



GREG ZEBROWSKI
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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes from the Thursday, May 27, 2021 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on May 27, 2021. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on December 28, 2020.

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Winton took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Mr. Brace, Mr. Dougherty, Mr. Elbich, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Glickman, Mr. Harakal, Mr. Herman, Mr. Lightner, Mr. Molchany, Ms. Moore, Mr. O'Neil, Ms. Rader, and Mr. Repasch

Northampton County

Mr. Amato, Ms. Davis, Ms. Dreisbach, Mr. Andrew Elliott, Mr. Charles Elliott, Mr. Lott, Ms. Lawless, Mr. Manges, Mr. McGee, Mr. Melnick, Ms. Pearson, Ms. Smith, and Greg Zebrowski

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Executive Armstrong, Ms. Gerlach, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Seigel and Mr. Schmidt.

Northampton County

Ms. Connolly, Mr. Donchez, Ms. Heller, Executive McClure, Mr. McGorry, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Panto, Ms. Rutzler and Mr. Yob.

Staff Present: Mr. Assad, Ms. Bradley, Mr. Hite, Mr. Reese, Ms. Seitz, Ms. Smith, Mr. Okumu and Ms. Winton.

Public Present: Jeff Ward, Charles Arlington Cole, Omar Ray, and Diane Kelley

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were no speakers during this section.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Zebrowski provided an insightful response to the New York Times article headlined "A New Crop in Pennsylvania Warehouses".

MINUTES

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the April 22, 2021 LVPC meeting are attached. Ms. Moore made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Dougherty seconded the motion. Ms. Rader abstained from the vote and the motion passed.

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Forks Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – 600 Kuebler Road

Ms. Smith detailed the application which is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV* as a 'major redevelopment', proposing to construct a 220,100-square-foot warehouse on 17.95 acres. The existing site includes a 174,547-square-foot manufacturing facility that will be demolished. This proposal, located at 600 Kuebler Road, is in a Preservation Buffer of the General Land Use Plan and within a High Preservation Priority Area of the Farmland Preservation Plan. The Preservation Buffer is an area that may have factors available to accommodate additional development but where additional scrutiny is warranted in determining whether growth can be accommodated. Those factors considered, the proposal is a redevelopment project, utilizing an area already used for industrial purposes and relieving development pressure on agricultural and natural lands (of Policy 1.1). For these reasons, the proposal is generally consistent with *FutureLV*. Pedestrian, bicycle, ADA, transit, vehicle mobility, landscaping and green infrastructure and building recommendations were made to make the plan more consistent. Mr. Melnick asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Elbich made a motion to approve the staff's comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

2. ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – 303 Demi Road Planned Industrial Park

Ms. Seitz detailed the project which proposes a 420,000-square-foot logistics center and associated site improvements at 303 Demi Road. The site is located at the terminating point of Demi Road, accessible via River Road. It is adjacent to the southeast border of Portland Borough and approximately one quarter of a mile away from PA Route 611, connecting south to Route 512 and the Lehigh Valley and the Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge, connecting north into New Jersey. The proposed project, while strategically located, is pivotal to the long-term viability of the Township and poses substantial impacts to Township character, infrastructure and quality of life if left unmitigated. The project has the potential to be consistent with *FutureLV*, however, the project location is not within an area with available or planned transportation capacity. The Township is discouraged from approving land development plans that have freight impacts, without the existing infrastructure to support it. Additionally, the development is proposed to be served by on-lot sewer utilities, eliminating the possibility that this development and any future developments in the vicinity may be used for manufacturing. Infrastructure improvements will need to be coordinated between Portland Borough (sewer and water), PENNDOT for a portion of Demi Road and connections to other state facilities, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, County, and others in order for this development to protect the public, health, safety, and welfare and not unnecessarily burden taxpayers in the short and long run. Without public sewer and water, higher quality and compensated manufacturing jobs are unlikely to be created, and the site will be relegated to warehousing and logistics only. Design of pedestrian facilities, green infrastructure and building design were also discussed and included in the review letter. Specifically, Mr. Melnick strongly stressed the environmental impacts of the project. Ms. Lawless made comments regarding the traffic impact studies being incomplete, inadequate,

and misleading. Mr. Zebrowski added that the developer did not do their due diligence with regards to the community. Mr. Amato asked if there are any comments regarding the subsurface geology. Mr. Glickman asked the relative elevation of the site to the river and the height of the building? Ms. Seitz' indicated it is 45 feet high. Mr. Glickman asked if there are provisions regarding changing use and is there another chance to review. Ms. Bradley indicated that, unless there is a significant change, we do not get another chance to review per the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Additionally, the LVPC met with PennDOT, the Township, County and others as partner engagement on this project and express concerns and opportunities related to the site and proposed development. Mr. Cole is a resident in Upper Mount Bethel Township and this project is taking 10 acres on steep slopes and should not be approved that the project is short-sighted on all items; water, wastewater, the roads, and everything. He is not opposed to development, but it should be developed carefully taking the into account the residents and area with a thoughtful process. Mr. Zebrowski asked if there were any questions. Ms. Lawless added if a comment can be added after the section on Page 3, of the letter, indicating that should be an area and need a revised traffic impact statement and study. Mr. Melnick made a motion to approve the staff's comments, as amended. Mr. Harakal seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

