



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, July 30, 2020 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on July 30, 2020 at 7:00 pm using Microsoft Teams. Commissioners and the public were able to join the meeting via web (<http://tiny.cc/FCmtg0730> and/or via phone 1 872-222-9976, Conference ID: 668 979 247#)

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Bradley took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Steven Glickman, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Kent Herman, Richard Molchany, Tori Morgan, Owen O’Neil and Stephen Repasch

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Malissa Davis, Liesel Dreisbach, Susan Lawless, Robert Lammi, Carl Manges, William McGee, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Pamela Pearson, Tina Smith, and Greg Zebrowski

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Mike Gibson, Michael Harakal, Jamie Johnson, Kathy Rader, Joshua Seigel, Kevin Schmidt, Leonard Lightner, Donna Wright, and Amy Zanelli

Northampton County

Bryan Callahan, Janell Connolly, Charlie Elliott, Darlene Heller, Kevin Lott, Spirit Rutzler, and Gerald Yob

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

Public Present: Cori Eckman and Charles Cole

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

MINUTES

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the June 25, 2020 LVPC meeting are attached. Ms. Bradley reviewed the Commission votes on the June 25th agenda items. Mr. Glickman made a

motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Lawless and Mr. Lammi abstaining from the vote.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Zebrowski thanked the Counties for their support of school districts and small business regarding their pandemic responses.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Ms. Dreisbach presented the July Comprehensive Committee items with staff presenting information.

1. Upper Mount Bethel Township – Zoning Ordinance and SALDO Amendment – Planned Industrial Parks

Ms. Smith reviewed the zoning ordinance and SALDO amendment for Upper Mount Bethel Township. The proposed zoning ordinance and SALDO ordinance amendments consider changes to the Township's I-2 and I-3 Industrial Zoning Districts, related to provisions for "Planned Industrial Parks". The amendment includes proposed additions to and removals from the Township's regulations. The proposed additional language is generally supported by the LVPC for its intent and consideration of development standards, with changes made in accordance with the LVPC recommendations. The language that is proposed for removal is of concern and, as such, is where the LVPC advisory review is focused, particularly as it relates to development impacts relating to uses with heavy tractor-trailer traffic, as well as environmental protection. The draft ordinance has the potential to 'continue diversification of the Regional economy to strengthen economic resilience' (policy 4.2) should appropriate accommodations be made in the proposal. However, as presented the proposal is generally inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan, *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, because it proposes to remove substantial environmental protection regulations, and further aims to treat 'planned industrial parks' considerably differently than other uses within the same zoning districts. Additionally, the proposed intensity of development supports an urban-level density that is contrary to the character of the Township and fiscally unsustainable in terms of road and bridge maintenance, among other impacts. Ms. Smith reviewed additional comments from the LVPC. Ms. Dreisbach inquired if the Township's EMS response ability to handle such a large structure was included in the letter. Ms. Smith stated that it was not but that it can be added. Mr. Melnick asked that the word "strongly" be placed in front of LVPC recommendations to communicate the importance of the subject at hand. Mr. Melnick also asked that language regarding the recommendation of an environmental impact study be added to the letter as well. Mr. Melnick also suggested that the staff include recommendations to coordinated with the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission and the Delaware River Basin Commission. Mr. Cole, a resident of Upper Mount Bethel Township, shared his support for the LVPC comments and communicated his concerns with the project. Mr. Amato shared his concerns with the site, and its impacts to the environmental and transportation infrastructure of the area. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the staff comments with the Commission's additions. Mr. Zebrowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. City of Allentown – Zoning Map Amendment – B5 to B/LI District

Ms. Smith presented the zoning map amendment for the City of Allentown. The subject application proposes to amend the zoning map by rezoning four parcels from Urban Commercial (B5) to Business/Light Industrial (B/LI). The proposed site to be rezoned is

located in a Development area of the General Land Use Plan, and has the potential to enhance 'growth by rooting economic development strategies in the unique advantages of the Region' (policy 4.1) should appropriate accommodations be made in the proposal. However, as presented the proposal is generally inconsistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it would enable by-right development of heavy and other industrial uses. These uses generate tractor-trailer trips in an area that does not have the infrastructure necessary to support this type of traffic and roadway impact, and do not 'improve efficiency of existing infrastructure' (of policy 2.2). Further, more intensive industrial uses are not likely to be compatible with recent redevelopment, including lighter industrial, recreation and tourism uses, or existing residential uses in the area, which does not 'promote the fiscal health and sustainability of municipalities' (policy 4.6). Overall it is unclear how these uses support existing uses or City and Regional Comprehensive Plans. Any permissible industrial uses should be well-defined in order to reduce impacts to the surrounding community to 'maintain quality and affordability of life' (of Policy 4.1). Industrial uses relying on freight should be strongly discouraged due to access limitations at the subject property, which does not support the location of 'freight in areas with available and planned transportation capacity' (of Policy 2.4). The LVPC further recommends that more intense uses be considered for appropriate buffering and noise emissions reduction to 'reduce blight to improve safety and accessibility in all communities' (of Policy 5.1). Ms. Smith reviewed additional comments from the LVPC. Mr. Glickman asked if the project was previously zoning industrial. Ms. Smith stated that the current zoning is for a commercial district but the permissibility of the heavier industrial uses in the proposal is where the concern is and stated that the staff will investigate the current zoning further. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Glickman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. *Lower Nazareth Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Triple Net Investments*

