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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, July 28, 2022 Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, July 28, 2022. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on Wednesday, January 5th, 2022.

Mr. Glickman chaired the meeting.

Ms. Benco took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Philip Ginder, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Dennis Klusaritz, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Christina Morgan, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch and Kevin Schmidt.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Jessica Cope, Liesel Dreisbach, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, Darlene Heller, Susan Lawless, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick and Tara Zrinski.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Geoff Brace, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Owen O’Neil, Joshua Siegel, Matthew Tuerk and Irene Woodward.

Northampton County

Dan Engle, John Gallagher, Carl Manges, Lamont McClure, William McGee, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, William Reynolds, Grace Smith, Tina Smith and Gerald Yob.

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Steve Neratko, Tracy Oscavich, Jill Seitz and Dean Severson.

Public Present: Gary Asteak, John Bermingham, Kurt Bresswein, Charles Cole, Cori Eckman, Judy Henckel, Jenn Loconte, Mark Mezger, Don Moore, Lou Pektor, Martin Pinter, Anthony Salamone, Pat Shoup, Fran Visicaro, Jeff Ward and Richard Wilford Hunt.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Molchany recognized Lehigh County’s honoring of Percy Dougherty for his years of service and commitment to the County and the Lehigh Valley as a County Commissioner from 1994 through 2021. He thanked Mr. Dougherty for his service and mentioned that the County will be naming their GIS Department Planning room after him. Mr. Dougherty acknowledged that GIS Planning in the region originally started at the LVPC and then extended to Lehigh County.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Mr. Glickman welcomed the newest member on the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission board, Philip Ginder, and described his background as a resident and Commissioner of Whitehall Township. Mr. Ginder shared his thanks for being welcomed on the Commission. Mr. Glickman also congratulated LVPC Director of Administration, Tracy Oscavich, on being named to the Lehigh Valley 2022 Forty Under 40 list

by *Lehigh Valley Business*. Ms. Oscavich shared that she was humbled to receive this recognition and thanked the Commissioners and LVPC staff for their support of her professional growth.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, June 23rd, 2022 LVPC meeting are attached, and he then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Moore made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Mr. Klusaritz, Ms. Cope and Mr. Schmidt abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: City of Allentown – Land Use of Regional Significance – Lincoln Leadership Academy Foundation Middle School

Mr. Neratko provided an overview of the project, which proposes the development and construction of a 24,093 square-foot middle school on an eight-acre site. Mr. Neratko noted that the site is the current property of the Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School and this is an expansion of that use. Mr. Neratko highlighted comments related to neighborhood characteristics, the inclusion of sidewalks and bicycle racks, sustainable energy systems, street trees and coordination with LANTA. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty made the motion; Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: City of Bethlehem, Northampton County – Lehigh University – Cundey Varsity House and Goodman Field House

Ms. Benco provided an overview of the project, which proposes several improvements that include a two-story, 11,194 square-foot addition to the existing Cundey Varsity House, the construction of a 96,712 square foot indoor field house, a turf baseball outfield and a turf practice field with site improvements on the Goodman Campus. Ms. Benco highlighted comments related to maintaining vegetated areas, green infrastructure techniques, retention of existing trees and the inclusion of bicycle racks. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Dreisbach made the motion; Mr. Amato seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Melnick asked if the light pollution was adequately addressed in the letter and Ms. Benco responded. Mr. Glickman asked if dark sky compliant lighting could be addressed and Ms. Bradley added that language involving full cut off of lights and light spill can be incorporated in the letter. Mr. Glickman asked if the motion would be amended to include language regarding full cut off of lights and light spill. Ms. Dreisbach made the amended motion; Mr. Amato seconded the amended motion. Motion passed, with amendments to the letter.

ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – RPL Planned Industrial Park Sketch Plan

Ms. Bradley emphasized that this submission is a sketch plan submission, which is an additional and advisory review before the preliminary plan review. Sketch plan reviews are done if they are legislated by the local government for the county planning agency. She noted the multiple Land Use of Regional Significance meetings that were held for the River Pointe Logistics Planned Industrial Park and surrounding related projects, which involved LVPC staff, Upper Mount Bethel Township and additional stakeholders. Ms. Seitz provided an overview of the sketch plan submission, which conceptualizes the development of a planned industrial park consisting of 12 industrial buildings, totaling 5,873,000 square feet, on approximately 804 acres of land. Ms. Seitz noted the anticipated daily vehicle and truck trips the project will create, as well as the significant size and scale of the project that surpasses existing development and infrastructure in the surrounding area. Ms. Seitz highlighted comments related to the conceptualized on-site wastewater treatment plant, sidewalks, a connected multimodal network, a development management plan, short-term and long-term economic impacts, the Norfolk Southern rail line overpass, truck routes, emergency access points and other various local and regional impacts. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions from the Commission. Mr. McGorry asked about impacts to the Delaware River and Ms. Seitz responded on the environmental

considerations within the letter. Ms. Bradley mentioned that Mr. McGorry's concerns can be addressed during the preliminary plan stormwater review. Mr. Amato emphasized a sentence within the letter on the potential for the development to pay for itself, mentioned concerns about Route 33 access and the Delaware River. Mr. Melnick added concerns over truck traffic on Route 611, the on-site sewage plant and access for trucks on the Delaware River Toll Bridge. Responding to Mr. Melnick's comments, Ms. Bradley mentioned the prior LVPC coordination with the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission on this proposal. Ms. Rader emphasized the concerns surrounding the Norfolk Southern rail overpass on Delaware Avenue. Ms. Zrinski underscored concerns over the on-site sewage treatment plant and the burden it could place on the taxpayer in the long-term. Mr. Molchany agreed with Ms. Zrinski's concerns and noted the amount of abandoned on-site sewage treatment plants in the Lehigh Valley that have been taken over by the municipality. Mr. Repasch reinforced Mr. Molchany's points pertaining to the on-site sewage treatment plants. Ms. Lawless asked about the proposed heights of the buildings and if they will impact the viewshed. Ms. Seitz responded that a request for renderings from various viewpoints is mentioned in the letter and Mr. Glickman mentioned the LVPC's guidance on high cube warehousing that should be referenced. Mr. Charles Elliott asked if a joint meeting with the Environment and Comprehensive Planning Committee could be held when the preliminary plan is received for this proposal and Mr. Glickman agreed on the joint meeting idea, including the Transportation Committee as well. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions from the public. Ms. Henckel, a member of the public, thanked the Commission for their comments and reviews. Mr. Cole, a citizen of Upper Mount Bethel Township, emphasized concerns over the project relating to truck traffic, sewage treatment for industrial projects, and economic impacts to the taxpayer. Ms. Visicaro a resident of Upper Mount Bethel Township, mentioned concerns over the traffic on Route 611, air pollution and the project's vicinity to the Upper Mount Bethel Community Park. Mr. Birmingham, an Upper Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors member, thanked the Commission for their guidance and review. Mr. Pinter, Chairman of the Upper Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors, reinforced that their Board takes into consideration the comments submitted by LVPC and addressed prior comments relating to greenspace and economic impacts made in the meeting. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Melnick presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which included a Palmer Township Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendment. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Ms. Moore made the motion; Ms. Zrinski seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Environment Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Glickman presented the Environment Committee Summary Sheet, which included four Delaware River Basin Commission review items. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Transportation Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – N. Egge Street – City of Allentown

Ms. Bradley presented the proposed street vacation petition for a portion of North Egge Street in the City of Allentown. Ms. Bradley noted that it is an improved alley way to the private parking lot for Resurrected Life Community Church and Resurrected Life Children's Academy, as well as 3 other residential and commercial properties along 9th Street. She mentioned that the petitioner would like to be able to control access in order to mitigate the impacts of drivers trying to utilize this portion as a through street. Ms. Bradley recommended that pedestrian access and utility access to various infrastructure below and above ground be maintained, as well as appropriate signage be installed at the access point on W. Turner Street. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Herman made the motion; Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: Northampton County Industrial Land Use Assessment

Ms. Bradley provided an update on the Northampton County Industrial Land Use Assessment and informed that Phase I is largely complete pending municipal comments and involved research of all local zoning regulations and industrial land uses in the County. She thanked Mr. Neratko and the GIS Team for their work on the project thus far. Ms. Bradley shared that the current phase includes drafting the model guide and a training program to support implementation. Mr. Severson added an additional update on the assessment, summarized the roundtable discussions on related freight issues and discussed how the project will advance through September. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Old Business:

INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports

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

Mr. Neratko presented the plan and review activity for June, which included 17 Subdivisions, 22 Development proposals, 19 reviews for Stormwater Management, and five Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 63 reviews. The reviews included 509 housing units and 991,644 square feet of non-residential development.

