



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

GREG ZEBROWSKI
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Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes from the Thursday, April 30, 2020 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on April 30, 2020 at 7:00 pm using Microsoft Teams. Commissioners and the public were able to join the meeting via web (tiny.cc/LVPC0430mtg) and/or via phone (1 872-222-9976, Conference ID: 460 386 771#)

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Bradley took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Steven Glickman, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Kevin Schmidt, Leonard Lightner, and Donna Wright

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Malissa Davis, Liesel Dreisbach, Darlene Heller, Susan Lawless, Robert Lammi, Kevin Lott, William McGee, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Pamela Pearson, Tina Smith, Gerald Yob, and Greg Zebrowski

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Michael Gibson, Jamie Johnson, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, Joshua Seigel, and Amy Zanelli

Northampton County

Bryan Callahan, Janell Connolly, Charles Elliott, Carl Manges, and Spirit Rutzler

Staff Present: Becky Bradley, Charles Doyle, Tracy Oscavich, Geoff Reese, Jill Seitz, Samantha Smith, and Bethany Vazquez

Public Present: Nicki Jacobs, Kerry Rabold, and Michael Shober

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

MINUTES

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the March 26, 2020 LVPC meeting are attached. Ms. Bradley reviewed the Commission votes on the March 26th agenda items. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

None this month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the Comprehensive Planning Committee did not meet this month due to the pandemic, and that Committee business has been forwarded to the Full Commission for consideration. Ms. Wright announced each review item with Ms. Seitz and Ms. Smith presenting the information.

1. *City of Allentown – Land Use of Regional Significance – 7th & Linden Apartments*

Ms. Seitz reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for the City of Allentown. The subject application proposes to consolidate nine lots into four lots and construct two four-story apartment buildings. The proposed buildings include 260 apartment units, 9,000-sq. ft. of retail space and an outdoor plaza. 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 and serves to 'increase density of residential and mixed-use development in centers' (of Policy 1.2). It is also located within a Historic Center and along the High-Frequency Bus Service Corridor in the Transportation Plan. The Proposed development fulfills the intent of FutureLV to 'encourage reuse and redevelopment within urban areas' (of Policy 1.1) and to 'increase housing density in Centers and along Corridors' (of Policy 4.5). Ms. Seitz reviewed additional comments from the LVPC with the Commission. Ms. Gerlach asked if there was knowledge of the types of units that were being proposed. Ms. Seitz stated that the type of units were not indicated in the plan. Ms. Gerlach continued by asking what in the plan was being demolished versus what was being proposed to be enhanced. Ms. Seitz stated that the project is not touching the parking garage associated with the Dunkin Donuts. Ms. Gerlach asked if the tenants of the apartments owned by the housing authority have already been relocated. Ms. Seitz stated that information was not disclosed. Ms. Gerlach followed-up by asking if the current number of apartments on the project location with the potential to be displaced were known. Ms. Seitz stated that though there is knowledge of units above one of the buildings being proposed to be demolished, the exact number of units is unknown. Ms. Gerlach asked if there were any recommendations or inclusions of affordable units proposed in the project. Ms. Seitz stated that information regarding intended tenants or unit details was not disclosed in the application. Ms. Wright asked if Ms.

Gerlach would like to include her recommendation of affordable unit inclusion in the project into the staff comments. Ms. Gerlach stated that she would. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments with Ms. Gerlach's addition. Mr. Zebrowski seconded the motion. With Mr. Lightner abstaining from the vote and Ms. Gerlach voting against the project, the motion passed.

2. *South Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Dorney Park*

Ms. Smith reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for South Whitehall Township. The subject application proposes to make improvements to existing concrete and asphalt, and to construct a new amusement attraction. The project site is located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan of FutureLV. Because the project area is almost entirely within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 100-year flood plain, it is also in a High Conservation Priority Area of the Natural Resources Plan. While the project site is within an area prone to hazard, the existing use and proposed improvements minimize the risk of hazard because the facility does not operate during adverse weather conditions, is not open to the public 24 hours a day and does not operate out of season. As long as the new attraction is built to withstand the hydrostatic and hydrodynamic forces associated with floodwaters, the LVPC has determined that the proposal is generally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. With Ms. Morgan abstaining from the vote, the motion passed.

