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Executive Director

## LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

### Minutes from the Thursday, December 17, 2020 Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVPC held a virtual public meeting on November 19, 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, Steven Glickman, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Richard Molchany, Christina (Tori) Morgan, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, and Kevin Schmidt

##### Northampton County

Liesel Dreisbach, Darlene Heller, Susan Lawless, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Pamela Pearson, Tina Smith, Gerald Yob and Greg Zebrowski

#### Members Absent:

##### Lehigh County

Mike Gibson, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Jamie Johnson, Leonard Lightner, Joshua Seigel, Donna Wright, and Amy Zanelli

##### Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Bryan Callahan, Janell Connolly, Malissa Davis, Charles Elliott, Kevin Lott, Carl Manges, William McGee and Spirit Rutzler

**Staff Present:** Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Julie Benco, Charles Doyle, Michael Hanes, Brian Hite, Craig Kackenmeister, Teresa Mackey, Mahdis Modaresi, Simon Okumu, Tracy Oscavich, Geoff Reese, Bruce Rider, Susan Rockwell, Jill Seitz, Samantha Smith, David Towsey, Elena Tucci Bethany Vazquez and Vicki Weidenhammer

#### COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

#### MINUTES

Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the November 19, 2020 LVPC meeting are attached. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### *New Staff Introduction*

Mr. Zebrowski welcomed Michael Hanes as the new Associate Director of Transportation and Data Management and ask Mr. Hanes to share a few words. Mr. Hanes expressed his excitement to work with the LVPC.

### *Thank You for Your Participation and Contributions to Our Region*

Mr. Zebrowski thanked the Commissioners for their partnership and dedication to the Lehigh Valley Region and announced that 2021 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commission.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Mr. Melnick presented the December Comprehensive Committee items with staff presenting information.

1. *South Whitehall and Lower Macungie Townships – Land Use of Regional Significance – Cedarbrook Skilled Nursing Addition*

Ms. Seitz reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for South Whitehall and Lower Macungie Townships. The project proposes a 142,00 sq. ft., 3-story expansion of the existing Cedarbrook Skilled Nursing Facility, with related site improvements. This proposal is generally consistent with FutureLV because it's located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan. The expansion of the existing Cedarbrook campus supports practices of reuse, sustainable building, site design and community design (of Policy 3.4) and complements the unique history, environment, culture and needs of the Valley (Policy 5.4). Of note, the LVPC applauded the proposal for incorporating a green roof and rain garden, which serves to support the sustainable actions of Policy 3.2 and 3.4. Mr. Melnick requested that section 301 of the MPC be added into the letter to give municipalities more coverage when dealing with developers. Mr. Glickman made a motion to approve the letter with Mr. Melnick's comments. Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. With Mr. Molchany, Mr. Dougherty, and Ms. Morgan abstaining from the vote, the motion passed.

2. *Lower Nazareth and Bethlehem Townships – Land Use of Regional Significance – Lehigh Valley Trade Center II*

Ms. Seitz reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for Lower Nazareth and Bethlehem Townships. The application proposes to construct a 527,472 sq. ft. industrial facility, comprised of 290,100 sq. ft. of warehouse space and 237,362 sq. ft. of manufacturing space. The proposal is generally consistent with FutureLV: The Regional Plan because it is in an area designated for development in the General Land Use plan and supports the location of freight facilities in areas with available and planned transportation capacity (of Policy 2.4). Comments within the letter provided further recommendations that address transportation impacts and site accessibility. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. *Bethlehem Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Notre Dame High School Auditorium Expansion*

Ms. Smith reviewed the Land Use of Regional Significance for Bethlehem Township. The plan proposes construction of a 17,157 sq. ft. auditorium expansion to the existing school. The proposal is generally consistent with FutureLV because it's located within a development area of 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). Additional comments in the review letter recommended that educational institutions incorporate sustainable design to further academic endeavors related to these technologies, enhance the campus setting, demonstrate environmental leadership within the region, and 'reduce climate change impacts through mitigation and adaptation' (of Policy 3.4). Mr. Glickman made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. *Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet*

Mr. Melnick stated that the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet is in the packet for review and made a motion to approve the comments in the summary sheet. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Environment Committee**

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

1. *PA Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative – Review of Proposed Rulemaking and LVPC Comments*