Mid-Year Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report

Mr. Neratko presented the six-month *BuildLV* report for the first half of 2022, which included 92 Subdivisions, 185 Development proposals, 99 reviews for Stormwater Management, and 23 Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 399 reviews. The reviews included 2,968 housing units and 10,051,409 square feet of non-residential development. Ms. Bradley provided a further update on industrial and warehouse growth through the mid-way point of 2022. Ms. Bradley summarized CBRE data for Lehigh and Northampton Counties, describing the square footage, vacancy rates and asking rents of industrial development in the first and second quarters of 2022. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Molchany commented on the CBRE data presented and how it ties in with the number of warehouse proposals that continue to be seen in the region.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Ms. Bradley provided the details of the June traffic counts, which shows an upward trend in vehicle counts throughout the summer. She mentioned certain dips in the traffic counts that represent holidays or weather events. Ms. Bradley also presented the traffic count data for vehicles and trucks on the new Route 22 counter for the second half of May through June 28th, which is made up of about 13% trucks and 87% cars, vans and motorcycles. Ms. Bradley noted that Route 22 has more vehicles per day than any other road in the Lehigh Valley, including I-78 and Route 33. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Executive Director's Report:

INFORMATION ITEM: Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans Update

Ms. Bradley provided an update on the Multi-Municipal plan efforts that the LVPC is consulting on currently. The Nazareth Area Plan has finished its 45-day public review and comment period and is moving into the public hearing process. The Northern Lehigh Plan is about to begin its 45-day public review and comment period. Ms. Bradley added that the complete draft of the Slate Belt Plan will go to the Steering Committee at the beginning of August for their review and comment. Finally, she noted that the River Central Plan Steering Committee is moving towards design and layout. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Molchany asked if there was another group of municipalities that was in the pipeline to create a Multi-Municipal Plan next, and Ms. Bradley responded that the focus is on plan implementation, including required municipal zoning updates and development of model ordinance regulations that support this.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Business Cycle column that hit the Morning Call website on Thursday, July 28th. That column focused on one of the nation's largest expanses of land, our public right-of-way, and looks at what the public-right-of-way means to us, how it's used, and in some cases misused.

INFORMATION ITEM: Plan Lehigh Valley radio show on WDIY NPR 88.1FM

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley 30-minute radio show that featured Brian Carl, administrator of Lowhill and Weisenberg Townships and chairman of the Northern Lehigh Multi-Municipal Plan Steering Committee. The show helped give a good picture of the benefits of multi-municipal planning, as well as the challenges many municipalities are facing right now. He stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, August 1 and will focus growth management and feature LANTA's Owen O'Neil.

INFORMATION ITEM: Zoning for Utility Scale Solar

Mr. Assad announced that there will be a workshop on utility scale solar for municipal officials and staff, hosted by LVPC in conjunction with Penn State, on Tuesday, August 2nd. He summarized what the workshop will entail during the four-hour training, including a presentation on utility scale solar impacts and emerging trends in solar implications, an immersive tour and discussion of specific solar ordinance language in Pennsylvania. Mr. Assad noted that the class size is limited, with the current expected attendance at 35 people.

INFORMATION ITEM: 2022 Lehigh Valley Government Academy

Mr. Assad reminded the Commission that the Lehigh Valley Government Academy Classes are currently running throughout 2022, including Community Planning on September 7, 14 & 21 and Zoning on October 6, 13 & 20. He noted that the Community Planning class is full, while there are a few seats open in the Zoning course. Anyone can sign up online at lvpc.org/lvga.

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program

Mr. Assad announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a full schedule of classes coming up through August and into September. Anyone can sign up at lvpc.org/ltap or contact Brian Hite. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on August 25th. Mr. Glickman then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:
Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and
Julie Benco, Regional Planner