LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm
LVPC Conference Room
AGENDA

DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WE WILL NOT BE MEETING IN-PERSON. THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT http://tiny.cc/FC0924 OR VIA PHONE 1-872-239-5796, Conf ID: 540 602 346#

Roll Call

Courtesy of Floor

Chairman's Report

1. Housing and the Federal Reserve Collaboration

Minutes

1. ACTION ITEM: Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of the August 27, 2020 Commission Meeting (BV)
   a. Roll Call Actions:
      i. Minutes of the July 30th Full Commission Meeting
      ii. South Whitehall Township – LURS – Ridge Farms
      iii. Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

1. Lower Saucon Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Bethlehem Landfill Northern Realignment (SS)
2. Summary Sheet

Environment Committee:

1. COVID-19 Impact on Air Quality Update (GR)
2. Hurricane Isaias Remnant Rainfall/Runoff Analysis Update (GR)

Transportation Committee:

1. Traffic Counts and COVID-19 Impact (CD)
Old and New Business:
1. BUILDLV: Subdivision and Land Development Outlook (BB)
2. Lehigh Valley Gala 2020 (TO, MA)

Communications:
1. Morning Call Business Cycle Column (MA)

Executive Director’s Report:
None

Public Engagement and Participation:
1. Engagement and Participation in light of COVID-19 Uncertainty (BV)

Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:
Thursday, October 29th @ 7:00 pm
Via web: http://tiny.cc/LVPC1029
Via Phone: 610-477-5793, Conference ID: 973 358 675#
LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes from the Thursday, August 27, 2020 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on August 27, 2020 at web (http://tiny.cc/LVPC0827 and/or via phone 1 872-239-5796, Conference ID: 730 800 790#).

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Bradley took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

**Lehigh County**
Percy Dougherty, Mike Gibson, Steven Glickman, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Kathy Rader, Joshua Seigel, Kevin Schmidt, and Donna Wright

**Northampton County**
Christopher Amato, Charles Elliott, Robert Lammi, Carl Manges, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Pamela Pearson, Tina Smith, and Greg Zebrowski

Members Absent:

**Lehigh County**
Bob Elbich, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Jamie Johnson, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, Leonard Lightner, and Amy Zanelli

**Northampton County**
Bryan Callahan, Janell Connolly, Malissa Davis, Liesel Dreisbach, Darlene Heller, Susan Lawless, Kevin Lott, William McGee, Spirit Rutzler and Gerald Yob

**Staff Present:** Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Charles Doyle, Brian Hite, Geoff Reese, Jill Seitz, Samantha Smith, and Bethany Vazquez

**Public Present:** Jeff Ward and Diane Kelly

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**
None.

**MINUTES**
Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the July 30, 2020 LVPC meeting are attached. Ms. Pearson made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Harakal seconded the motion. Mr. Molchany noted that Mr. Seigel, Mr. Dougherty, and Mr. Harakal were present at the July 30th meeting and their attendance needed to be accounted for. With Mr. Molchany’s amendment to the attendance, the motion passed with Ms. Wright and Mr. Elliott abstaining from the vote.
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT
Ms. Wright gave the Chairman’s report for Mr. Zebrowski whose line dropped during the meeting. The report gave accolades to the LVPC’s pursuit of continued business during the Pandemic. Mr. Zebrowski’s report noted that the LVPC stands as a consistent, quality partner and collaborator and it’s Commissioners and Staff has risen to every challenge during these times.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee
Ms. Wright presented the August Comprehensive Committee items with staff presenting information.

1. South Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Ridge Farms
Ms. Seitz reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for South Whitehall Township. The project proposes to construct a mixed-use community totaling 870 residential dwellings and 67,200 sq. ft. of commercial space. The wide array of residential dwellings are made up of market-rate and age-restricted single family and twin units, apartments and condominiums. The proposed commercial component includes restaurant, medical office, and retail spaces, and include 52.9 acres of combined open space and active open space, consisting of trails, playground equipment and bicycle amenities. The project is generally consistent with FutureLV: The Regional Plan because it is just outside of a development area, is along two major corridors, and is in close proximity to a Post-War Center in the transportation plan, supporting a logical pattern of development and growth for the Township. Ms. Seitz reviewed additional LVPC comments with the Commission. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty seconded the motion. With Ms. Morgan abstaining from the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet
Ms. Smith briefly reviewed the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet and Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty seconded the motion. Mr. Zebrowski abstained from Bethlehem City Zoning Ordinance Amendment. With Mr. Zebrowski’s abstention, the motion passed.