Mr. Reese briefly reviewed the proposed rulemaking for the PA Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and stated that the draft LVPC comments on the proposed rulemaking are in the packet and briefly reviewed the staff comments with the Commission. Mr. Glickman made a motion to approve the staff comments as presented in the draft letter. 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. *City of Allentown – Street Vacation – South Fountain Street*

Mr. Doyle reviewed the proposed street vacation for the City of Allentown. The purpose of the project is to provide Allentown Parking Authority with consolidated grounds for a new parking garage along the vacated portion of South Fountain Street. The Parking Authority currently owns parcels on both sides of South Fountain Street. Access will be provided via a new private alley for the properties that front on Walnut Street. The proposed streets to be vacated do not appear to adversely impact the accessibility to existing lots and therefore appears consistent with FutureLV: The Regional Plan as the purpose of such plans are to allow for alternatives to on-street parking within a downtown, redevelop an underutilized lot and promote safer downtown streets as an identified policy within FutureLV: The Regional Plan (Policy 5.4), to promote development that complements the unique history, environment, culture and needs of the Valley". Ms. Rader made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. *PennDOT Pathways Alternative Funding Program*

Ms. Bradley reported on the PennDOT Pathways Alternative Funding Program. PennDOT is exploring sustainable transportation funding options through the Pathways Program to help address the \$8.1 billion gap in its annual infrastructure funding. Through the program, the department has launched an extensive initiative to examine possible short- and long-term funding solutions to explore how they could potentially better serve our communities and all Pennsylvanians for the next generation. Ms. Bradley reviewed the potential short- and long-term solutions with the Committee. Ms. Bradley stated that a draft public comment letter to

PennDOT is in the packet and reviewed five key infrastructure considerations highlighted in the letter with the Committee.

These were the five key considerations:

1. A long-term, stable, and broad infrastructure funding program(s) must be developed to maintain the Commonwealth's economy and future, triage funding solutions or kicking the issue down the road are unacceptable and irresponsible.
2. Transportation-only based metrics for determining system investments ignores critical and global considerations of regional economic output, population growth and impacts on communities, especially with vulnerable populations
3. Larger pieces of transportation infrastructure and the system are often in more urbanized areas with large communities where equity is an issue. Offsets for impacts for new user fees on people and places with less access to opportunity must be accounted for.
4. Revenue generated from new transportation funding programs must stay within the county in which it is generated and be only utilized for transportation investments in perpetuity.
5. New transportation revenues must be allocated in accordance with regional long-range transportation plans and a fair share of revenues distributed to Planning Partners, and not solely distributed to projects owned by the Commonwealth because the state is not the only infrastructure owner.

Mr. Repasch asked if there was any thought to charging fees by vehicle weight. Ms. Bradley stated that PennDOT is considering those fees in the sixth category of the funding program. Mr. Dougherty asked if alternative funding in terms of electric vehicles and mileage be specifically addressed. Ms. Bradley stated that the additional comments by Commissioner Dougherty can be incorporated into the first key consideration addressed in the letter. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *1. Monthly Activity Report*

Ms. Bradley presented information on the September Monthly BuildLV: Subdivision and Land Development Report. The report will be distributed publicly around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and is available at lvpc.org. Mr. Hite reviewed the Traffic Count data with the Commission as well.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *1. 2021 Meeting Calendar*

Ms. Bradley stated that the 2021 meeting calendar is in the packet. Ms. Lawless made a motion to approve the 2021 calendar dates. Ms. Rader seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### *1. Morning Call Business Cycle Column*

Mr. Assad state that the draft High Cube and Automated Warehouse Community Guidance published on Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup> was in the packet. The next column will be about important updates to the LVPC's Eviction and Foreclosure tool and is due to be published on Sunday, January 3.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### *1. 2021 LVPC Budget and Workplan*

Ms. Bradley and Mr. Rider took the Commission through the 2021 LVPC Budget and Workplan. The 2021 Budget and Workplan was adopted by the Executive Committee on December 10<sup>th</sup> at its monthly meeting.

## **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 in the packet. Any questions can be referred to [bvazquez@lvpc.org](mailto: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. Molchany made the motion. Mr. McGorry seconded the motion and Mr. Zebrowski adjourned.

Submitted by:

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