or riparian buffer setbacks. The primary inconsistencies included quite a few ordinances that still allowed, under certain circumstances, development in floodways. There is also a tendency for the municipal zoning to be a little bit more restrictive than the NAZCOG Comprehensive Plan would recommend on residential density and permitted housing types. We generally would have
encouraged a slightly higher level of density across certain zoning classifications than most municipalities were prescribing.

The second topic addressed infrastructure improvements. Mr. McAfee said, generally speaking, at least 50% of the projects have had some sort of progress from when they had been proposed through the end of 2014. All three of the major bridge projects that had been proposed were completed. There were also a number of open space projects and transportation improvement projects that had no reported progress. The next topic looks at subdivision and land development data. This is essentially a version of what we release every year with the annual Subdivision and Building Activity Report, which this year was known as Build LV. It was personalized for the NAZCOG municipalities. We also looked at the housing sales in the region. The fifth topic looked at community indicators. This included a broad, sweeping look at a variety of socio-economic, demographic and transportation indications from across the municipalities. This starts with something as basic as population. All of the NAZCOG municipalities gained population, with the exception of Nazareth and Chapman. We also saw median age and median household size increasing across some of the NAZCOG municipalities. The NAZCOG municipalities are at a very stable condition in terms of home occupancy and ownership, which are generally higher than Northampton County as a whole, and in many cases, the median income is quite a bit higher as well. Mr. McAfee said we also looked at transportation conditions. One of the things we noticed was the conditions of roads and bridges are actually rated inferior, with a higher percentage that were classified as either functionally obsolete or structurally deficient. Ultimately, we took all of the sweeping array of studies and included observations and recommendations for each municipality’s zoning in comparison with the future land use plan recommendations from the NAZCOG plan. Again, we looked at them in terms of being consistent, generally consistent, generally inconsistent or inconsistent. The one municipality that had the highest level of inconsistency was the Borough of Chapman, largely because we recommend zoning, and Chapman doesn’t have zoning.

We encourage zoning that will allow for higher residential density with infrastructure that will support it. We also encourage zoning provisions to be much more stringent in areas where we encourage strong environmental protection. We were very encouraged by the level of alignment between the village center zoning, or that type of zoning, and how much that would align with the mixed use village recommendations in the comprehensive plan. Some of our final recommendations are that municipalities should recognize future land use plan categories outside of boundaries to remain mindful of the impacts of certain uses on their closest neighbors. They should be mindful of sewage facility planning documents and how those would align with their comprehensive plan. They should also reassess the development that has taken place since the completion of the comprehensive plan and use that comparison to help guide what their future zoning amendments would be based on what has taken place. We also recognize that the NAZCOG Comprehensive Plan is about a decade old, and there are some significant changes that have taken place that were largely unforeseen a decade ago. We are encouraging the NAZCOG municipalities to consider an update to the plan at this point. Ms. Bradley said we presented this to the Nazareth COG, and they are reviewing the document. We will meet with them in October to discuss the document and see what the next steps are.

**East Penn School District – Sale of 6503 Lower Macungie Road to Private Party**

Mr. McAfee said any time school districts engage in a sale or purchase of a property they are obligated to send the proposal to the county for review, per the Municipalities Planning Code.
He said this sale involved a 5.8 acre tract at 6503 Lower Macungie Road at the northwest corner of the intersection of Lower Macungie Road and Mill Creek. The draft review letter is on page 7 of the agenda attachments. We did not find anything objectionable with this sale. This land is fully within our urban classification. There are no impeding natural features. It is already zoned in an area suitable for supporting urban development. We had a discussion with the lawyer, and he is not sure what will be the use of the land. We see it as something that is strongly encouraged to be developed. Ms. Pandl said the Lower Macungie Township Planning Commission had the same comments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Pandl abstaining.

City of Allentown – Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Various: Regarding Land Use Definitions and Setbacks for Properties fronting North 7th Street

Mr. McAfee said we did not receive the amendments in time for the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on Monday. The draft review letter is on page 8 of the agenda attachments. He said there are various modifications to some of the definitions and terms. We are fully in support of this, and it is consistent with the comprehensive plan “in promoting neighborhood-based commerce, walkability and the use of alternative modes of mobility—particularly transit and bicycle” along North 7th Street, which the city has long identified as a primary gateway to downtown. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Pandl seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hefele abstaining.

Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are four summary sheet items on page 9 of the agenda attachments. She said we will first discuss Item #3. Mr. McAfee said we see this as generally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan regarding redevelopment of existing sites. We have a very small concerns with regards to provisions for group homes, private streets and definitions for certain uses. The biggest objective is to encourage redevelopment of a site that has long struggled largely to find that redevelopment. This zoning will encourage a variety of mixed uses that will largely emphasize residences, allow commercial and retail, but will not mandate the retention of the tower structure or ancillary buildings. Ms. Wright said the only comments at the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting were related to traffic concerns.

Mr. Herman asked if anyone from the Commission has any comments and then we will hear from the public. Mr. Elliott asked about the size of the proposed district. Ms. Heller said it is about 53 acres. Mr. Glickman said they removed anything related to the state-approved Traditional Neighborhood ordinance and to follow guidelines of Smart Growth. He didn’t know what the impact of that was. He asked if it broadens diversity of development or restricts it. Mr. McAfee said it opens the book to a variety of possible developmental strategies, some of which could be very mixed use and high density in nature, fostering a walkable environment. Mr. Gemmel asked about the uses not allowed. Mr. McAfee said there are a variety of certain uses, generally, the vast majority of higher intensity industrial uses. Mr. McAfee also said there are height restrictions in relation to the proximity to the street. Mr. Gemmel asked about the comment on group homes and private streets. Mr. McAfee said they are separate issues. The private streets comment was a consideration more with the language. It was unclear as to whether the ordinance encouraged private streets or not. The language should be clearer. The LVPC doesn’t encourage private streets. Group homes were listed as a “not permitted use”, and we thought this could be problematic, considering virtually all single family homes that could house
a group home were being omitted. Mr. Glickman asked if this site could be developed to mimic what is across the street, such as an office building or strip center development. Ms. Heller said no. She said the ordinance is written where an overall Master Plan needs to be submitted to the City before they can start development. There is a requirement that three types of uses be included in the development in different proportions: residential; retail, entertainment and restaurant; and offices and related uses. Ms. Heller said the greatest concentration of development on the site is required to be more than one story. We see that as where the mixed use comes in with retail on the first floor and offices and residential above. This is the kind of development we are trying to encourage. Mr. Gemmel asked if the Master Plan is open to public review. Ms. Heller said it is all open to the public. Ms. Pandl asked is this always going to be privately-owned or will the City be a partner. Ms. Heller said someone owns it privately right now. The City is not anticipating purchasing or leasing it. It is a sort of public/private partnership in that it’s a CRIZ (City Redevelopment and Improvement Zone) parcel and they have RCAP funds.

Mr. Herman opened the discussion to public comments. He noted that the Planning Commission is not designed to micromanage the decisions of the local government. It is a matter of analyzing what has been submitted in light of the overall goals and objectives of the two-County Comprehensive Plan. The role of the Planning Commission is advisory. After public comments, he said we’ll have concluding comments from the Commission and staff.

Mr. Bruce A. Haines, Managing Partner, Hotel Bethlehem, said they understand the LVPC’s role, but they are here to represent the businesses in downtown Historic Bethlehem and the South Side. The downtown merchants in Historic Bethlehem are united and against this proposal. They will be obviously making their pitch to City Council to that regard. Virtually every business on Main and Broad streets and the South Side feels this particular proposal as presented effectively creates the opportunity for the developer to create a third downtown in Bethlehem. Virtually all of the uses being proposed are the uses for the Commercial/Central Business District, which the Downtown businesses are a part of. They look at the Martin Tower property the way it is zoned today as complimentary to Downtown. The way it is being proposed today, it would be a direct competitor to Downtown. The developer could replicate Main Street. He said they have the authentic Main Street, but it is fragile. The retail stores on Main Street are fragile. If it wasn’t for Christmas, they wouldn’t have enough people on the street in Downtown Bethlehem. The Moravian Book Store reached out to Allentown to open an auxiliary facility to protect themselves. What is happening here in the Lehigh Valley and the reason they are here is they understand they have to battle with the City of Bethlehem, and they will make their case that this is not as complimentary as the current zoning is, but it is competitive. He said they think the LVPC should reconsider approval for this. He said this is a bad development for the Lehigh Valley. The reason he said this is the way this land is currently zoned was approved by the LVPC in 2006. It is primarily residential and office, with only 50,000 square feet of convenience, limited neighborhood retail. The biggest change being proposed is the retail and giving the developer the ability to effectively put up to 1.4 million square feet of retail on that property. The entire 53 acres could be covered with first floor retail, second floor office and third floor residential. They will be allowing 300,000 square feet of one story retail, which is higher than Westgate Mall at 270,000 square feet. This is a new shopping destination area in the Lehigh Valley that would be created to compete with the existing shopping districts in Downtown Bethlehem, Downtown Easton, the Promenade Shops, Lehigh Valley Mall and the Westgate Mall. What makes it even more disturbing is that it is all designated as CRIZ eligible. What that means is that it not only is a competing destination to our Downtown, but like Allentown’s NIZ
(Neighborhood Improvement Zone), the developer gets to keep all of its 6% retail sales taxes generated on the property and apply it to his mortgage. Anyone building a retail facility there gets to keep that. He said they collect retail sales tax from anyone who shops in Downtown and South Side Bethlehem and send it to Harrisburg to help balance the budget. Any retail that comes onto the Martin Tower site will not have to give money to Harrisburg. The assignment of the CRIZ to this developer puts him at an extreme competitive advantage similar to the NIZ in Downtown Allentown. He said this body should think about this. He provided handouts that portray this issue.

Mr. Bruce A. Haines said he also wanted to address a comment made on Smart Growth. The document references Smart Growth. The problem with this is it failed to recognize two very critical components of Smart Growth. They are recommending mixed use development, which is all part of the Smart Growth law, but one of the key components of Smart Growth is to focus on your current downtown. Creating another Main Street a mile from Historic Bethlehem Main Street is bad planning. It is one thing if the City didn’t have a downtown. This property is walkable, it is a sustainable property and it is a mile from the Brew Works in Downtown. This is no further than residents that live in the Historic District of Bethlehem. The second thing this failed to address on Smart Growth is stakeholders were not involved. One of the key components of Smart Growth is to involve stakeholders. Downtown businesses were never consulted. They are stakeholders who have invested in Downtown. They work hard to create events to bring people to Downtown Bethlehem. This property is walkable and bikeable to downtown. They are being put at a competitive disadvantage because the developer is in a CRIZ and will be offering lower rents and no parking meters. He said the bottom line is he doesn’t think we should be creating a new subsidized downtown.