Environment Committee

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the Environment Committee did not meet this month due to the pandemic, and that Committee business has been forwarded to the Full Commission for consideration. Mr. Lammi announced each review item with Mr. Reese presenting the information.

1. *Act 537 Review – Kline's Island Sewer System Interim Act 537 Plan*

Mr. Reese presented information on the Kline's Island Sewer System Interim Act 537 Plan. Because of the record rainfall beginning in August 2018 through July 2019, the average flow to the Kline's Island sewage treatment plan over 3 consecutive months was recorded at 42.71 million gallons per day, exceeding the plant's permitted hydraulic design capacity of 40 million gallons per day. Even though the plant met all of its discharge requirements during this period, DEP regulations indicated the plant by hydraulically overloaded and corrective actions needed to be taken. The Kline's Island draft interim plan addresses the short-term needs of the plant's service area, including the municipalities of Allentown, Hanover Township (LC), Alburtis, Lowhill, Macungie, Lower Macungie, Upper Macungie, Upper Milford, Weisenberg, South Whitehall, Coplay, North Whitehall, Whitehall, Salisbury, and Emmaus, covering a period from 2021-2025 and was prepared under the direction of the PA Department of Environmental Protection. The draft Interim Plan proposes a rerate of the Kline's Island Wastewater Treatment Plant hydraulic design capacity from 40 million gallons

per day (gpd) to 44 gpd, a sew connection management plan, and identification and construction of an alternative to address hydraulic restrictions in a two-mile portion of the Western Lehigh Interceptor through Trexlertown. No physical changes to the plant are proposed, and the planning period of the Plan is from 2021-2025. During this planning period, significant efforts will also begin in preparation and development of a long-term Act 537 plan covering a period of 2026-2050. These efforts include sewage flow monitoring, conveyance system modeling and calibration, and evaluation and selection of alternatives to address long-term regional sewer conveyance and treatment capacity needs. The Kline's Island plant service area consists of 15 Lehigh County municipalities. The municipalities will continue to implement their current infiltration and inflow source reduction programs. Mr. Reese reviewed additional information on the project with the Commission. The proposed rerate of the plant's hydraulic design capacity does not conflict with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. The LVPC previously reviewed the proposed Western Lehigh Interceptor – Trexlertown project, which is included in the 2021-2025 LCA preliminary Capital Plan (Suburban Division). The proposed project was also found to be consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Harakal asked how the increased capacity of 44 million gpd would work with the hydraulic capacity of 40 million gpd. Mr. Reese stated that the physical plant has the capacity for 54 million gpd, but the permitted capacity with DEP is 40 million gpd. Mr. Elbich asked who determined that the plant's capacity is 54 million gpd. Mr. Shober, with LCA, stated that the engineering firm for LCA completed a study to determine the plant's capacity. Mr. Elbich asked that the inclusion of the engineers report on the plants capacity be included in the letter. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the presented comments with Mr. Elbich's addition. Mr. Glickman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. *Project Review, Summary Sheet*

Mr. Reese reviewed the project summary sheet for the Environment Committee. The LVPC received one application to renew an existing surface water withdrawal permit in Lower Mount Bethel Township. The application is to renew approval of the existing Martins Creek Electric Generating Facility surface water withdrawal up to 784.45 million gallons per month (mgm) from the Delaware River. The withdrawal supplies applicant's electric generating facility and Lower Mount Bethel Energy Facility on an adjacent property. The renewal would be on a ten-year cycle and average annual combined consumptive use is 58%. A separate application is required for approval of a heat dissipation area and possible change in discharge location to another existing, but currently unused, location. The application does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. Per DRBC documentation, no adverse impactions are anticipated with continued withdrawal. Mr. Lammi made a motion to approve the presented staff comments. Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation Committee

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the Transportation Committee did not meet this month due to the pandemic, and that Committee business has been forwarded to the Full Commission for

consideration. Mr. Herman announced each review item with Mr. Doyle and Ms. Bradley presenting the information.

1. *Traffic Count and COVID-19 Impact*

Mr. Doyle gave a brief presentation on COVID-19 impacts on traffic counts from four continuous traffic counters throughout the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Bradley continued the presentation giving post-pandemic predictions on the workforce and traffic impacts going forward.

