



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

GREG ZEBROWSKI
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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes from the Thursday, October 29, 2020 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on October 29, 2020. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on October 8, 2020.

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Vazquez took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Steve Glickman, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Jamie Johnson, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt, Leonard Lightner, and Donna Wright

Northampton County

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

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Mike Gibson, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Richard Molchany, Christina (Tori) Morgan, Joshua Seigel and Amy Zanelli

Northampton County

Bryan Callahan, Janell Connolly, Charles Elliott, Darlene Heller, William McGee, Spirit Rutzler and Gerald Yob

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

Public Present: Jeff Ward, Judith Henckel, Richard Wilford-Hunt, and Charles Cole

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

MINUTES

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the September 24, 2020 LVPC meeting are attached. Mr. Dougherty made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Zebrowski announced two items under the Chairman's Report. The first included a recap of the October 13, 2020 Lehigh Valley Gala and Awards. Ms. Vazquez shared a clip of the awards with the Commission. For those who missed the Gala, the full video can be found at the LVPC website, lvpc.org. The second item under the Chairman's Report concerned Commissioner Lammi. Mr. Zebrowski announced that Commissioner Lammi will be retiring from the Commission after 15 years of service to the Lehigh Valley. Commissioner Lammi served actively on the LVPC as a Commissioner, Executive Committee and Comprehensive Committee member and Environment Committee Chair. Mr. Zebrowski shared additional words regarding Mr. Lammi. Mr. Lammi shared words with the Commission. Additional Commissioners shared words about Mr. Lammi and his service. Mr. Zebrowski ended the sentiment once again thanking Mr. Lammi for his service.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

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

1. *Catasauqua Borough – Land Use of Regional Significance – Catasauqua School District, Alumni Field Improvements*

Ms. Smith reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for Catasauqua Borough. The project, located at the Catasauqua Middle School Campus, proposes improvements to the existing athletic facility including a new track and field, new visitor bleachers, relocation of several accessory buildings and a 1,000-square-foot expansion of the existing maintenance building. This is generally consistent with *FutureLV* because it's located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan and serves to 'enhance the long-term viability of assets' (of Policy 1.3) and 'support cultural and social programs' (of Policy 5.2). The LVPC recommended incorporating environmentally sensitive building and landscape design to further academic endeavors related to these technologies and 'reduce climate change impacts through mitigation and adaptation' (Policy 3.4). Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. *Bethlehem Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Mill Creek Business Park*

Ms. Smith reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for Bethlehem Township. The project proposes constructing four industrial buildings totaling 500,000 square feet on 61.8 acres on Church Road, north of Emrick Boulevard in Bethlehem Township and is inconsistent with *FutureLV* because it does not 'encourage quality, sustainable design and construction' (of Policy 1.2), and the design does not mitigate impacts of the development on the transportation network or Township residents (of Policy 2.4). Ms. Smith stated that the review letter provides recommendations and considerations regarding Zoning and Land Use, multimodal connectivity, traffic and transportation infrastructure impacts, landscaping and green building, and façade improvements. Ms. Davis asked if the LVPC could include comments regarding parking next to the pedestrian access points near the project. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments with Ms. Davis' recommendation. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. With Ms. Davis abstaining from the vote, the motion passed.

3. *Upper Mount Bethel Township – Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Amendments – Planned Industrial Parks*

The proposed zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance amendments consider changes to the recently adopted standards pertaining to 'Planned Industrial Parks', which the LVPC reviewed in July. The amendments made notable changes that address comments made by the LVPC in the previous review, such as impacts of the allowed building scale, building separation and emergency access, and limitations on buildings exceeding one million square feet and 100-feet tall. While the LVPC is encouraged by the proposed amendments in response to the previous review, many of those comments still apply, such as impacts to Township character, impacts of development scale on infrastructure sustainability, and considerations for environmental protection and scenic corridors. For these reasons the proposed amendments were found to be generally inconsistent with *FutureLV*. The review letter includes further recommendations on these matters to continue moving the Planned Industrial Park use closer to consistency. The LVPC strongly encouraged the Township to begin collaboration 'across public, private and governmental entities on the effects of land use decision-making on mobility, resiliency and quality of life' (of Policy 2.1) to ensure all parties are prepared for development in the I-2 and I-3 Zoning Districts. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. *Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet*

Ms. Seitz presented the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet. All proposals were consistent with *FutureLV*. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Environment Committee

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

1. *Environment Committee Summary Sheet*

Mr. Reese presented the Environment Committee Summary Sheet, all items are consistent with *FutureLV*. Mr. Lammi made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Lightner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation Committee

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

1. *Transportation Committee Summary Sheet*

Mr. Doyle reviewed two petitions from the City of Allentown for Walnut Street and St. John Street along Union Street. The purpose of the two proposed street vacation petitions are identified as closing access to a future planned "Riverside Drive" for traffic purposes. Mr. McGorry made a motion to approve the Transportation Committee Summary Sheet. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD/ NEW BUSINESS

1. *High Cube and Automated Warehousing Community Guide*

Ms. Bradley stated that the newly drafted High Cube and Automated Warehousing Community Guide is now available for review. The draft community guide is a chance to get in front of an emerging trend in a proactive way that forwards the goals of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* and supports local leadership. This will be the first guide of its type on high cube and automated warehousing in the US and it is expected that the publication will gain traction in other areas. On November 9th, the LVPC will be holding a special meeting to solicit public comment on the draft community guide from the municipalities.

All are encouraged to attend. The virtual meeting information can be found at the LVPC website, lvpc.org.

2. *Monthly Subdivision and Land Development Report*

Ms. Bradley presented information on the September 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. Mr. Doyle reviewed the Traffic Count data with the Commission as well.

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 the value of the land in the Lehigh Valley and how as a region we need to put warehouses in places where they belong and where they invest in our communities. The next column is due to be published on Sunday, November 29th.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None this month.

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. Mr. Zebrowski asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Melnick 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