Mr. Herman said he has a business in Downtown Bethlehem and has used the services of all the businesses there. He said they should be commended for what they have contributed to the Downtown Bethlehem community. Mr. Herman said these economic factors may have a slight nuance in consideration of what should be done in the overall analysis of the LVPC of whether or not this is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Most of the focus is not on these types of economic issues. This board looks at the overall two-county area and tries to decide whether or not what is being proposed is consistent with the overall goals and objectives, and the economic piece is not a big piece of the overall puzzle. That is really for policy-makers other than this board. He said we appreciate your explanation and concerns, but that is his view.

Mr. Bruce E. Haines, Aardvark Sports Shop, said he has owned his store for 18 years. He realizes they are expressing concerns that are not directly related to the LVPC mission. When he started working in Downtown Bethlehem, the Hotel Bethlehem, Orr’s and Woolworth shut down. There was no restaurant row. They have seen the decline and rise of Downtown Bethlehem in a relatively short period of time. Downtown Bethlehem is very fragile. The City has a beautiful architectural backdrop, but the commerce on the street is very fragile. The CRIZ is going to be subsidized. He said most of the merchants would support the current zoning with the exception that the Martin Tower be removed. He showed a drawing from a proposal for zoning that was passed in 2006. He said that particular Master Plan was approved in 2007 by the current owner of the property. He became eligible for the CRIZ and was able to change the mix of the property from primarily residential to potentially 60% to 70% retail. He said they are not against development, but he feels uncomfortable with the carte blanche being given to the developer. It upsets him to go against City government, but this is his view.
Mr. Gemmel commented that Mr. Herman previously said economics aren’t a part of our consideration, however, when he looks at the posters for the Return on Environment study, many of them address economic impacts. Mr. Herman said you can’t separate them; that is correct.

Ms. Rader had a procedural question of the Commission. Municipalities are sometimes put in a position that, like it or not, they have to pass or approve various proposals that meet the criteria of their ordinances. She asked how that works here. Since it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, she asked if the Commission is obligated to vote in favor of it even if they don’t like it. Ms. Bradley said no. Mr. Herman said if you are not satisfied with the recommendation of the Commission, you don’t have to approve the comments.

Mr. Glickman commented on the Costco proposal in Lower Macungie Township that was previously brought before the LVPC. The LVPC found the proposal inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. However, the developer used words that made it sound like urban development in Smart Growth ways. He gets the same sense with this zoning. The zoning ordinance with this CRIZ is talking about Smart Growth, yet that may not necessarily ring true. There may be more guidelines than anything legal. It just should be noted that some words sound good, but may have inappropriate meanings. Mr. Herman said he thinks there are nuances to the two situations. In the one circumstance you are dealing with a state law designating the area as a CRIZ. In Lower Macungie, when the economic issue came before the Commission, it was a determination as to the assessment of that as a redevelopment area and the local government providing the subsidy to basically assist with that project. The nuance was a little bit different. It was controlled by the local government to a large extent over the determination that the subsidy would be available to that particular development. In the Martin Tower project, you have a state law determining that area as a CRIZ. Whether or not this plan is in place or another, whoever develops this is going to have the benefit of the CRIZ. Maybe what is being proposed is an attempt to maximize what the return might be as opposed to something else. Mr. Glickman said the Lower Macungie proposal was Tax Increment Financing (TIF) where they needed us, the school district and the county. Mr. Herman said the developer did research on the mining on the site and used that argument to qualify the project under the TIF. He thinks that nuance is a little different here. Mr. Glickman asked if the use of the CRIZ requires any input other than a review from the LVPC. Ms. Heller said there is a CRIZ Authority.

Ms. Pandl said when you look at the County Comprehensive Plan for local land use issues, pretty much anything can go in the urban areas. She asked if there are other conflicting policies in terms of downtowns. She said we don’t really have a lot to work with in terms of policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Bradley said no, she wouldn’t make that leap. Mr. McAfee said the County Comprehensive Plan doesn’t really speak about the retail competition at any great length at all beyond a mixture of uses. This zoning amendment is fostering a mixture of uses. Ms. Bradley said we have a Comprehensive Plan that is general in its language. It is not going to be restrictive in saying put certain uses in certain places.

Mr. Elliott asked if there are any constraints in the zoning amendment that would create friction against that from happening or are there just winners and losers, and that’s the way it goes. Ms. Heller said there are three business owners here who are highly respected in the community. They moved in when Bethlehem was not what it is today, and they stuck it out. They are the kind of people that downtowns need. Thank goodness we have them. They have been great to the City. Ms. Heller said when people think of the City of Bethlehem, they think of Main Street, not the Casino. She said the City doesn’t want to do anything to harm Main Street. This
is not the intention of this. What is built into the ordinance to add some protection, frankly, is that there are three use types that are required. As office uses come in, they will bring workers who will eat lunch and stay after work. The residential component will do the same thing. They are required to have residential components. We think that is what creates the balance. The greater the mix of uses, the healthier the site and other areas of the City as well. She said in some ways, this is new territory for the City, but they think they have something here that will work for the entire City. Ms. Borso asked if they are definitely getting rid of the tower. Ms. Heller said it doesn’t require the retention of the tower. It doesn’t say whether it stays or not. The lot has more flexibility for development if the tower is not there.

Mr. Elliott asked if there are enough built-in consumers to absorb the amount of retail capacity, or will there be a small number of residences and office workers and then the possibility for such an amount of retail space that the scenario they are painting will occur. He asked if the City has intentionally created balances to try to prevent that. Ms. Heller said it is intended to be flexible. There is a broad range of percentages that can exist on the site. That is also the role the overall Master Plan will provide us before they submit actual development proposals.

Ms. Pandl asked if it is a zero sum game in the Lehigh Valley or are we willing to bring in new businesses and more people. She asked if we are creating space for more people, more opportunities that we don’t have here, or are we saying there is no room for growth. Ms. Heller said it’s a little unfair because the City has a huge amount of land still vacant, and they’re going to infill that land. They want to get as many residential uses as they can. This is a goal for the BethWorks site and along Rt. 412. Redevelopment is ongoing at the Westgate Mall. There is a lot going on in different areas of the City.

Mr. Clater said the LVPC role is to ensure that we stay relatively consistent with our current Comprehensive Plan, which obviously changes over time. He doesn’t recall seeing anything in the Comprehensive Plan that within the urban zone talks about the centers of retail activity. He doesn’t like what he sees, but we have to stand by our charter and are obligated to do what we need to do based on what our responsibilities are today.

Mr. Bruce A. Haines wanted to clarify that the current zoning, which was approved in 2006 with the same developer, was approved as a mixed use development that allows unlimited residential or office. The main restriction is that it can only have 50,000 square feet of convenience retail. The LVPC supported this in 2006. The changes with the CRIZ are going to have the developer competing with Downtown. He is going to try to put the best retail there to attract as many people away from Downtown as he can. Also, he gets to keep the sales tax and the 3.07% income tax for every worker who works on the property.

Mr. Herman thanked everyone for their comments. Ms. Wright said this is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and made a motion to approve the comments on Item #3. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Heller abstaining, and Ms. Rader, Mr. Gemmel, Ms. Borso, Mr. Hozza, Ms. Thomases and Mr. Glickman voting no. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments on Item #1, #2 and #4. Ms. Duerholz seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Hozza abstaining on Item #1, and Mr. Diacogiannis abstaining on Item #2.


Environment Committee

Livable Landscapes – An Open Space Plan for Northampton County – Draft Plan

Mr. Reese said tonight we have a preliminary draft of Livable Landscapes – An Open Space Plan for Northampton County. He passed out several copies of the plan to Commission members. The plan includes a public participation element, and we have had meetings with County staff and the steering committee to get their input on the plan. We completed a survey with Northampton County registered voters to get their opinion and feedback. We have done a survey of a variety of properties owned by Northampton County that are either existing parks or properties that are intended for park use, completed an assessment of the facilities and provided recommendations for those properties. We completed an analysis that looked at the population forecasts for Northampton County up to 2040 and what that means for open space needs. Mr. Reese briefly discussed the vision statement and goals of the open space plan. The vision statement was worked on with the Steering Committee, the public and Environment Committee. He briefly discussed some of the recommendations from the plan. Based on an analysis of the population forecasts and existing/proposed parks, the County should have additional regional space in parkland. Also, the County has an open space program, and we have made a variety of recommendations for them to consider to refine the program. We presented the draft plan to the Environment Committee on Monday, provided it to the Steering Committee and are presenting it to the Commission tonight. We are asking for comments to be provided to us in early October and will prepare a revised draft based on the comments. Ms. Bradley said she and Mr. Reese will be at Jacobsburg State Park on Saturday to solicit input on the draft open space plan and to talk about some of the bigger regional goals like the Return on Environment study. Ms. Bradley encouraged Commission members to attend.

Reviews

Ms. Wright said there is one summary sheet item on pages 10-11 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Rockwell briefly reviewed the comments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Transportation Committee

Long Range Transportation Plan/Regional Freight Plan

Mr. Diacogiannis made a motion to approve the adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan and Regional Freight Plan. They were endorsed by the Transportation Committee. Ms. Rader seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Lehigh Valley Planning + Development Gala & Lehigh Valley Awards

Mr. Herman invited everyone to attend the event next Thursday. He said last year the event was well-received.
NEW BUSINESS

Lehigh County Aging Population Overview

Ms. Bradley said we received a call from Lehigh County to ask for help on aging issues in the County. Ms. Bradley said the staff turned it around in two weeks. Ms. Bradley reviewed some of the findings from the report. She said by 2040, the number of people 55 and older is expected to increase by 58%, those 65 and older will increase by 93% and those 75 and older will increase by 108%. Ms. Bradley showed a graph of the different generations for the 2010 Lehigh County population, including the Baby Boom generation.

Ms. Bradley said Lehigh County asked about the work force. On a national level, there was a significant increase in the number of older adults that are staying in the work force. The number of men 55 and older in the labor force increased by 52.5% between 2002 and 2012; for women, the increase was 60.4%. People are living longer and working longer.

Ms. Bradley said in terms of owner occupancy, a lot of people are staying in their homes, and a lot of people over 55 own homes. However, there are also a lot of people who are renting or will continue to rent in Lehigh County and the region. Poverty status is also something important to our community. It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in poverty status for people over 65, as many as 90,000 people by 2040. If our population is 650,000 people now, and it goes up to 800,000 by 2040, that is still a significant number of people in our region who are going to be elderly and not have enough income to really survive.

Ms. Bradley said in 2012, Alzheimer’s disease was responsible for about 89 deaths in people over 65 years of age in Lehigh County. This ties into the nursing facility equation. According to a 2007 report, it was estimated that 35% of people over 65 in 2005 will receive some sort of nursing home care, 18% will live in a nursing home for at least one year and 5% for five years. Translating these estimates to Lehigh County, about 5% of people over 65 in 2014 was 2,864 people. If Lehigh County has 2,754 nursing home beds, and 2,864 beds are needed for 5% of the over 65 population, it appears there is a need right now for an additional 110 beds. Lehigh County liked the report. They asked us more questions and we responded to those yesterday.

National Community Planning Month Proclamation

Ms. Bradley said this is the third year the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission will support National Community Planning Month, which is the month of October. There is a proclamation on page 12 of the agenda attachments.