3. *ACTION ITEM: Riverside Drive – Implementation Plan – Phase 1*

Ms. Samantha Smith detailed subject application which proposes construction of a new road, called Riverside Drive. It includes 3,750 linear feet of new roadway and multimodal improvements. The proposal is located along the abandoned railroad right-of-way between Liberty and Union Streets. The proposal is located in a Development area of the General Land Use Plan and is consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it will enhance multimodal connections to Hamilton Street and future Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) bus rapid transit service by establishing a mixed-transportation corridor. The proposal also serves to increase the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the region. In addition, this phase of the Riverside Drive Implementation Plan is a designated Commuter Trail on the *FutureLV* Transportation Plan, which serves to 'encourage an interconnected street network. The proposal includes the 'Hamilton Gateway' element and a portion of the 'Allentown Riverfront Redevelopment' element of the Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor project, which envisions an ultimate connection from the City of Allentown to Whitehall Township, and most significantly closes a substantial gap in the Delaware & Lehigh (D&L) National Heritage Corridor in one of the region's neighborhoods with the least access to opportunity. Mr. Melnick asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Molchany made a comment that this project has been formally vetted for several years and the developer has done a great job. He believes the project will benefit the entire Lehigh Valley! Mr. Zebrowski asked if there were any other questions or comments. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve. Mr. Harakal seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4. *ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet*

Mr. Melnick detailed the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet and asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, Mr. Zebrowski asked for a motion to

accept the summary sheet. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve. Mr. Lightner seconded the motion. Ms. Rader abstained from the Upper Macungie item and the motion was approved.

5. Commission Training on Northampton County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance by Solicitor Gary Asteak

Ms. Bradley detailed that a feasibility sketch plan was received by Chapman Borough and because the Borough does not have their own Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), then the adopted county SALDO applies. The LVPC, as the county planning agency, is responsible for reviewing. We are serving as the professional staff for the Borough. Only four communities in the Lehigh Valley defer to the LVPC those are: Slatington, West Easton, Glendon and Chapman. Mr. Gary Asteak serves as Chapman Borough Solicitor and will be Special Council for this project. Mr. Asteak detailed the Commissioner's role and obligations in the feasibility review stage of the process. Mr. Repasch asked if a municipality can reverse their SALDO and rely on the LVPC? Mr. Asteak said "yes", if a municipality repealed their SALDO then the LVPC would step in but cannot image that happening. There was then a discussion on the four communities and their responsibilities. Mr. Zebrowski asked if there are any questions or comments, hearing none he thanked Mr. Asteak for his time.

Environment Committee:

1. Committee Summary Report

Mr. Repasch detailed the Environment Committee's meeting on May 25th including the Trexler nature Preserve Master Site Plan, Metropolitan Area Planning Forum Resiliency Working Group and Regional Climate Action Assessment and *ClimateLV* along with the LVPC application to the Pennsylvania Department of Environment Protection Local Climate Action Program and, if accepted, will support a regional greenhouse gas inventory among other planning.

Transportation Committee:

1. *Action Item:* Bethlehem Street Vacation – Luna Street and unopened part of Bushkill Street

Mr. Okumu detailed the proposed street vacation was submitted by the City on behalf of Mr. Michael and Gretchen Devers of 2006 Renwick Street, Bethlehem, 18107, through their attorney for portions of Luna Street and unopened Bushkill Street. The owner's property is located on address 129 Luna Street. The proposed plan, submitted for recommendations under Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, was reviewed for general consistency with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* and found generally consistent with conditions. Mr. Molchany suggested that that an easement for emergency services will be added to the letter. Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the revised letter. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Old Business:

1. *INFORMATION ITEMS:* Activity Reports:

a. Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report

Ms. Bradley reviewed the development activity for April another very busy month with 67 reviews, 16 subdivisions, 30 development (the highest this year) 17 Stormwater & 4 Municipal Ordinances and Maps.

b. COVID-19 Pandemic Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Hite detailed the total vehicle traffic as well as total truck traffic for the month of April.

Communications, Public Engagement and Participation:

Mr. Assad detailed the many ways you can be be informed of what is happening in the region. Including The Morning Call Business Cycle Column and WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio Monthly. Or to be involved you can attend Local Technical Assistance Program on June 9th, Workshop Environment on June 10th, Transformative Talk – Housing on June 25th and the Joint WorkshopLV Multimodal and Workshop LV Freight on July 21st.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on June 24, 2021. Mr. Zebrowski asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:
Jennifer Winton, Executive Secretary