Environment Committee
Mr. Lammi presented the report for the Environment Committee with staff providing information.

1. COVID-19 Impact on Air Quality
Mr. Reese and Ms. Bradley presented information on COVID-19’s impact on air quality in the Lehigh Valley for the months of June and July. In June, the ozone values for both counties were below the overall trend lines for the data. For July, the data indicated that as the months get warmer, the ozone concentrations are higher. What is not apparent from the information is whether these concentrations are harmful to human health. Mr. Reese shared that air quality index charts can be brought to the Commission next month to look beyond ozone and particulate matter to nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter 10.

2. Hurricane Isaias Remnant Rainfall Analysis
Mr. Reese presented information on daily rainfall totals at the rain gage at the Lehigh Valley International Airport for a portion of the period of record of 1996 to the present. Mr. Reese reviewed the five highest daily rainfall totals within the period of record as well
as explained that the data does not necessarily reflect the duration of the storm or even the whole storm in some cases. The data only reflects the rainfall amount that day from midnight to midnight. Ms. Bradley provided some images of the resulting damage from having successive days of rainfall. Ms. Bradley shared the impact these damages will have on taxpayers, the municipalities, the counties, and even impacts on the federal level.

**Transportation Committee**

Mr. Herman presented the report for the Transportation Committee with staff providing information.

1. *Traffic During COVID-19*
   
   Mr. Hite reviewed the impact that weather events have on traffic patterns. Of note, Mr. Hite explained that though commuter traffic is significantly lessened by severe weather, freight traffic only dips slightly to about 90% of its normal levels.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. *High Cube and Automated Warehousing Guidance*
   
   Ms. Bradley shared information concerning a High-Cube Warehouse Guidance document that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission staff have been working towards publishing. High-cube warehouses are typically automated buildings as tall as 180 feet or roughly the height of a 17 to 18 story building, though that is not always the case. This new type of warehouse is generally built for specific uses utilizing rack systems that also serve as the building’s structure. The rack system is typically wrapped with a metal skin that serves as the building’s walls. These tall structures typically integrate Automated Storage and Retrieval Systems (ASRS) as the building’s support structure to maximize the storage space that’s available to process goods in a more efficient manner than traditional storage systems where people in forklifts pick and move goods. Ms. Bradley continued by stating that high cube and automated warehousing’s substantial building height could change the character of individual and neighboring communities in the region. The proposed guidance will outline the issues, opportunities, and how municipal governments through zoning, subdivision and land development, and building codes, can handle proposals for high cube and automated warehousing.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. *Eviction and Foreclosure Prediction Tool*
   
   Ms. Smith and Ms. Seitz gave a brief over the LVPC’s eviction and foreclosure prediction tool. The analysis and mapping tool demonstrates areas of the region likely at an increased risk for eviction, for renters, and foreclosures, for owners. The tool uses data at the Census Block level to identify cost-burdened households by percentage and volume for owners and renters. Ms. Seitz took the Commissioners through the tool and demonstrated its various functions and data sets. Ms. Smith stated that the goal of the tool is to ensure that the municipalities, counties and non-profit partners are armed with good information to make fiscal decisions in terms of housing and household assistance.

