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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, June 23, 2022 Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, June 23, 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

Geoff Brace, Bob Elbich, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Christina Morgan, Kathy Rader and Stephen Repasch.

Northampton County

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

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Percy Dougherty, Michael Harakal, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Dennis Klusaritz, Owen O'Neil, Kevin Schmidt, Joshua Siegel, Matthew Tuerk and Irene Woodward.

Northampton County

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

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Teresa Mackey, Steve Neratko, Dean Severson and Brad Stewart.

Public Present: Jeff Ward.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were none.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Glickman summarized the LVPC Commissioner Retreat survey responses that were received. He also shared some background information on the National Association of Regional Councils and summarized the major themes of the 56th Annual Conference.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, May 26th, 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. Melnick seconded the motion. The motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: City of Allentown – Land Use of Regional Significance – Neuweiler Brewery Mixed Use

Mr. Neratko provided an overview of the project, which proposes the development and construction of 37,967 square feet of retail space and 306 apartments on a 3.8-acre parcel that was previously a vacant industrial building. Mr. Neratko noted that the site was previously the Neuweiler Brewery that has been vacant for many years and that the development consists of the demolition of most of the current structures on site. Mr. Neratko highlighted comments related to historical structures on the site, local cultural elements, bicycle racks, pedestrian access, a vegetated roof and street trees. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Molchany made the motion; Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Ms. Dreisbach commented on a minor textual edit to the letter. Mr. Melnick commented on the need for affordable housing within the region and the absence of affordable units in the project. Mr. Glickman asked if the project is pursuing historic tax credits on any parts of the project and staff responded. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Nazareth Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Severson provided an overview of the Draft Nazareth Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Severson noted that the plan strongly aligns with the goals and policies of *FutureLV*, which includes themes of balancing preservation and development, improving air and water quality, reducing development stress on existing utility infrastructure, and increasing the availability of housing. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Gallagher made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Ms. Lawless commented that Hanover Township, Northampton County was left out of the subject line on the letter. Mr. Amato asked if Northampton school districts were invited to participate in the plan. Ms. Bradley responded and discussed the planning efforts of current Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans in the region. Mr. Molchany asked about the advantages of creating Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans and Ms. Bradley explained the coordinated zoning advantages and capital improvement programming. Mr. Molchany emphasized that municipalities should join these multi-municipal planning efforts. Mr. Amato asked about the downsides to Multi-Municipal planning and Ms. Bradley responded. Motion passed.

Transportation Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Williams Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Mr. Stewart presented the proposed zoning ordinance amendment for electric vehicle charging stations in Williams Township. Mr. Stewart noted that the amendment proposes to permit Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in certain zoning districts and adds related definitions. These amendments align with the intent of *FutureLV* to 'advance autonomous and electric vehicle technologies' (of Policy 2.5) and 'promote best practices in land use regulation and efficiency' (of Policy 1.4). Mr. Stewart mentioned recommendations that include providing additional design standards and coordination with PennDOT on the implementation of electric vehicle infrastructure. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Herman made the motion; Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Ms. Lawless mentioned a related story that covered PennDOT's plan to implement electric vehicle charging stations on major interstates and desert areas that lack charging stations. Ms. Bradley mentioned the LVTS activities that are involved with electric vehicle charging stations. Mr. Glickman asked about the logistics of implementing charging stations at service stations and Ms. Bradley and Mr. Stewart responded on the trends of fueling stations. Mr. Glickman asked about the cost of charging at electric charging stations. Mr. Repasch commented on the availability of electric vehicle charging stations. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – Portion of 2nd Avenue – City of Bethlehem

Mr. Stewart presented the proposed street vacation petition for a Portion of 2nd Avenue in the City of Bethlehem. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Herman made the motion;

Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – 900 Block of N. Lumber Street and 900 Block of Refwal Street – City of Allentown

Mr. Stewart presented the proposed street vacation petition for 900 Block of N. Lumber Street and 900 Block of Refwal Street in the City of Allentown. Mr. Stewart recommended that, if the petition is granted, the existing cartway and stormwater inlet and infrastructure be maintained and that the stormwater inlets remain free and clear of any impediments to the designed capture of storm water that exists currently (Policy 3.2). 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.

Environment Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Draft Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation & Open Space Plan

Ms. Mackey presented the Draft Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation & Open Space Plan and noted that the Plan's goal is consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan's*, Policy 3.1 'Preserve the natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic assets' and Policy 5.3 'Improve access to green space'. She also offered recommendations on portions of the text and mapping. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: Join the Environment Committee!

Mr. Repasch made a request to the Commissioners that they join and attend the Environment Committee meetings and summarized the roles of the Environment Committee.

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 May, which included 21 Subdivisions, 29 Development proposals, 16 reviews for Stormwater Management, and two Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 68 reviews. The reviews included 650 housing units and 855,737 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Stewart provided the details of the May traffic counts. He also announced that PennDOT has completed and made operational a new Continuous Automatic Vehicle Classification (CAVC) traffic counter on Route 22 between Airport Road and the Lehigh River Bridge. Mr. Stewart presented the traffic count data for vehicles and trucks on this new Route 22 counter for the second half of May. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Glickman asked if the traffic counts accounted for both directions of traffic and Mr. Stewart responded that it accounted for both directions.

New Business:

INFORMATION ITEM: Workshop on Utility Scale Solar partnered with the Penn State Solar Team

Ms. Bradley 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. She 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.

Executive Director's Report:

INFORMATION ITEM: National Association of Regional Councils 2022 Achievement Award for Jobs and Housing Support Initiative

Ms. Bradley announced that the LVPC and Lehigh County were awarded the 2022 Achievement Award from the National Association of Regional Councils for the work on the jobs and housing balance assessment. The recognition was given specifically for the February 2021, Job and Housing analysis that identified the neighborhoods where families were most likely to struggle with job and housing loss during the COVID-19 Pandemic. She also announced that Lehigh County Executive Phillips Armstrong was re-elected to the NARC Board of Directors, representing Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and New York and that she was re-elected to NARC's Executive Directors Council, also representing Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and New York. Mr. Glickman congratulated Lehigh County and the LVPC staff on the award.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Tilghman Street Bridge Reopening

Mr. Assad provided an overview of the Tilghman Street Bridge Opening and Block Party that LVPC attended on May 26th. Mr. Assad informed that the event drew 1,700 people including LVTS Vice Chairman Mike Rebert, LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley, Mayor Matthew Tuerk, Representative Peter Schweyer and Senator Pat Browne. He mentioned that the LVPC/LVTS cube, which displayed data on the Transportation Improvement Program, Riverside Drive and *FutureLV*, was a popular attraction at the event.

INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Business Cycle column that was published in the Sunday, June 19th Morning Call. That column focused on how quickly electric cars are taking hold among investors and drivers, and detailed measures being taken right now by the state and power companies to get ready. He stated that the next column was scheduled to publish July 31, 2022 and will focus on the benefits of multi-municipal planning and what half of the region's municipalities are doing right now to find new efficiencies and better manage the development that is coming at them.

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 Department of Environmental Protection Energy Program Specialist, Colton Brown, and covered the growth in electric cars on the road, the charging station infrastructure being built, and how that effort is going to be greatly accelerated by the Federal Infrastructure Law. He stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, July 4 and will focus on Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Planning and the 31 communities that are joining forces right now and feature Brian Carl, Administrator of Weisenberg and Lowhill Townships and Chair of the Northern Lehigh Multi-Municipal Plan Steering Committee.

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 July 28th. 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