CORRESPONDENCE

Spring Garden Children’s Center, Inc.

Ms. Bradley said staff participates in a Jeans for a Cause program. Donations are made to local charities. We sent a donation to Spring Garden Children’s Center and received a thank you letter that is included on 13 of the agenda attachments.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

UPENN Studio

Ms. Bradley said we have a University of Pennsylvania Design Graduate Landscape Architecture Studio working here in the Lehigh Valley this semester, specifically on the ten communities that make up the northeast corner of Northampton County. They will be looking at everything from connecting trail networks from the Federal system of the Appalachian Trail down to our local network and how that connects into Monroe County, to meeting commuter goals for more multimodal options to looking at quarry revitalization and how we can better support the geologic formations that naturally occur here, to looking at some fresh food access issues. She said we are also getting a lot of community interaction with them.

LVPC Newsletter

Ms. Bradley said you should have received our most recent newsletter. We are using the Benchmark System to get the newsletter out. She said if anyone is having any problems receiving their copy please let us know.

ADJOURN

Ms. Wright made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

**Lehigh County**
- Norman Blatt
- Shannon Calluori
- Percy Dougherty
- Steven Glickman
- Armand Greco
- Kent Herman
- Richard Molchany
- Christina Morgan
- Sara Pandl
- Kathy Rader
- Kevin Schmidt
- Julie Thomases

**Northampton County**
- Gordon Campbell
- Eugene Clater
- John Diacogiannis
- Liesel Dreisbach
- George F. Gemmel
- Kevin Lott
- Thomas J. Nolan
- Pamela Pearson
- Michael Reph
- Tina Roseberry


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

Public Present: Kirk Raup, Smart Regional Rail; Randy Kraft, WFMZ.
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Herman introduced two new Commission members: Ms. Shannon Calluori, the new Planning Director for the City of Allentown who is replacing Michael Hefele and Tina Roseberry, the Director of Planning and Zoning for the City of Easton. The LVPC staff and Commission members introduced themselves to the new members.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the September 24, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Gemmel. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Reph, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Molchany, Mr. Blatt and Ms. Calluori abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Allen Township - Land Development Plan - Northampton Industrial Park (Land Use of Regional Significance)

Mr. McAfee said this site is located to the north of State Route 329 (Nor-Bath Boulevard) and just to the west of Howertown Road (SR 3017). According to the County Comprehensive Plan land use element, the area south of Nor-Bath Boulevard is recommended for urban development, and the area north is recommended for a combination of rural, farmland preservation and some natural features. With that in mind, the proposed development is inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan because we are seeing the approval of a highly intense development and land use of regional significance. Four lots are proposed, three of which will amount to a total of 1.6 million square feet of largely warehouse space. It is going to be served by public sewer and water utilities.

Mr. McAfee said the draft letter is still a work in progress, and we have another week before the 30 day review deadline. We have an attachment showing the General Land Use Plan. It is very clear cut in terms of south of Route 329 being urban and north being rural. Beyond that, we have some additional considerations with regards to natural features, the most prominent of which is a fair number of karst formations, either surface depressions or surface mines. These features are strong indicators of potential sinkhole activity. Mr. McAfee provided an aerial map showing the potential location of these features. Another prominent feature is the large quarry, the largest in the Lehigh Valley, on Lot 4. The remainder of the site is divided across three parcels that will include the industrial space, largely for shipping and warehousing.

Mr. McAfee said many of our other considerations are tied to the Traffic Impact Study. There are some considerations with regard to bridge capacity as well as some concerns with cartway width on some of the roads. Furthermore, because this is a land use of regional significance, and per our Memorandum of Understanding with LANta, we submitted this proposal to LANta for their review. In the draft letter, LANta’s comments are shaded in gray. LANta does not currently provide fixed-route public transportation to the proposed site and does not anticipate serving this location in the future, further substantiating that this is a relatively rural site. However, LANta recommends provisions to help make it a more walkable site should transit service be provided in the future. Mr. McAfee said this creates a challenge for the LVPC, which is addressed
in the subsequent paragraph in italics. This paragraph was added after the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday. He said LANta is recommending what we normally would advise in the event of extending transit service. However, because this is recommended for rural development, we don’t anticipate the need for transit service. The ultimate goal of the new paragraph is to say this is not in the character of urban development, and the strongly discouraged act of developing it supersedes pedestrian transit provisions.

Ms. Pandl asked if this requires rezoning, or is it zoned for this use. Mr. McAfee said it is by-right. She asked if the zoning is consistent with the local Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Clater said the Comprehensive Plan is about 14 or 15 years old, and it is consistent. Mr. Gemmel asked if the use of the bridge over the Hokendaqua Creek on Weaversville Road was brought into consideration. Mr. Clater said no, one of the PennDOT Traffic Impact Study requirements is they only had to analyze up to a mile from the site. That bridge is slightly more than a mile from the site. Mr. Clater said there are two bridges that will be directly affected: one on Howertown Road, which has a 14-ton weight restriction and one on Route 329, which has no weight restrictions. That bridge is to be replaced with either a three lane or four lane box culvert.

Ms. Bradley said one of the reasons the county General Land Use Plan was drawn the way it was for urbanized areas is because there is not existing adequate road infrastructure around these sites. The township is still working that out as part of the project. Ms. Pandl asked about the inconsistency between the Township Act 537 Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Clater said that will be amended. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the draft letter with the new paragraph. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Clater abstaining.

South Whitehall Township – Land Development Plan – Hotel Hamilton

Ms. Dreisbach said the review letter is on pages 12-13 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee said this project is on the northeast corner of the southern spur of Route 222 (east bound) and Cedar Crest Boulevard. This property has been underutilized for a long time. The King George Inn, one of the most historic structures in South Whitehall Township and possibly Lehigh County, is located on the site. The Inn was used as a restaurant until relatively recently. It is now being proposed for office use. This redevelopment is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan, however, there are some considerations particularly related to the site design, which could use considerable improvement. He said there will be large buildings on the site surrounded by a vast parking lot, which is a huge contrast to the structures to the south on Hamilton Boulevard. There are not many provisions for pedestrians. There are a high number of ingress/egress points, more than necessary. Another issue is the karst features on the site. One feature could have an impact on the hotel. By moving the structure further south, this could mitigate future impacts. The decision is ultimately up to the Township, and we would encourage them to pursue a more carefully thought out site plan.

Ms. Morgan said there has been so much energy and effort put into this area and being able to use that building. There has been a lot of thought put into this, and we came up with something that really works. We instituted a Historic Preservation Ordinance in the Township that is helping with this project and a variety of other projects in the Township. Ms. Dreisbach noted that the letter was already sent because we were up against a time requirement. We are approving the letter that has already been sent. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Clater seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Morgan abstaining.
**Ordinance Reviews**

Ms. Dreisbach said there are five summary sheet items on page 14 of the agenda attachments. Mr. McAfee said Item 5 is the only inconsistent item on the summary sheet. The project is a Lot Consolidation and Land Development Plan for the TBI Active Adult in East Allen Township. The original rezoning request for this was seen by the Commission twice in the last year and a half. In both cases, it was inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan to build anything of significant intensity on the tract in question. This tract is largely encouraged for rural and agricultural preservation in the County Comprehensive Plan. We are seeing a relatively high density, age-restricted residential development being proposed.

Mr. McAfee said beyond that, the actual residential development, which is now in its preliminary plan stage, had a number of considerations that we thought were very problematic. Roads are not being built to municipal standards because they are to be private roads, there is only one way in and out to a high density development, there are numerous karst formations, and the required dedicated open space largely consists of stormwater management facilities. Finally, the sidewalk inclusion is only on one side of the street for each cul-de-sac, with the sidewalk ending half way up. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the comments for all items. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Environment Committee**

**Livable Landscapes – An Open Space Plan for Northampton County – Status Report**

Mr. Reese said a copy of the Draft Livable Landscapes – An Open Space Plan for Northampton County is at each Commission member’s place. We created a Preliminary Draft and provided it to our Environment Committee and the Steering Committee back in September. We asked them for their comments on the draft. We received a variety of comments, and we are working our way through them. This draft does not completely deal with all of those comments. We are continuing to work through them. Mr. Reese provided a brief overview of the process used to create the plan and what’s in the document. He said we’ll bring this back next month for further discussion.

Mr. Reese said we just finished the Return on Environment study that documents the economic benefits of open space for the region. This is really a companion effort to the open space plan, so the information related to Northampton County is included in the plan. He said we documented the existing open space resources in the County along with a map of each. There was a very significant public participation process: Steering Committee, public meetings, public opinion surveys, and interviews with County staff and local businesses. We completed a variety of field work, data collection and analysis. The plan includes a vision statement, goals, policies, implementation strategies and recommendations. Mr. Reese pointed to a poster on the wall that lists the six goals in the plan. We also considered five major open space areas in the plan: natural resources, outdoor recreation facilities, greenways and blueways, historic and scenic resources, and farmland resources.

Mr. Reese said one of things we did was look at the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program in Northampton County. We are doing an assessment of that program and will be giving the County our recommendations. Mr. Reese talked about the public participation aspect. The survey document was sent out to a random sample of registered voters in Northampton County.
We received a very good response. The County has a variety of land and park facilities. We looked at each one of those and provided an assessment and recommendations in the plan. We also looked at the data analysis in terms of municipal and county park acreages and whether they were sufficient.

Ms. Bradley said, at the request of the County, we completed an assessment of their Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, as well as their Parks and Open Space Environmental Conservation programs. We have recommendations in the plan associated with making those programs more effective as well. We will be doing the same exercise for Lehigh County and want to thank the Lehigh County Commissioners for adopting our budget last night. She said we have a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to start the Lehigh County Plan next year, with a match from PennDOT and Lehigh County. She said we will be starting on their plan when this one is completed. On Sunday, Mr. Reese will be at the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Half Marathon. We will be placing Return on Environment signs from the starting to finish line. We have been promoting this plan and the Return on Environment plan throughout the region. Mr. Glickman asked who took the photos. Ms. Bradley said all of the photos were taken by staff. Mr. Glickman suggested the photographer be identified for each photo. Ms. Bradley said we can do that. He asked about the chart on pages 160-161 that have the priority key at the end of the chart. He thinks the key should be in the beginning, not at the end. Ms. Bradley said we will make that change.

**Transportation Committee**

*Long Range Transportation Plan/Regional Freight Plan Adopted*

Mr. Diacogiannis reported that the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Regional Freight Plan were adopted by the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) on October 13. Mr. Kinney said the LRTP was sent to PennDOT for review and approval, who then forwards it to the Federal Highway Administration for final approval. We just learned today that PennDOT approved and forwarded the plan to the Federal Highway Administration. We hope to hear the outcome of the review within 30-60 days.