2. *Lehigh Valley Housing Needs Analysis*
   
   Ms. Seitz and Ms. Smith presented information of the Lehigh Valley Housing Needs Analysis. The housing needs analysis has been an ongoing initiative to quantify what the Region’s housing needs are, by directly comparing the number of households in the Region at various income levels to the number and cost of existing housing units, essentially comparing supply and demand. Ms. Smith continued by sharing that the
LVPC will be working with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia regarding exchanging data from related work. The Federal Reserve will be making a presentation at the WorkshopLV: Housing meeting on September 10th.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. *Morning Call Business Cycle Column*
   Mr. Assad gave a brief summary of Ms. Bradley’s recurring Morning Call Business Cycle Column. The column discussed expectations in a post-pandemic Lehigh Valley. The next column will talk about the LVPC’s new foreclosure and eviction tool and will be published on September 13.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

1. *Monthly Subdivision and Land Development Report*
   Ms. Bradley presented information on the July Monthly BuildLV: Subdivision and Land Development Report. The report will be distributed publicly around the 15th of each month and is available at lvpc.org. Ms. Bradley also reviewed the mid-year development activity in the region by county, type of new development, by location and year to date numbers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
Ms. Vazquez stated that a list of the meetings anticipated to be canceled or postponed due to the need to maintain social distance are listed in the packet. Any questions can be referred to bvazquez@lvpc.org or called in to 610-264-4544.

ADJOURNMENT
Mr. Zebrowski stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual and the LVPC staff will be sending out meeting specific information and posting it to the LVPC website shortly. Mr. Zebrowski asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Molchany made the motion. Mr. Amato seconded the motion and thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned.

Submitted by:
Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director
Bethany Vazquez, Program Associate
September 9, 2020

Craig Kologie, Planning Commission Chair
Lower Saucon Township
Town Hall, 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18015

RE: Bethlehem Landfill Northern Realignment –
Land Use of Regional Significance
Lower Saucon Township
Northampton County

Dear Mr. Kologie:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, please see the meeting details below to attend. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting should the Commission have any additional comments.

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - September 22, 2020 at 12:00 PM
  - https://lvpc.org/meetings.html

- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - September 24, 2020 at 7:00 PM
  - https://lvpc.org/meetings.html

The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* as ‘landfills and other solid waste facilities’. The project proposes an expansion at the existing Bethlehem Landfill facility. No operational changes are proposed with the project that cumulatively involves 48.9 acres of total disturbance including the expansion and related site improvements. The project is located on Applebutter Road adjacent to the intersection with Ringhoffer Road (parcel number P7 5 33).

This proposal is generally consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it is located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan. The subject application proposes to expand an existing landfill over 25.25 acres of existing fill area in the northeastern portion of the landfill, a reuse of existing landfill that provides...
‘environmentally responsible and economical solid electronic and hazardous waste disposal and recycling’ (of Policy 3.2). Additionally, a lateral expansion is proposed for 3.75 acres of new disposal area previously approved for landfill support activities.

The LVPC offers the following additional comments:

**Landscaping**
The LVPC commends the inclusion of a berm to provide screening of the proposed increase associated with the expansion, to the maximum permitted height of 725 feet. In order to ‘advocate for use of native, climate-adaptive and carbon-sequestering landscaping’ (of Policy 3.4), the LVPC recommends additional landscaping in and around the proposed berm and property boundaries.

**Stormwater**
The project site is located within the Saucon Creek Watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Note that the LVPC has received a time extension for the review of the project’s stormwater management plan, and comments related to the stormwater review will be provided in a separate letter.

Our review does not include an in-depth examination of the plan relative to subdivision design standards or ordinance requirements since these items are covered in the municipal review.

Should this proposal move forward for approval, please call or email myself or another Community Planning staff person for information on how to obtain LVPC signatures on the final plans.

Feel free to call or email me if you have any questions about this review.