Ms. Seitz reviewed the land use of regional significance for Lower Nazareth Township. The subject application proposes to consolidate two parcels totaling 24 acres and construct a 243,750 square-foot office and industrial building. While the 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 LVPC notes several opportunities for site design improvement that would increase the consistency of the project. In order to improve the lack of pedestrian connectivity within the site, sidewalks should be extended from the vehicle parking area along the site access driveways and on the entirety of the Hanoverville Road property frontage. These sidewalk extensions are critical in order to promote pedestrian safety and support the LVPC policy to 'promote safe and secure community design' (policy 5.1). Ms. Seitz reviewed additional LVPC comments with the Commission. Mr. Repasch asked if the deficient bridge in question is on a restoration list. Mr. Doyle stated that he was not sure if the bridge was on a deficiency list. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. McGorry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. *North Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Schnecksville Elementary School Project No. 2*

Ms. Smith reviewed the land use of regional significance for North Whitehall Township. The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* as an educational facility. The subject application proposes to construct a 17,869-square-foot building addition and related improvements to the existing Schnecksville Elementary School campus. The proposed project is consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it is primarily located in an area designated for Preservation Buffer in the

General Land Use Plan and is within a Multimodal Accessibility Buffer of the Transportation Plan. Preservation Buffers are those areas that may be able to accommodate additional development based on existing conditions and development criteria outlined in the General Land Use Plan, which are met by the proposal considering the site is already developed, its proximity to an existing Center and its location in a Multimodal Accessibility Buffer. Further, while natural resource and agricultural conservation is strongly preferred in Preservation Buffer areas, neither exist on the subject property. Ms. Smith reviewed additional LVPC comments with the Commission. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Zebrowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. *Palmer Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Carson NW Quad*

Ms. Seitz reviewed the land use of regional significance for Palmer Township. The subject application proposes to construct a 403,896-square-foot warehouse and distribution building on a 35-acre lot. The development includes 5,000 square feet of related office space, and 110,160 square feet of “Speed Bay” space. A speed bay is dedicated floor space adjacent to loading docks within a warehouse that provides quick access to temporary storage of goods in order to move them in quick and efficient manner. The project is located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan, and directly adjacent to a major interchange. While the proposed location of the project adjacent to appropriate infrastructure and similar industrial uses promotes a logical development pattern that serves to ‘enhance growth by rooting economic development strategies in the unique competitive advantages of the region’ (Policy 4.1), the LVPC has identified discrepancies between the plan proposal and the previously submitted traffic impact study (TIS) that affect consideration for plan approval. The submission does not include an accurate TIS required to fully assess the transportation implications of the proposed project in this location. *FutureLV* constitutes that plans and their relevant materials submitted contain accurate information, as ‘municipalities must assess the impact of freight-based businesses on the entire regional transportation system’ (of Policy 2.3). Therefore, the LVPC recommends that the Township request additional or revised traffic impact information prior to consideration of approval. Ms. Seitz reviewed additional LVPC comments with the Commission. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. *Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet*

Ms. Dreisbach briefly reviewed the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet and made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Morgan abstained from voting on the South Whitehall Township Zoning Ordinance Item. With Ms. Morgan’s abstention the motion passed.

Environment Committee

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

1. *Environment Committee Summary Sheet*

Mr. Reese presented information on a DRBC Review for North Whitehall Township. The application is to renew approval of the existing Li'l Wolf Mobile Home Park wastewater treatment plant and discharge. The plant’s capacity is 70,000 gallons/day. There is no expansion or modification of the treatment plan proposed. The project would be on a 5-year renewal cycle and does not conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan. Per DRBC documentation, there are no substantial adverse impacts anticipated with the continued operation of the treatment plant. Mr. Lammi made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation Committee

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

1. Airport Area Freight Study Implementation Meeting

Ms. Bradley gave a brief update from the LVIA Airport Area Freight Study Implementation Meeting. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission team hosted a stakeholders meeting with the Lehigh Valley International Airport Area Freight Study working group. LVPC staff presented an update to the Lehigh Valley International Airport. The update included development trends, a presentation concerning the newly proposed land use of High-Cube warehousing, and detailed plan reviews of the formerly proposed Royal Farms Store along Airport Road and the Rockefeller warehouse proposal as they presented to the Commission. Both reviews were presented to the Commissioner earlier this year. Mr. Doyle reviewed the development activity in the project area from 2018 to present day.

2. Traffic During COVID-19

Ms. Bradley reviewed the total vehicle and truck traffic volumes between March 3, 2020 and July 14, 2020. Mr. Assad provide future projections based on the information presented by Ms. Bradley.

3. LVTS Update – Transportation Improvement Program Adoption

Ms. Bradley announced that on July 15, 2020 the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study – both the Joint Technical + Coordinating Committees – approved the Transportation Improvement Program for Federal Years 2021-2024, which begins October 1, 2020. The Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, consists of a four-year investment program that will comprise of more than \$451.8 million invested directly into the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Bradley reviewed the roles, structure and membership of the LVTS body. Mr. Doyle reviewed the TIP project timeline with the Committee as well as the funding categories and amounts.

OLD BUSINESS

None this month.

NEW BUSINESS

None this month.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. LVPC Website Report

Mr. Assad review the LVPC mid-year website hits report with the Commission.

2. Morning Call Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad gave a brief summary of Ms. Bradley's recurring Morning Call Business Cycle Column. The column discussed racial and ethnic disparities in the Lehigh Valley and directed people to the LVPC's equity analysis. The next column will make some predictions of how different aspects of the region may change after the pandemic.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Monthly Subdivision and Land Development Report

Ms. Bradley presented information on the June 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. Zebrowski seconded the motion and thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned.

Submitted by:

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