*Road to Rail*

Ms. Bradley said a pamphlet on the initiative is at each Commission member’s place. She said the Long Range Transportation Plan includes significant information on multi-modalism. Many of our roadways are more congested; freight traffic is expected to double over the next 20 years. It’s important to start planning now for a strong multi-modal future. The average time to set up a passenger rail system is 18 years in the U.S. There are a number of ways to achieve a better multi-modal future. The first is to complete a sidewalk inventory of the Lehigh Valley that we’ve contracted with PennDOT to complete by June 30, 2016. Then we will begin a bicycle/pedestrian plan for the entire region. This plan will include a business model, working with LANta, Lehigh Valley Greenways and our hospital network, to explore a regional bikeshare. If we can find a business model, it will be the first in the U.S.

Ms. Bradley said we’ve started conversations with DVRPC and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority on how we’d make the systems work. We have opportunities to talk with people from northeast Pennsylvania about their connections. We have broad support from Leslie Richards, the Secretary of PennDOT. We have opportunities to work with the private
sector, which has never been explored before. The three mayors, who are members of LVTS, are supportive of passenger rail. Ms. Bradley briefly reviewed LVTS’ membership. Any rail system that would occur would have to go through LVTS. Mr. Raup said he is looking forward to how this rolls out and thanked the Commission. Mr. Dougherty said he doesn’t think we should restrict ourselves to the present tracks because they are so circuitous from here to New York City. It would take forever. He thinks the best way to do it is to go down the middle of the highway as was done in Washington, even though studies say it can’t be done here because all the bridges would have to be raised. We need to look at a number of different scenarios.

**Act 89**

Mr. Diacogiannis said it was brought to our attention that, due to the budget impasse in Harrisburg, there has been an unintended impact on our budget. Mr. Kinney said the way most projects are funded through the LRTP and Transportation Improvement Program is by federal dollars: Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administration. These come to the state with a 20% match requirement. Both state money and local funds come into play. The majority of our match money comes through PennDOT in the form of the Motor License Fund. As part of the Act 89 compromise and passage, this fund dedicated some money to the State Police Department. He said that 9% of the fund per year is redirected to state police; a portion of this money is not coming back to our region. The Transportation Committee recommended we should alert legislators and PennDOT through a letter that states they should look for alternative sources to fund state police needs. Mr. Diacogiannis made a motion to direct staff to draft a letter to PennDOT and local legislators regarding solvency of the fund as it relates to the reduction of transportation dollars to the Lehigh Valley. Mr. Lott seconded the motion. Ms. Bradley said this was not part of the passage of Act 89. This amounts to a reduction of over $200 million for roads, bridges and transit to our region. Mr. Dougherty asked if it would help to have a legislative day, whether LVPC members go to Harrisburg or legislators are invited here, so we can impress on them how important this is. Ms. Bradley thought this was a good idea. Mr. Herman called for the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

*Lehigh Valley Awards Gala Report*

Mr. Herman said the event was well-attended, well-received and increased the visibility of the LVPC in the community. We enlisted the help of a consultant, Tracey Werner from Blabbermouth Communications, and she did a good job. Ms. Bradley said the event was sold out. She said Ms. Werner did a survey after the event and almost all of the comments were positive. Everyone liked the content and the idea that we honored all of the people involved in a project.

**NEW BUSINESS - None**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Herman said we have thank you letters from both Mr. Howells and Mr. Hefele on pages 15 and 16 of the agenda attachments.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

LVPC Mission & Purpose

Ms. Bradley said, from time to time, it’s important to discuss why we exist. She said in your packet is our statutory authorization, and the front page is really our federal authorization for the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study. This is actually how we kind of started, but it also was set up to deal with land use. In 1969, Lehigh and Northampton counties decided to plan together and take on some of the county planning functions as well. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Code was also passed in 1969, and our statutory responsibilities under that are on the back of the page. Ms. Bradley said the LVPC is charged with encouraging municipalities to adopt municipal or joint municipal comprehensive plans that are generally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. One thing that is becoming a more important part of the conversation because we are under 50% of the total land area in farmland, is to encourage the preservation of prime agricultural land, natural and historic preservation through easements, transfer of development rights, rezoning and the like.

Ms. Bradley said the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission is made up of 37 total members: 19 elected and 18 citizen Commissioners. Our citizen Commissioners are selected at large by the County Executives and sent to County Council for approval. There are nine appointees each from Lehigh and Northampton counties. Then we have elected commissioners. This is all written into our by-laws. The Lehigh County and Northampton County Executives have permanent seats. One member of the Lehigh County Commissioners and Northampton County Council has a permanent seat. The Mayors of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton have permanent seats. Ms. Roseberry represents Mayor Panto of Easton, Ms. Heller represents Mayor Donchez and Ms. Calluori represents Mayor Pawlowski. An Allentown City Council person has a permanent seat, and it switches year to year between Bethlehem and Easton. This year it is Elinor Warner from the City of Easton. Next year, Bethlehem City Council will select someone. Then we have five Borough or Township elected officials from Lehigh County and five Borough or Township elected officials from Northampton County.

Ms. Bradley said our main purpose is to promote the public health, safety and welfare for both Lehigh and Northampton counties. She said we are to follow the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. We also have an additional Declaration of Purpose to guide the orderly growth, development and redevelopment of the Lehigh Valley in accordance with long-term objectives, with principles and standards that are in the best interest and welfare of the inhabitants and political subdivisions of our region. We coordinate and integrate the plans for orderly growth and development and redevelopment of the Lehigh Valley. We work very closely with our municipal governments to review their comprehensive plans and ordinances and find out how those tie in with our County Comprehensive Plan. Our work is to improve the social and economic climate of the area. Over time, we have put very strong economic development language as well as implementation tools into our County Comprehensive Plan. We deal with social issues and economic issues every day. Every decision of the LVPC and LVTS ultimately touches something in our society that is incorporated into that social and economic responsibility. We encourage appropriate land use through implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. This is the guiding document of the LVPC, and the Long Range Transportation Plan is as well. We require both of them to be consistent with each other. This requires our transportation planning decisions to tie in with our land use decisions. We are very special in that regard. She said it is one of the primary reasons why Governor Wolf has her on his Community and
Economic Development Advisory Team because of how wisely this organization was set up in the 60’s. The LVPC took our Metropolitan Planning Organization function through the Federal Highway Act and married it with our county planning functions. It creates efficiency and results in better implementation in the Lehigh Valley. They want to make us a state-wide model because of the very wise decisions our County Commissioners made and all of the other officials and citizens who formed our MPO back in the early 60’s. We should be really proud of that. In fact, other places like the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, which has 100 planners, are jealous of us because we are able to tie that land use planning function in with the transportation investment strategy through the LVTS.

Ms. Bradley said another purpose is to encourage the maximum utilization of the existing infrastructure and plan for new infrastructure as needed to fulfill the goals and objectives of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. We also need to promote the conservation of energy, land, water and air in the Lehigh Valley and preserve unique historic and natural features. Energy consumption is very important and ties into our work. The relationship of all these things is very important when you look at things holistically or comprehensively.

Ms. Bradley said we are to promote and assist in achieving improved traffic and transportation flow. This gets back to the road to rail conversation where we know we have had a sustained growth of about 1% per year population growth in the region over a period of 60 years. This is not slowing. We have to take a new look at how traffic and transportation flow occurs in our region and our purpose mandates we do that.

Ms. Bradley said we need to collect and distribute useful regional data. We are the Lehigh Valley’s regional data center on everything related to land use and regional transportation planning. We have taken that function very seriously. Without good, reliable statistics and data, we can’t do any of the things that we talked about before. We have held this as one of our core values. We will continue to excel at this, putting more information out on our website and in new and interesting ways. We are currently exploring an iPhone app. We provide services to coordinate with other public agencies and political subdivisions within and outside the Lehigh Valley area. Our job is to bring people together and organize those efforts in a way that serves all of the people as well as the businesses of the region. We distribute that information as well as educational materials. This sets us up as an educational entity. We also need to coordinate and distribute our information and other public agency information when it becomes available. She said we struggle with this latter part. A recent situation occurred when PennDOT gave a presentation about roundabouts. Not everyone likes them. PennDOT dropped the study off about a week ago and told us to put it on our website instead of theirs. We are trying to figure out how to disseminate that information, information that we don’t create.

The LVPC also needs to provide regional and county-wide planning, including natural resources, land use planning, energy, conservation, transportation, community facilities and utility planning. There are a lot of authorities that assist us in our efforts. The interesting challenge as we go into the update of our Comprehensive Plan is the fact that more and more of our utility infrastructure is private, like the internet and electricity. Broadband and cell tower infrastructure is going to become more and more important in the planning we do. We are trying to think how these things will affect planning in the future.

Another purpose is to provide local planning services, including the preparation of local comprehensive plans and ordinances for local municipalities and special planning projects and
Nielsen studies for municipalities and other public or private organizations. We are charged under our purpose, for well over 50 years, to go out and help our municipalities coordinate those efforts with our regional plan and to do that work as much as we can.

Ms. Bradley said it is our job to administer county subdivision regulations and other ordinances assigned to the LVPC by Lehigh and Northampton counties. It is also part of our job to support the work of our two county governments in as much as it serves the region. She said we need to collect data by conducting research on land use, natural resources, housing, infrastructure, population and economic trends and make this information available to the public. We review and coordinate planning for all relevant projects and programs specified by federal, state and local statutes. This is easily characterized by our transportation planning section as well as some of our stormwater work. We need to educate public officials and citizens on the value of local and regional planning. This is our taking the message out to the community. It is part of our service to the public. Again, this was embedded in the very wisely crafted mission and purpose of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission from back in the 1960’s. Ms. Bradley said it is important that we review, understand and realize we are the responsible entity by law for all of those things. We take this very seriously.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Nolan seconded the motion. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

Lehigh County
Norman Blatt
Shannon Calluori
Karen Duerholz
Steven Glickman
Armand Greco
Kent Herman
Christina Morgan
Kathy Rader
Stephen Repasch
Julie Thomases

Northampton County
Gordon Campbell
John Diacogiannis
Liesel Dreisbach
Charles Elliott
George F. Gemmel
Darlene Heller
Robert Lammi
Thomas J. Nolan
Pamela Pearson
Michael Reph
Lori Sywensky


Staff present: Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Eric McAfee, Sue Rockwell, Dave Manhardt and Ben Holland.

Public Present: Bruce Haines, Historic Bethlehem Merchants; Kacey and Gabe Lloyd, Long Tail Creative; Nicole Radzievich, The Morning Call.
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Herman asked if anyone would like to speak at this time. Mr. Lloyd said he and his wife attended tonight to discuss the Road to Rail Program. Mr. Herman said it is not on the agenda but they could ask staff questions about it if they’d like. He explained how the Commission meetings work. This is the monthly meeting of the entire Commission. The Commission consists of people who are appointed by the two counties. Members include local government officials and some citizen representatives. We will be taking official action on the matters on the agenda tonight. Mr. Lloyd said they are from Orefield and are interested in how transportation can affect urban growth. He said they have spent time in Europe and have seen how cities really thrive with light rail and other modes of transportation because they attract younger people. He said they moved to the Lehigh Valley several years ago and love it here. He thinks transportation could be a catalyst for younger people to move to the Lehigh Valley.

