



GREG ZEBROWSKI
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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes from the Thursday, September 24, 2020 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on September 24, 2020. The meeting was advertised in the Morning Call on August 23, 2020.

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Vazquez took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Percy Dougherty, Mike Gibson, Steven Glickman, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Jamie Johnson, Christina Morgan, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, and Donna Wright

Northampton County

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

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Bob Elbich, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Leonard Lightner, Rick Molchany, Joshua Seigel, Kevin Schmidt and Amy Zanelli

Northampton County

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

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

Public Present: Nicki Jacobs

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

MINUTES

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the August 27, 2020 LVPC meeting are attached. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Zebrowski announced that the LVPC's newest housing tool, Identifying Foreclosure and Eviction Risk, found over 71,000 households are cost-burdened in the Lehigh Valley. The LVPC recently began an exciting partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, who is examining household risk due to COVID from the perspective of job loss. Next steps on this front include further evaluation of the Federal Reserve's data so that it can be integrated into the housing evaluation. The data will be considered in conjunction with an attainability assessment at the regional, municipal and school district level, which will ultimately make up the Lehigh Valley Housing Needs Analysis.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee

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

1. *Lower Saucon Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Bethlehem Landfill Northern Realignment*

Ms. Smith reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for Lower Saucon Township. The project proposes an expansion at the facility on Applebutter Road. 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 proposal is generally consistent with *FutureLV* because it is located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan, and 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). Ms. Smith shared additional comments with the Commission regarding further detail of the appropriateness of the expansion at and over the existing facility and commendation of the inclusion of a landscape berm to provide screening of the expansion. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. Ms. Lawless abstained from the vote, with this abstention the motion passed.

2. *Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet*

Ms. Seitz briefly reviewed the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet and Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Herman abstained from Lynn Township Zoning Ordinance Amendment. With Mr. Herman'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 presented information on COVID-19's impact on air quality in the Lehigh Valley. Mr. Reese briefly reviewed information from the June, July, and August Meetings. Mr. Reese shared the health implications of the ozone data with the Commission. The US Environmental Protection Agency air quality website allows for the creation of Air Quality Index charts from the daily monitoring data for individual sites. The

Air Quality Index translates the actual concentration of a pollutant in the air into an index reflecting the impact on humans. Ground-level ozone can trigger a variety of health problems, particularly for children, the elderly, and people of all ages who have lung diseases. Additionally, people with certain genetic characteristics or reduced intake of certain nutrients, such as vitamins C and E, are at greater risk. Ozone exposure reduces lung function and causes respiratory symptoms, such as coughing and shortness of breath. Asthma and lung diseases, such as emphysema, are aggravated by ozone exposure, leading to increased medication use, hospital admissions, and emergency room visits. Exposure to ozone may also increase the risk of premature mortality from respiratory causes. Mr. Reese shared a summary of the data for the time period of 1995 to 2020.

2. *Hurricane Isaias Remnant Rainfall Analysis*

Mr. Reese presented information on the impact of Hurricane Isaias on the local river and stream flows. The LVPC will continue to monitor this type of information and relate it to the goals policies and actions of FutureLV: The Regional Plan as the Lehigh Valley continues to experience impacts of enhanced risk of natural hazards to persons and property associated with climate change.

Transportation Committee

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

1. *Traffic During COVID-19*

Mr. Doyle announced that total vehicle traffic levels have steadily returned to pre-pandemic conditions, while truck and freight traffic has grown passed pre-pandemic levels.

OLD/ NEW BUSINESS

1. *Monthly Subdivision and Land Development Report*

Ms. Bradley presented information on the August 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.

2. *GLVCC Real Estate Outlook Presentation*

Ms. Bradley shared her presentation at the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Commercial Real Estate Outlook. Representatives from many different real estate sectors, including the banking industry, developers and the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation presented. The Commission's unique role in subdivision and land development, municipal ordinances and plans among other things is key to support equitable economic resiliency and sustainability and why the Commission continues to present to key sectors responsible for investment and ultimately implementation of FutureLV: The Regional Plan.

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 LVPC's newly-created Foreclosure and Eviction tool that identifies the areas and neighborhoods in the region where people are paying more than is recommended for rent or mortgage costs. Mr. Assad continued by stating that the

column spoke on how the tool can be used by government and non-profit officials to direct resources where they are needed the most to keep people in their homes, and how the LVPC has partnered with the counties, cities and Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia to help prevent evictions and foreclosures. The next column will talk about the LVPC's new foreclosure and eviction tool and will be published on October 19.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None this month.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Assad announced the opening of the 7th Annual Lehigh Valley Gala + Awards registration. The Gala will be held virtually on October 13th from 5:30 – 6:30 pm. Public registration cost is \$15 per ticket. LVPC Commissioners are complimentary and only need to contact Bethany Vazquez to get registered.

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. Harakal 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