



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

GREG ZEBROWSKI
Chair

STEVEN GLICKMAN
Vice Chair

PAMELA PEARSON
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

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