Mr. Herman said we could spend hours explaining what has been accomplished here and what is being planned for transportation in the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Bradley said Mr. Kinney will get their contact information so we can have a more detailed conversation. Mrs. Lloyd said they just wanted to be more involved and aware of what is going on. Ms. Bradley said we actually manage the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, which is the federal arm of our regional planning entity. We manage the funding of about $3.9 billion for roads, bridges and transit. We just updated our 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan for infrastructure in the region, which includes all of those modes with a particular focus on multimodalism. She said we will be starting a sidewalk inventory to be done by the end of June, then a bike/pedestrian plan for the region, and then we’re working with PennDOT and LANta to explore options for enhanced transit service such as bus rapid transit, which is a precursor to rail systems. We are working with SEPTA, NJT, PA Norfolk Southern and Amtrak to explore options for rail for the region. It’s all very preliminary at this point. We do know that vehicle registrations and population are increasing every year. Safety is becoming a bigger concern as there is more road congestion. We have reduced air quality also. It is in our mutual interests to build a better multimodal future. Ms. Lloyd added that she is more interested in bike transportation, and they are very interested in learning more about this at a later date. Mr. Herman noted that the Commission members are volunteers. He encouraged them to participate in local government. It’s important that young people participate.

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the October 29, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Greco. Mr. Glickman seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Duerholz, Mr. Elliott and Mr. Lammi abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

City of Easton – Comprehensive Plan 2035 – Complete Update

Mr. McAfee said there is a two-part document we reviewed that includes *Transform, Unify and Thrive*, which is the bulk of the actual Comprehensive Plan 2035 for the City. Accompanying the plan is an appendix or existing conditions and analysis, which has a lot of the underlying data.
Mr. McAfee said we are about half way through the 45-day review period. Our review letter, included on pages 10-13 of the agenda attachments, is still a preliminary draft at this time.

Mr. McAfee said the biggest consideration for a document that is predominately consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan is throughout the document there are references to the interplay of proposed development along crucial corridors in the City of Easton, particularly waterway corridors. The document does not clearly distinguish what sort of activity it encourages. The clearest cut description of this is distinguishing waterway-based economic development from actual land development, which should eliminate this confusion. We are trying to say that, while it is also encouraging waterway-based economic development such as recreational activities, it also comes very close to encouraging all-out new construction transit-oriented development. The document does not make as strong a consideration of the problems this might propose in terms of floodplains and flood hazards, as well as what they might pose to the ecological conditions of these waterways in terms of riparian buffers. There is one point later in the document where it does make reference to a do-not-build condition, but there are numerous situations throughout the document where it does passively encourage development along waterways. Our recommendation is that the document be much clearer in its language of what it is trying to encourage in these areas.

Mr. McAfee said the vision statement objective 2.2a talks about the Black Diamond site, which is an old brownfield site, and the sort of activity that it encourages in an area that is otherwise highly prone to ecological sensitivity due to natural features such as steep slopes. In objective 2.2d, they talk about Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) along vacant lots, many of which encourage multimodal access and pedestrian movement towards the waterfront. They are not really making any sort of acknowledgement with respect to the fact that much of this activity could place these structures fully within a floodplain or floodway. In objective 3.3a, they talk about established industrial areas along Bushkill Creek and the Lehigh River. We do encourage redevelopment of long dormant activity, particularly as adaptive reuse or infill development, but it has to be as mindful as possible to all natural features.

Mr. McAfee said when you look at the existing conditions and analysis report, there are a few concerns regarding housing and homeownership. The gray highlighted text on page 3 of the review letter is in response to recommendations from the Comprehensive Planning Committee on Tuesday. We see the housing analysis does not make a compelling case given the data. It is somewhat strange to see such an emphasis on multifamily housing when the primary vehicle for owner-occupied multifamily housing would be condominiums. There is not a particularly strong demand for condominiums. There is a fair amount of equating of affordable housing to public housing without clearly showing which economic groups would be the primary consumers of the affordable housing or public housing or whether or not there is sufficient demand, given that the City of Easton has some of the lowest median home values in the entire Lehigh Valley. Finally there is also some concern about the way the document analyzes the extreme divergence in home prices within the City. The West Ward has significantly lower home values than the College Hill neighborhood. While that might be true, it doesn’t make any reference to the fact that the College Hill neighborhood has housing stock of a completely different type than the West Ward. There are likely many extenuating circumstances to explain this divergence.

Mr. McAfee said some of the mapping also underplayed our chief concerns, and they were not as up-front about showing restrictions along floodplains, while there is some reference to natural features, and there is a descriptive reference to certain overlay districts that would
presumably have protection from any activity in the floodplains. We don’t have a clear sense of space where those overlay districts would apply and exactly how they might align or not align with floodplains or riparian buffers. Our final concern in regards to that would be significantly mitigated if there was at least a visual sense of what is to be done by including those overlay districts in the mapping as it relates to zoning. Ms. Duerholz asked if the surrounding communities get copies of this letter. Mr. McAfee said we are only sending it to the City. Ms. Bradley said the City is responsible for getting comments from adjacent municipalities. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve staff comments. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Elliott abstaining.

**Geographic Information System Presentation**

Mr. Manhardt and Mr. Holland provided a power point presentation on the work they have been doing. Mr. Manhardt said we prepare all the maps for our publications. Any publication that comes out of the Commission usually has a map we created. We manage a lot of the data, both spatial and non-spatial. With the non-spatial data, such as tables from the Census, we make it spatial so we can visualize it. We also create, procure, process and analyze data. An example of this process is we acquire county parcel data, process the parcel data into a unified Lehigh Valley parcel layer so we have the same attribute data across the board. We also process the parcel layer into our existing land use layer based on county assessment land use codes. Then we can analyze the data from a regional perspective.

Mr. Holland said we use this data in many of our publications such as the County Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan. He provided some specific examples to explain the process of reconciling land use data and land coverage. Another issue we need to deal with is mixed use parcels. Mr. Manhardt said one of the ways we are going to address this issue is through the Delaware River Basin project. They are working on creating a land use data set. The University of Vermont, one of several partners, is doing the technical work. Funding for the project is through the William Penn Foundation. He said the idea is we can take some of the land cover data, we’ve received tree canopy data so far, take the existing land use at the parcel level and combine it with this land cover. Then we can reclassify this parcel into its true land uses. We are going to end up with a true representation of what is on the ground as far as land use and land cover. Mr. Elliott asked if we will have more than one land use attributed to the parcel. Mr. Manhardt said we will probably summarize it at some point if we need to at the parcel level. It will ultimately be a blanket layer for the whole Valley of the specific land uses. Mr. Gemmel asked if this information goes back to the counties. Ms. Bradley said we process it for the counties, but they don’t need it. Their GIS is for tax assessment purposes. We are their County Planning Agency so we have an obligation under the County Planning function to then use our GIS for that purpose. Mr. Manhardt said the counties have their use for the data, and we have a different use. We have to figure out how to best manage the data. Ms. Bradley said there is a state mandate that all county tax assessment offices have to use standardized GIS coding. They made it an unfunded mandate, and the counties are trying to figure out what that means. There is a working group through the County Commissioners’ Association of Pennsylvania that is working on it. Our job will ultimately become easier as that rolls out over a five-year period.

Mr. Manhardt said the next topic is how we get the information out to the public and municipalities. We have been working on developing ArcGIS online capabilities. We have in a draft form now a general land use plan viewer, a natural resources plan viewer and a transportation data viewer. ArcGIS online is a web-based mapping application, we can upload data to it, and it
is available on the internet twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Moving towards an interactive, dynamic comprehensive plan is where this will eventually go. He showed some examples, including the general land use map. He explained how it can be used and the type of information that would be included. We are also working on the natural resources plan and transportation data. We are putting data online so people can interact with that data. Mr. Manhardt said right now we are going through beta-testing and figuring out the best way to lay it out and what data we need to present. We will probably start rolling them out this winter for public access.

Ordinance Reviews

Mr. Repasch said there are five summary sheet items on page 14 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Herman said staff will go through all the reviews first, and then Mr. Haines could speak on the Bethlehem item.

Mr. McAfee said the first two summary sheet items were brought before the Comprehensive Planning Committee two days ago. For the first one, what seemed like a modest change, given the extreme rural nature of Upper Mt. Bethel Township and the fact there is no part of the jurisdiction that falls within the urban area, we did have some concern that, even though it didn’t conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan, the tenfold increase in maximum building size for their industrial and commercial districts from 35,000 to 300,000 square feet opens the floodgate for the possibilities for large industrial warehouse facilities. This is incompatible with the rural and agricultural uses that dominate the Township. Item No 2 is a revision of what we saw in September on the Martin Tower rezoning. There were modest changes that are largely consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Item Nos. 3-5 are new tonight. They were not reviewed at Tuesday’s Committee meeting. Item Nos. 3-4 are a matter of local concern, and Item No. 5 is fully consistent with the county plan.

Mr. Bruce Haines, 63 West Church Street, Bethlehem, said he represents the merchants from Main Street. He said they believe there are three aspects of the city zoning ordinance that are inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The first one deals with the allowance of up to 380,000 square feet of retail space at the Martin Tower property. It makes it over 250,000 square feet, which makes it regionally significant, not a matter of local concern. Mr. McAfee said we did make the change to the review letter that there is the likelihood of it being of regional significance.

Mr. Haines spoke with respect to greenfields on page 52 of the county plan, which states the LVPC supports the renewal, redevelopment and retrofitting of existing shopping centers, industrial sites and office complexes in preference to the development of new facilities on greenfield sites. Mr. Haines’ position is that this is a greenfield site with respect to retail. There is no retail on site now. It’s an office. The zoning allows up to a minimum of 380,000 square feet of retail. Mr. Haines and the Main Street Merchants believe not dealing with that is inconsistent with the county plan because the City is implementing a new, regionally-significant shopping district that is tax-subsidized, which the county plan also discourages. From their perspective, this is a huge conflict with the comprehensive plan. Mr. Haines and the Main Street Merchants were disappointed the first time the LVPC did not accept that position.

Mr. Haines said the third aspect deals with the goal on page 109 in the county plan with respect to historic preservation, which is to preserve the important historic buildings, structures and sites in Lehigh and Northampton counties. The zoning, as it is being changed, removes the
restriction on tearing down Martin Tower. In the current zoning, if there is any retail or residential development on the site, they can’t tear down the tower. With the new plan, that restriction is removed. The tower is on the National Register of Historic Places so we would argue that this has not been identified in the September letter or the November letter. Mr. Haines said, for that reason, he is here to ask this body to request staff to review this again in light of our comments and come back next month. Mr. McAfee said the biggest consideration here in this entire process, including what took place Tuesday and two months ago, is that these are purely, at this point, zoning changes that change the full scope of the possibilities of what might take place on this land. Beyond that, we don’t have any idea what is going to take place at this point. We don’t have a land development plan to review. We’re just reviewing zoning, which is an array of regulations within which this eventual land development may operate. Anything regarding what the composition might be in terms of retail is 100% speculative. Ms. Bradley said the zoning ordinance does not require that the Martin Tower building be torn down. It just allows it to be a consideration. Ms. Heller said that is correct. Mr. Gemmel asked if we review it and see that removal would be allowed, would we comment on it being on the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Bradley said probably. She noted that a National Register designation does not provide any protection for a building. Mr. Glickman said that it is still a consideration in the county plan. Ms. Bradley said yes, but there is no land development plan. Mr. Gemmel asked if we should comment on it. Mr. McAfee said we did in the original letter. Mr. Elliott asked if the policies in the county plan regarding impacts on National Register sites refer to land developments or also zoning changes. Ms. Bradley said we did comment on that in the September letter. Mr. McAfee said the letter was trying to reconcile the nature between being an historic property and one that has no current development proposal. The ultimate goal is to adaptively reuse the structure, but recognizing there has been no development in eight years, we need to expand the flexibility of possibilities.