2. *Federal Highway Administration Webinar on Freight Beyond the City: Approached to Improving Freight Mobility in the Suburban Context*

Ms. Bradley stated that late last year the LVPC was asked to participate in the Transportation Research Board meeting on Freight by the Federal Highway Administration. On April 25th, 2020 the LVPC presented how the region has a long-term, green, fearless and reasonable strategy through *FutureLV* and all the LVPC's planning efforts. The LVPC has a holistic strategy that positions the region to address many of the expected outcomes of COVID-19. Ms. Bradley stated that the LVPC will continue to engage the Federal Highway Administration as the pressure for additional freight development will grow as the pandemic continues.

3. *MAP Forum and Data Coordination*

Mr. Doyle stated that the LVPC, in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning (MAP) Forum have been collaborating to assemble an online map and data portal. The MAP Forum is a consortium of 10 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and the Lehigh Valley that have entered into an agreement to better coordinate planning activities in the multi-state region. As part of the MAP Forum's mission, we are working towards a data portal site that will provide a "one-stop shop" for accessing important information for better decision making within the region, with a strong consideration for how freight movements are coordinated and managed. The data portal is currently being assembled. Currently, the LVPC is working on collecting and mapping truck parking data, and updating demographic and socio-economic characteristics for the region. Future data collection and mapping will enhance resiliency, or hazard mitigation, planning and integration of performance measures to assess the effectiveness of investments and policies.

OLD BUSINESS

1. *Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan – Adopt and Forward to LVTS*

Ms. Bradley stated that the LVPC has been working with the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study Technical and Coordinating Committees and the Multimodal Working Group for about a year and a half to develop the region's first pedestrian, bicycle, last feet to transit and accessibility strategy. Ms. Bradley continued by stating that at the March LVPC Commission meeting the group discussed the final draft of the plan. The plan is posted to the LVPC website. Mr.

Reese walked the commission through the plan public review and adoption process. Mr. Zebrowski made a motion to adopt the *Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan* and recommend that the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study Technical and Coordinating Committees do the same. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed Development Activity and the Pandemic

Ms. Bradley, Ms. Seitz, and Ms. Smith gave a short presentation on development in the era of COVID-19, where the region has been, where the region is currently at, where the LVPC anticipates the region is going with subdivision and land development, and what it means to our community.

2. Monthly Subdivision and Land Development Report

Ms. Bradley presented information on the March 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.

COMMUNICATION

1. 2020 Census Coordination and Promotion

Mr. Assad gave a brief update on the LVPC's Census outreach efforts in order to continue to advocate for the communities participation in the 2020 Census. Currently, the response rates for Lehigh and Northampton Counties were close to 60%, while the state and nation remained in the low 50s.

2. COVID-19 Resources and Partnerships

Mr. Assad and Ms. Bradley shared information on the LVPC COVID-19 resources and partnerships with the Commission. The LVPC started a COVID-19 page on the website to help people make sense of how all the current events are affecting the Lehigh Valley. The page includes links to the CDC page, the Pennsylvania COVID-19 page, the websites of the two counties and other resources where residents and businesses can find what they need to know. The website also includes an interactive map that shows the number of infections in Lehigh and Northampton Counties. Ms. Bradley spoke on the LVPC partnerships with several non-profit and government partnerships during the pandemic.

3. The Coronavirus Shows It's Time to Remake the American City

Mr. Zebrowski shared an article from the Huffington Post about how people are rethinking roads and mobility as COVID-19 has shown us the need for outdoor recreation opportunities and how that can be incorporated in our roadways. Mr. Zebrowski continued by stating that *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* already lays the groundwork for this with its promotion of complete streets principles and *Walk/RollLV* then identifies locations for this type of infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Senate Bill 841 and Local Subdivision and Land Development Approvals

Ms. Bradley stated that on April 22nd the LVPC held a webinar to discuss Act 15 of 2020. The webinar was in partnership with Fitzpatrick, Lentz and Bubba. Ms. Bradley gave a brief snapshot of the new law and what it means to the Commission and the Lehigh Valley communities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Oscavich 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. With Mr. Amato seconding the motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Zebrowski thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director
Bethany Vazquez, Program Associate