Sincerely,

Samantha Smith
Chief Community Planner

cc: Leslie Huhn, Lower Saucon Township Manager
    Brien Kocher, PE, Hanover Engineering Associates
    Joseph McDowell, PE, Martin & Martin, Inc.
    Darlene Heller, City of Bethlehem Planning Director
    Amanda Raudenbush, Bethlehem Township Planning Director
    Anthony Branco, Fountain Hill Borough Administrator
    Gerald Gasda, Freemansburg Borough Manager
    Cathy Hartranft, Hellertown Borough Manager
    Kerry Rabold, Salisbury Township Planning and Zoning Officer
    Samantha Ciotti Falcone, Upper Saucon Planning Commission Chair
    Mikal Sabatine, Williams Township Manager
### Project Review Summary Sheet

**Comprehensive Planning Committee**  
**Date:** September 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Brief Statement of Purpose</th>
<th>LVPC Comment</th>
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</table>
| Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendment           | Forks Township     | **TC to TC-1** – Rezones an area near Sullivan Trail from Town Center to Town Center/Apartment district.  
**EC to EC-3** – Rezones an area near Kesslerville Road from Employment Center to Employment Center/Apartment district.  
**Apartments in SR District** – Adds apartments as a permitted use in the Suburban Residential district.  | **TC to TC-1** and **Apartments in SR District** are generally consistent with **FutureLV** – The LVPC commends the Township for expanding the availability of a variety of housing types, serving to ‘expand housing options near employment areas’ (Policy 4.5).  
**EC to EC-3** is generally inconsistent with **FutureLV** – Does not ‘preserve natural areas and farmland by managing growth and development’ (Policy 1.1). |
| Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Amendment | Lower Macungie Township | **Miscellaneous** – Proposes to revise several sections of the Township’s ordinance, including definitions, plan submission requirements and design standards. | Partially consistent with **FutureLV** – Serves to ‘encourage an efficient development process that is responsive to regional needs’ (Policy 1.4).  
The proposed exemption of certain lot consolidations from plan submittal and approval requirements is inconsistent. |
| Official Map                                 | Lower Nazareth Township | **Official Map** – Revises a draft official map reviewed by the LVPC in a letter dated May 29, 2020. The draft official map is intended to further the Township goals of promoting open space and farmland preservation, by shifting away from an atmosphere of intense development. | Generally consistent with **FutureLV** – Serves to ‘support agriculture and open space as essential components of the regional economy and identity’ (Policy 4.4), as well as the identity of the Township.  
The LVPC commends the Township for incorporating numerous comments provided in the previous review. |
| Zoning Ordinance Amendment                   | Lynn Township      | **Short Term Rentals** – Adds definitions and regulations pertaining to short-term rentals. Allows short-term rentals as a permitted use in many of the Township zoning districts, with the requirement of a short-term rental permit and standards for operation. | Generally consistent with **FutureLV** – Supports the ‘expansion of small businesses and entrepreneurship’ (of Policy 4.2).  
The establishment of an application process is a best practice for regulating these uses (of Policy 1.4). |
State Route 33 between Newburg Road and State Route 248 (Northampton County)

Interstate-78 just east of the State Route 309 exit (Lehigh County)

Interstate-78 just east of State Route 33 exit (Northampton County)

State Route 309 just south of State Route 378 (Lehigh County)

TOTAL VEHICLE TRAFFIC

TOTAL TRUCK TRAFFIC

* August 4 was impacted by Tropical Storm Isaias
Lehigh Valley Gala + Awards

planning for the new normal.

Join us virtually for our 7th annual celebration of community collaboration
Wednesday, October 13, 5:30-6:30 PM
Cost: $15
Register online: www.lvpc.org/lv-awards.html
Public Engagement and Participation Items

DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, SEVERAL PUBLIC MEETINGS OCTOBER HAVE BEEN CANCELED, RESCHEDULED OR MOVED TO A VIRTUAL PLATFORM. FUTURE MEETINGS WILL BE REEVALUATED, AS THIS SITUATION EVOLVES.

1. 7th Annual LVPC Gala and Awards – MOVING TO VIRTUAL PLATFORM
   • October 13, 2020 @ 5:30 pm

2. WorkshopLV: Multimodal, October 28th @ 3 pm
   • Via Web: http://tiny.cc/WMM1028
   • Via Phone: 610-477-5793, Conference ID: 987 106 313#

3. Planning + Pretzels: Climate, Water and Air, October 28th @ 4 pm
   • Via Web: http://tiny.cc/PP1028
   • Via Phone: 610-477-5796, Conference ID: 132 070 414#