Mr. Herman asked if there were any other questions. Mr. Elliott asked about the rational of Upper Mt. Bethel Township on Item No. 1 regarding the increase in building size. Mr. McAfee said their rational is that it a large, extremely rural municipality and is the second largest township in Pennsylvania. They believe a township of that size warrants some greater flexibility. Ms. Sywensky asked what the review time frame on the Martin Tower item is. Ms. Bradley said we are required to send a letter in 30 days. She said this ordinance was reviewed in September. They made some changes, and the changes are the only thing we are reviewing at this time. The Commission voted it was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in September. The changes are minor in nature, but we have to review them. The overall intent of the ordinance is exactly the same. Mr. McAfee said the changes are mostly a reorganization of classifications, but they do include a reduction in the size of retail. Mr. Haines said there is an assumption here that just because the tower hasn’t been developed in eight years that it needs to come down. No impact studies have been done.

Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the staff comments for Item Nos. 1-5. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. Mr. Repasch withdrew the motion so the Commission could vote on each item. For Item No. 1, Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Rader, Ms. Thomases and Mr. Gemmel voting no. For Item No. 2, Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Glickman, Ms. Thomases, Ms. Rader, Ms. Pearson, Mr. Gemmel, Ms. Morgan and Mr. Reph voting no and Ms. Heller and Ms. Szywensky abstaining. For Item No. 3, Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Diacogiannis abstaining. For
Item No. 4, Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Diacogiannis abstaining. For Item No. 5, Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Lammi abstaining.

*Environment Committee*

*Livable Landscapes – An Open Space Plan for Northampton County*

Mr. Reese said a copy of the report is at each Commission member’s place. He provided a power point presentation. Mr. Reese said we previously talked about the contents of the report, including the five areas of open space and the six goals. He presented a graphic from the report that talks about relationships between open space resources, health and wellness, and economic activity---information that was provided in our Return on Environment study from a year ago. The point of the Return on Environment Study is to look at natural systems service benefits and dollars provided by our open space resources and also property value benefits. At the center of the graphic linking open space, health and wellness and economic activity is multimodal connectivity, recreational economy and ecological resilience. Mr. Reese said we reviewed a draft of the Northampton County Livable Landscapes document with the Environment Committee in September and also received comments from the Steering Committee. We have received comments from the County and several Commission members last month. We received additional comments from the Environment Committee on Tuesday. We believe we are ready to move forward with this. Mr. Gemmel said he is always amazed at the text of these documents. The writing and editing are outstanding. Mr. Repasch made a motion to forward the document to the County for adoption. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

*Transportation Committee*

*Transportation Alternatives Program*

Mr. Kinney said the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) is a federal program that consolidates some of the older programs that didn’t necessarily qualify for federal funding through our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or Transportation Improvement Program. It is not a grant program or match program. It is actually a straight funding reimbursement program. Mr. Kinney said an applicant receives 100% funding for construction; however, they are expected to do the pre-work for that construction in the form of environmental clearances, utility work, right-of-way acquisitions if necessary, and those kinds of improvements. This program is really looking at shovel-ready projects. It is a competitive selection process. Those agencies not eligible to submit an application include nonprofits, DOTs and MPOs. A nonprofit can partner with an eligible applicant. Eligible applicants include local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts and tribal governments.

Mr. Kinney said the state is holding $9 million of TAP money for Federal Fiscal Year 2015. We as a region are holding a two-year pot of money at $1.27 million. The funding minimum for a construction project is $50,000. The funding maximum is $1 million, but PennDOT can consider extenuating circumstances where funding could exceed $1 million. Mr. Kinney said there are ten funding categories outlined through the TAP program for eligible projects. Each category is explained in a manual put out by PennDOT regarding guidance and procedures for the program,
which is available through our website. As part of our allotment, we have control through the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, the local MPO. We removed four categories from consideration of that money because the six remaining categories are more in keeping with what we’re trying to accomplish with our recently adopted LRTP. These categories are more transportation enhancement related and include biking/pedestrian facilities, biking/pedestrian education, conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails, construction of overlooks and viewing areas, historic preservation and rehab of historic transportation facilities, and archaeological activities.

Mr. Kinney said we recently completed the LRTP. New to the LRTP is a discussion on mobility and mobility enhancements such as transit-oriented development, walkable neighborhoods, complete streets, and road diets, among others. What we’re trying to strive for with respect to regional submissions is how does a project fit within the LRTP and Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan and how is that project integrating and tying all those things together. Mr. Kinney described some things that are more fitting with the LRTP like road diets and expanded sidewalks. These kinds of projects will go a long way in scoring really well with respect to the regional funding. Mr. Kinney said we have made all of this information available on the LVPC web page. We conducted a TAP kickoff meeting this morning where we discussed expectations and where to get the information. On our website, there are links to the power point presentation from this morning, the TAP application, the Program Guidance, our Long Range Transportation Plan and the Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan. We plan on doing a photo inventory on the awarded projects and track them over time to watch the development. The program is open now, and the closing date is January 8th. PennDOT is offering a pre-application eligibility determination if a project doesn’t quite fit the program eligibility criteria.

_Catasauqua Town Hall Meeting_

Ms. Bradley said we have been working with Catasauqua for over a year to come up with some urban design alternatives to improve their pedestrian environment, as well as calm traffic, and come up with an affordable plan for them to be able to turn Front Street into a two-way street. Simultaneously, the Borough has been working with an architect and designer, as well as an engineering firm, to come up with a new emergency management facility at the former Iron Works site. It has been a Brownfield site for many years. It has its environmental clearance. They are also coming up with a greater site plan. They will be putting out an RFP to find a developer soon. It is a really great thing that we have been able to work on the public infrastructure piece of it. The Borough has been able to work on the public/private piece of it for the redevelopment of the Iron Works site. We are going to do a joint town hall meeting to talk about how all of those things relate to each other. It is a really great thing to be able to work private/public together, the regional entity with the local government. This meeting will be held on Monday night from 6:30-9:00 p.m. at the Catasauqua Area School District Conference Room. If you have an interest, please feel free to attend.

_OLDER BUSINESS - None_

_NEW BUSINESS_

Mr. Herman said, yesterday at the Executive Committee meeting, the Committee appointed a Nominating Committee for reorganization of officers for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. The Committee consists of Percy Dougherty, Bob Lammi and Steve Glickman.
They will report back at the meeting next month with their recommendations for the new officers. Also, Mr. Herman informed the Commission that Bethlehem was named by the Wall Street Journal as the 9th best city to live in among 550 United States cities with a population over 65,000. This is quite a tribute to the City of Bethlehem.

_Beyond Codes: Fair Housing and Model Ordinance Updates_

Ms. Bradley said we started talking about Fair Housing and what that meant to zoning at the last meeting. We showed you how complicated it was through a track changes document that we have been working on with the counties and cities for a very long time. As part of that effort, we have actually updated seven model ordinances. We have drafts for you this evening. The ordinances are Inclusionary Zoning, Density Bonuses, Street Connectivity, Mixed Uses, Traditional Neighborhood Development, Cottage Housing and Conservation Subdivisions. Ms. Bradley said many of our communities have used these in the past and adopted portions of them or even adopted the whole ordinance. We will be emailing to you direct links to these ordinances and give you a month to look at them and bring comments back to us at the December meeting. The Comprehensive Planning Committee asked us to give them a summary of what has changed, so Mr. McAfee is in the process of putting that together. It should be ready tomorrow. These model ordinances are some of the most popular things that we do. We want to keep those relevant and alive. She said the Cottage Housing Ordinance was written about seven years ago. Allentown has adopted a very close version of that, and they now have a Cottage Housing Development. We are proud of that, and we want to keep doing more of that work. Ms. Bradley said, regarding Fair Housing, it is not a one size fits all issue. There is not going to be any one ordinance that will be a magic bullet on the Fair Housing issue. We had two separate Fair Housing meetings last week. We partnered with North Penn Legal, the two counties, the three cities and the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley to talk about this issue and discuss what the difference is between Fair Housing and Affordable Housing and what your obligations are. Fair Housing is a civil rights issue, and Affordable Housing is a financial availability issue. Also, inadvertent Fair Housing violations is a big issue for our municipalities.

CORRESPONDENCE

_Pennsylvania Humanities Council_

Ms. Bradley said she has been working with Ms. Szywensky from Northampton County, and we have been talking for some time with the ten communities that make up the Slate Belt about the preparation of a multimunicipal comprehensive plan. A Pennsylvania Humanities Council/Orton Family Foundation grant opportunity became available. It is basically an organizing grant. They tend to fund more humanities type projects than organizing multimunicipal comprehensive plans. We applied for a grant anyway and received $5,000 to help to do some preliminary organizing, and we hope to do a multimunicipal comprehensive plan there.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

December Meeting and Commission Photo

Ms. Bradley said our December Commission meeting will be December 17th at 11:00 a.m. We will be taking the Commission picture and serving lunch. Also, the Transportation Committee meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on December 17th.

Toys for Tots

Ms. Bradley said we are collecting for Toys for Tots again this year if you would like to donate an unwrapped toy. The deadline is December 8th.

ADJOURN

Mr. Repasch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sywensky seconded the motion. Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley
Executive Director
MINUTES

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, December 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Kent Herman chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance:

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<td>Norman Blatt</td>
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<td>Shannon Calluori</td>
<td>Eugene Clater</td>
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<td>Percy Dougherty</td>
<td>John Diacogiannis</td>
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<td>Steven Glickman</td>
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<td>Armand Greco</td>
<td>Charles Elliott</td>
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<td>Kent Herman</td>
<td>George F. Gemmel</td>
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<td>Edward Hozza</td>
<td>Darlene Heller</td>
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<td>Richard Molchany</td>
<td>Robert Lammi</td>
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<td>Christina Morgan</td>
<td>Thomas J. Nolan</td>
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<td>Kathy Rader</td>
<td>Pam Pearson</td>
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<td>Stephen Repasch</td>
<td>Lynn Prior</td>
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<td>Kevin Schmidt</td>
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<td>Julie Thomases</td>
<td>Tina Roseberry</td>
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<td>Donna Wright</td>
<td>Lori Sywensky</td>
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Staff present: Becky Bradley, Geoff Reese, George Kinney, Tracy Oscavich, Bruce Rider, Bill Deegan, Eric McAfee, Ngozi Obi, David Manhardt, Ben Holland, Mike Donchez, Sue Rockwell, Teresa Mackey, Gabe Hurtado, Alice Lipe and Kathleen Sauerzopf.
Public Present: Matt Assad, The Morning Call

MINUTES

After a brief review, the minutes of the November 19, 2015 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Greco. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Wright and Mr. Hozza abstaining.

REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election of Officers for 2016

Mr. Dougherty said the Committee nominated Ms. Dreisbach for Chair, Mr. Repasch for Vice-Chair and Mr. Diacogiannis for Treasurer for 2016. Mr. Dougherty made a motion to accept the nominations for officers. Mr. Glickman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL REPORT

Commissioner Recognition

Mr. Herman said two Commission members will be leaving the Commission: Ms. Scheller and Ms. Sywensky. Ms. Scheller, who couldn’t attend tonight, was a very important participant and Lehigh County Commissioner. Mr. Herman said Ms. Sywensky has worked at Northampton County for nine years. She is moving on to become the Executive Director at Turning Point. He thanked her for her service and presented her with a gift. Ms. Dreisbach presented a gift to Mr. Herman for his service as Chairman.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Model Ordinance Updates

Mr. McAfee said each Commission member has seven model ordinances at his/her place. Most of the ordinances were created in the past but needed some updating. The most extensive update was for Inclusionary Zoning. The ordinances were updated for unity of look and consistency among the documents. Ms. Wright made a motion to accept the model ordinance updates. Mr. Dougherty seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Housing Market Report

Ms. Obi said in front of you is our most recent Housing Market Report. The report discusses housing sales in the Lehigh Valley over a five-year period from 2010 through 2014. Ms. Obi provided an overview of the report. The report includes county sales, municipal sales, school districts and housing sales types—attached, detached, condominiums, multifamily (2-4 units only) and mobile homes on owner lots. New construction sales have also been included. We define new construction as being built and sold in the same year. She said our data sources
were the Geographic Information System (GIS) and Assessment Departments of Lehigh and Northampton counties.

Ms. Obi said over the five-year period, all the sales were aggregated—57% of the sales occurred in Lehigh County, and 43% of the sales occurred in Northampton County. We ran the median price on all of those sales. Lehigh County was $165,000 and Northampton County was $189,000. When you combine those transactions, there is about $5 billion floating around the Lehigh Valley over that five-year period. When the total housing sales in the Lehigh Valley were broken out annually, there were a total of 25,652 sales over this five-year period. The housing sales in 2010 were higher than 2011, rose drastically from 2011 to 2013, with a slight dip in 2014. Single family detached is still the most popular type of housing sale in the Lehigh Valley, followed by single family attached, condominiums and other types that we combined (mobile homes and multi-family units) because there were so few sales. Ms. Obi discussed the total sales by municipality. She said when you look at the total sales over the five-year period, 45% percent of those sales occurred in six municipalities. They are Allentown, City of Bethlehem, Lower Macungie, Palmer, South Whitehall and Whitehall.

Ms. Obi said the median housing sales price for the Lehigh Valley for 2010 was $177,000. It dipped to $173,000 by 2012 and currently is at $175,000, which was also the median in 2013. The highest median sales price by housing type in 2014 was Condominium at $205,000 and single family detached at $203,000.

Ms. Obi discussed the median sales price by municipality over the five-year period. There were five municipalities in the Lehigh Valley that had median sales prices that exceeded 150% or more of the Lehigh Valley’s median of $175,000 for five consecutive years. The municipalities were Bushkill, Hanover (N), Lower Nazareth, Weisenberg and Williams townships.

She said new construction housing sales haven’t returned to the 2008 levels, but looking at 2010-2014, there were 249 sales in 2013, which was the highest over the five-year period. When you look at the median sales price for new construction housing sales, you see a huge uptick in 2014 because the Traditions of America development in Hanover (N) had 65 sales. They accounted for 34% of all new construction housing sales. The median sales price for these homes was $439,505.

Ms. Obi said we looked at housing sales based on affordability and housing sales price. She discussed the price range of houses you can afford based on income. The report also looks at housing sales by price variety by evaluating housing sales based on a percentage of the region’s median sales price for the five-year period.

In summary, Ms. Obi said we found total housing sales in the Lehigh Valley increased from 2011-2013. The median sales price was the lowest in 2012. The median sales prices for six municipalities were below 80% of the Lehigh Valley median for five consecutive years. They were Allentown, Catasauqua, Easton, Fountain Hill, Slattington and Wilson. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the Housing Market Report. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
Ordinance Reviews

Ms. Wright said there are four summary sheet items on page 11 of the agenda attachments. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Lammi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Environment Committee

Governor’s Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force Report

Ms. Rockwell said the Governor’s Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force Report was released for public comment last month. We prepared a draft review letter on pages 12-14 of the agenda attachments. The letter is divided into three parts. The first part describes who we are and what we do here. The second part provides a short summary of the report. The Governor established this Task Force in May of this year as an opportunity for collaboration among stakeholders throughout Pennsylvania to help guide safe and responsible pipeline development throughout the state. The Task Force consists of 48 members headed by DEP Secretary John Quigley. The Task Force was broken up into 12 work groups. The work groups are listed on page 12 of the letter. The Task Force was to develop recommendations and best practices related to their topic areas. There were a total of 184 recommendations developed among the work groups. They are just recommendations at this point. Obstacles for implementation were identified by many of the work groups, including legislative action, funding and staffing.

Ms. Rockwell said the third part of the letter, beginning on page 13, provides our comments. We have one general comment---each group developed recommendations on their own, which resulted in overlap. We think they should combine overlapping recommendations to better streamline the report. Since there are so many recommendations, we reviewed them solely in relation to the Comprehensive Plan. We identified two recommendations that were not fully consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The first is the suggested setback for wetlands and watercourses of 50 feet. The Comprehensive Plan recommends riparian buffers of 75 feet. The second is the “no net loss” of regulated wetlands, interior forests or forested riparian buffers through mitigation versus the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of 100% preservation of these features. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan doesn’t specifically address many of the recommendations, but where recommendations included activities such as public participation, education, training and so on, we are supportive of those.

Ms. Rockwell said the comment period ends December 29th. The Task Force will consider the comments received and present the report to the Governor in February. The next step for the Task Force will be to determine the feasibility and implementation strategies for each recommendation. Mr. Repasch made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Transportation Committee

Federal Certification Review

Mr. Kinney said the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study is subject to a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) combined review once every four years. There are three phases to the review. The first phase is a desk audit where we supply
information to FHWA and FTA, and they review that information in preparation for the second phase, which is a two-day, on-site visit. The on-site visit occurred about 1 ½ weeks ago. Mr. Kinney said the first day was held at the LVPC office, and the second day was held at the PennDOT District 5 office. The third phase will be a report. They will take the findings of the desk audit and on-site visit and compile that information into a report. The first part will include commendations or things we are doing really well from a process standpoint in administering our transportation program. The second part is the recommendation aspect of it. These are things that aren’t necessarily against federal law, but they are recommendations that PennDOT would like to see us implement. The final is corrective action.

Mr. Kinney said, based on the feedback we received at the meeting last week, we did really well. He was expecting a more technical meeting. It was a much more give and take discussion where we talked a lot about transportation and land use integration and innovation. We talked a lot about some of the programs we are doing and how we’re trying to supplement them, especially on the freight side. Mr. Kinney said he was encouraged by the conversation, and thinks we will come out of it really well. They liked that we built performance standards into the Long Range Transportation Plan for the first time ever. They were also excited about the fact we do some after-action corridor analyses. Often we suggest infrastructure improvements for a certain corridor. A lot of MPO’s don’t follow up and complete after-action reports to see if corrective measures were effective. We are expecting the final report in the next four to six months.

Ms. Bradley added that we are clearly a water-rich area. One of the things that happens is when you do a lot of bridge projects, you disturb a lot of wetlands. Also, during road work you are inevitably going to hit some sort of tributary or stream. One of the things the federal government is very interested in is working with us to help get projects out on the street more quickly by exploring setting up a wetland bank. When you have a disturbance or need to eliminate a wetland, you need to create a new wetland in that watershed. So thinking ahead in doing more global planning along those lines can do nothing but support the overall environmental quality and integrity of our region. The federal government wants to work with us as a pilot area in that regard, and we are hoping that will bring some additional resources to the region as well and put us in a leadership position not only in the state, but nationwide.

_Freight Advisory Committee_

Mr. Kinney said we recently completed our first ever Regional Freight Plan. The Freight Plan included some recommendations and some ideas going forward. One was to implement a Freight Advisory Committee to look at how we can integrate freight into our transportation processes, specifically the kinds of things we can look at from an infrastructure standpoint to improve our freight mobility and to make improvements in first and last mile corridors and those types of things. Mr. Kinney said we looked at what the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has done in the Philadelphia area and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and what they have done with respect to freight planning. Based on looking at what others have done, we have developed a Freight Advisory Committee to assist the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) in their decision making. Mr. Kinney said on November 30th the LVTS adopted the Freight Advisory Committee by-laws by resolution. He discussed the goals and objectives of the committee. He said the committee has been put together to advise the LVTS on freight movement issues, studies, projects and the development of a functioning, efficient freight system. He identified four main points that the committee is to consider:
1. Ensuring the participation of the freight industry in the planning process.
2. Identifying improvements to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of freight.
3. Implementing regional congestion intermodal management programs.
4. Improving communications, data and technology sharing.

We want to put together a forum that would be cross-representative between public and private sector participation. Initially, we are considering having the committee consist of the entire LVTS membership (which includes the three cities), a truck driver, a law enforcement official, CDL training organizations (LCTI and Northampton Community College), a freight insurance risk management provider, freight warehouse shippers and receivers, Class 1 and short line railroads, trucking firms and associations, 3rd party logistic companies, Lehigh Valley Industrial Park, Federal Highway Administration, Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association, an economic development organization (LVEDC), Chamber of Commerce, regional bus operators (Bieber, Trans-Bridge and Easton Motorcoach) and a developer. Mr. Kinney said we think that is a pretty representative group. We were very careful in the creation of the by-laws to make it an all-inclusive deal. We encourage all municipalities and both counties in the region to participate in these meetings. We should have a schedule coming out soon. We think this will be a good platform for people to share their issues, talk about solutions and talk about how we can start to actually program or consider programming money to implement solutions. Ms. Bradley added that the two counties, as well as LANta and the Airport Authority, PennDOT Central Office and PennDOT District Office, will be part of the committee.

Amtrak Update

Ms. Bradley said we are the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and we manage, prioritize and plan for all public infrastructure investments on behalf of the region. This includes a $3.9 billion road, bridge and transit program. This also includes rail infrastructure. In as much as it is our role to plan for systems in our adopted Long Range Transportation Plan that was completed in October, we have a strong focus on multimodal connections into and out of our region. This includes how we work between our public and private bus companies, manage the congestion on our roads and tie this into making our parks, recreation and open space networks as alternatives for commuting. We introduced the Road to Rail effort and said we would work with our federal partners, who provide as much as 80% of the total budget for multimodal options. As part of the Federal Certification Review process, and at the exact same time that an Amtrak official was making certain comments related to the potential for rail into the Lehigh Valley, we were sitting with the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration negotiating what that process would be. So the official strategy is we will do a commuter/travel mode study first. We have significant challenges to looking not only at the rail scenario, but also how we implement and support LANta in the implementation of bus rapid transit.

Ms. Bradley said we have about 88,000 people who commute into the Lehigh Valley every day from all over. About 136,000 people live and work here, and 103,000 people live here and work someplace else. There is a misnomer that they all work in New Jersey and New York City. In fact, the highest percentage of commuters actually go into the King of Prussia region, and they don’t just go to one location in the King of Prussia area. There are issues as to what sort of service and what sort of options we need to offer. Very logically, the federal government said to look at that first and explore what are the best modes to serve each of these populations, not only internally, but externally. We are working with a lot of partners, which includes Amtrak, our
sister MPOs, SEPTA, PennDOT Central Office, Federal Rail Administration, etc. We are going to continue to meet on these issues. Step one, we will be required to do the commuter/travel mode study. There is a very protracted process for the implementation of rail, even if the federal government will go along with us pursuing rail after the commuter/travel mode study is done.

Ms. Bradley said the minimum time a new rail system has been added in the United States is around 12 years from start of study to implementation. The other thing you need to know is the FAST Act, which is the reauthorization of the last transportation bill, does not include any significant increases in funding for any form of transportation. A piece of that which is very important to what we do is the funding formula. The federal government generally provides 80%, and the state provides 20%. The state government took part of the Act 89 funds (roughly 11% of the 20% match) and used it to shore up the State Police Pension, reducing the amount of money available for the Lehigh Valley. If we want to bring Amtrak here, Amtrak would be competing with the same pot of money that LANta, PennDOT or our municipal governments would be competing for. The other thing you need to know is if we do qualify for additional outside Federal money through the New Starts Program or some other federal program, we are competing with the entire nation like the State of California and other areas that are pursuing new transit programs.

Ms. Bradley said we are still going to follow the federal process to explore rail with eyes wide open. The public trust is important, and overpromising is not wise. It’s a very slow process. If we are approved to move forward, we will be responsible for half of the cost of the construction. Ms. Thomases asked if part of the reason why a certain piece of funding is not available is because it has already been committed to widening Rt. 22. Mr. Bradley said that has nothing to do with it. Ms. Thomases asked Ms. Bradley to explain why. Ms. Bradley said you can’t take highway funding and move it to transit. That is against federal law. She said right now, 100% of transit funds go to LANta. Mr. Molchany said at the federal review we tried to ask if we could move the process along. Their response was “no”, there is no fast-tracking this process. Mr. Repasch said the previous commuter study has brought a lot of criticism. He asked if there was any value to it at all. Ms. Bradley said it was not actually a commuter study, it was a rail study to one location. Mr. Dougherty said the data was very suspect. The Lehigh County Commissioners did not think they got their money’s worth. Ms. Bradley said, when we talked to the federal government, they said to look at the commuter/travel mode study, but don’t look at it in just one direction to New Jersey and New York City. They want us to look at it from the global transportation picture, to get new data that can actually speak to real commuter and travel patterns.

Ms. Wright said the private sector sees a rail line and feels it can put a passenger train on it along with freight. They have no concept that you can’t mix the two on the same line. Ms. Calluori said she assumes we are going ahead with the commuter study. Ms. Bradley said yes, but it can’t start until 2017 because of the way that the contract works. Ms. Calluori asked, in addition to looking at what commuters are doing now, will we also look at passenger rail bringing more people into the Lehigh Valley? Ms. Bradley said yes, it would affect growth and revitalization in the cities and our suburban communities, too, which could lead to sprawl conditions if proper laws are not in place. We would have to work with our municipal governments on whatever comes out of the study and determine what would happen next.

Mr. Dougherty said we have to change the current PennDOT process of being reactive instead of proactive. What we are talking about here is something that can encourage economic
activity and revitalize downtowns. It has so many implications. Rather than asking if we have enough customers to support a line from Allentown to New York City, we have to look at this in terms of the future and the real cost of highways versus rail and other forms of transportation. Multimodal is the way to go. We should look at maybe running a line down Route 78. Ms. Bradley said we have right-of-way and maybe we could use that more efficiently, which is what we’re doing on Route 22. Some people don’t think we should widen Route 22, but it will help improve our air quality by reducing sitting time. It is unlikely to promote sprawl. The roadway already exists. She said our population is continuing to grow every year, along with vehicle registrations and through traffic, including tractor trailers. We need to address this growth. Ms. Thomases said she has read that every time a road is widened, it ends up filling up. Ms. Bradley said it is a lot more complicated than that. If you leave Rt. 22 in a two-lane condition, in the very near future, you will not be able to travel through the Lehigh Valley in any reasonable amount of time. It was determined 20 years ago that we needed to continue to invest in that roadway. We’re also improving 17 structurally deficient bridges and working within the existing rights-of-way. We have to continue to work on the maintenance of our infrastructure. Mr. Herman said he thinks the message from the Commission standpoint is that it is a positive, realistic message given what resources there are to work with. We have some serious constraints.

OLD BUSINESS

Plan SWL Comprehensive Plan Information Gathering Interviews

Ms. Bradley said we are working with the six municipalities in the southwest corner of Lehigh County to update their multimunicipal comprehensive plan. This includes Emmaus, Alburtis and Macungie boroughs as well as Lower Milford, Upper Milford and Lower Macungie townships. We spent the last year getting all the data together, understanding and working with the steering committee on where the community is (including transportation infrastructure, housing sales and values) and getting a good baseline set of information to work from and putting together a website for the effort.

The first week in January we are going to do some information gathering, not only from the local and regional leaders identified by the municipalities and their thoughts, ideas and challenges and the good things happening in the region, but also from the public in a charrette. Then we will also be putting out a public survey that, once we have those first set of meetings to find out what the public is thinking in terms of prioritizing those issues, we will then start to develop the draft goals and policies and take those out again to the public. By and large, we will have this wrapped up in June through a whole series of meetings and events. This will hopefully continue the great direction that these communities are on and support their growth in a responsible way. Ms. Bradley said there is an invitation at each Commission member’s place to attend the January 14th public information gathering event at the Lower Macungie Community Center at 7:00 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

2016 LVPC Work Plan & Budget

Ms. Bradley provided a copy of the Summary of the Work Plan and Budget, the Staff Work Plan and the Budget for 2016. Mr. Herman explained that there is an Executive Committee that, under the by-laws, looks at and acts on these issues. This has been looked at and talked about
at our Executive Committee meeting yesterday. He said the Budget and Work Plan were unanimously approved at the Executive Committee meeting.

Ms. Bradley said, in terms of revenues, we bring in about $2.6 million. We had less than that this year, but due to the support of Lehigh and Northampton counties, we were able to increase our budget for 2016. It is a balanced budget. Our expenditures total $2.65 million annually. The majority of our expenditures are for staff because we produce a lot of reports, which is a primary piece of our job, as well as providing a significant amount of municipal assistance. In fact, that makes up roughly $1.9 million of the $2.65 million expenditure line. Our sources of revenue include Lehigh and Northampton counties, who are increasing our budget from $425,000 to $525,000. PennDOT, through contract work, is another huge piece of our funding, as well as any state work we do through groups like the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources or any community contracts we would get with groups like the Southwest Lehigh communities.

Ms. Bradley said we are going to be doing all kinds of exciting things next year including updating the regional comprehensive plan. We have taken 2015 to be able to get baseline data together, to be able to have an honest conversation with our community as a whole, where we are at as a region. We will be talking to the public about current goals and policies, things that are changing, where we need to go. That will kick off in a public way in 2016, and that plan is anticipated to be completed in 2017. We will begin the Lehigh County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. We just completed Northampton County’s Plan. We will be doing the same for Lehigh County next year, with the hopeful adoption of that in 2017. This will include an assessment of the agricultural environment as well. Ms. Bradley said, besides the Freight Advisory Committee, we will be completing a sidewalk inventory. This is a precursor to developing a bicycle and pedestrian strategy for the Lehigh Valley. Obviously, we are preparing for the commuter study, and as we have just learned, we have a lot of partners to talk to and coordinate with. Those activities will be contractually arranged next year and hopefully completed in 2017. One thing that we are really excited about is the growth of our scenario modeling capabilities, which includes our abilities to visualize what things will actually look like on the ground and do 3D modeling. We tested a little of that this year with the Catasauqua Urban Design Project. We want to do more of that so our communities have real opportunities to walk through, drive through or bike through the areas they are planning.

Another piece of this is we are able to purchase REMI software in an updated form. This is a financial modeling tool that will allow us to look at the financial implications of the land use decisions that we are making today. We will be purchasing that next year. We will also be able to update the Monocacy Creek Act 167 Plan through a contract with the City of Bethlehem. This affects 11 municipalities. We are updating a strategy along with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and County Planning Directors Association for integrated water resources management. It is only becoming more and more important as we have changes in policies and laws from MS4 to Homeland Security needs and floodplain management. You saw a presentation last month on our transition from Geographic Information Systems in a static way to an on-line interactive way that will roll out in the first six months of 2016. We’re updating the functional road classification system for our roads and congestion management process. We are trying to coordinate with ten municipalities in the Slate Belt region and were awarded funding from the PA Humanities Council to continue to coordinate with them. Ultimately, our greatest hope is then to get them into a single, multimunicipal comprehensive plan. We also have a traffic counting program and segment inventory on behalf of PennDOT. Other partnerships in 2016
include the Urban Land Institute, Delaware Valley Green Building Council, Chamber of Commerce, and University of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Bradley said next year the Pennsylvania Planning Association is having its statewide conference in downtown Allentown. The staff will be heavily involved in that, and it is a great way to showcase our region to the rest of the state. We will update our annual Subdivision and Land Development Activity Report and hopefully do an event around that. We will continue our Awards Program and grow our community outreach and education programs through the Local Technical Assistance Program, the Lehigh Valley Government Academy, Data & Doughnuts meetings, Policy & Pizza meetings, as well as increasing our traditional and social media presence. Ms. Sywensky asked about the Housing Study recommendation from the Regional Housing Plan and if that fits into the Work Plan. Ms. Bradley said it is an unfunded recommendation. We have to work that out. We want to work through other traditional channels to talk about these issues. Mr. Gemmel asked if we are going to be under budget for 2015. Ms. Bradley said we generally break even. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the 2016 Work Plan & Budget. Mr. Gemmel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2016 LVPC & Committee Meeting Dates

Mr. Herman said the 2016 LVPC and Committee Meeting Dates are on pages 15-16 of the agenda attachments. Mr. Greco made a motion to approve the 2016 LVPC & Committee Meeting Dates. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE – None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – None

ADJOURN

Mr. Herman adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Sauerzopf for
Becky Bradley, AICP
Executive Director