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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, May 26, 2022 Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, May 26, 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, Percy Dougherty, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Dennis Klusaritz, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore and Kathy Rader.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Liesel Dreisbach, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, Dan Engle, John Gallagher, Susan Lawless, William McGee, Stephen Melnick, Edward Nelson and Tara Zrinski.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Bob Elbich, Michael Harakal, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Christina Morgan, Owen O’Neil, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt, Joshua Siegel, Matthew Tuerk and Irene Woodward.

Northampton County

Jessica Cope, Darlene Heller, Carl Manges, Lamont McClure, John McGorry, Scott Minnich, Salvatore Panto, William Reynolds, Grace Smith, Tina Smith and Gerald Yob.

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Steve Neratko, Sue Rockwell and Brad Stewart.

Public Present: Toni Mitman and Jeff Ward.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were none.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Mr. Glickman summarized the LVPC Commissioner Retreat that occurred on Friday, May 20th and encouraged those that attended to fill out the survey. He also encouraged those that did not attend to review the packet of materials that was mailed to them.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, April 28th, 2022 LVPC meeting are attached, and he then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Dreisbach made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Brace seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Ms. Rader abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Lowhill Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Kernsville Road Industrial

Mr. Neratko provided an overview of the project, which proposes the development and construction of a 190,960-square-foot warehouse/distribution center on a 21.61-acre parcel that was previously farmland. Mr. Neratko noted that the applicant is proposing two other industrial projects within the vicinity and that the size of the proposed warehouse may be decreased to 100,570 square-feet. Mr. Neratko highlighted comments related to truck transportation and routing, onsite truck parking spaces, steep slopes, and landscaping. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty made the motion; Ms. Lawless seconded the motion. Ms. Rader commented on the movement of truck traffic from the warehouses and asked if the applicant had discussed with PennDOT or Upper Macungie Township on the truck traffic. Ms. Bradley answered. Mr. Amato asked about the signage and enforcement related to the direction of truck traffic on certain roads. Mr. Molchany also asked about the signage and details of the traffic study. Mr. Stewart and Ms. Bradley responded to their comments. Mr. Elliott asked about the meaning of language used in the letter and Mr. Neratko responded. Mr. Elliott also asked about the consistency of the project with *FutureLV* and the Northern Lehigh Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Bradley responded. Mr. Klusaritz and Mr. Molchany commented on the potential for truck traffic driving over a bridge within the vicinity of the proposal. Mr. Nelson asked about the zoning of the area and Ms. Bradley responded. Mr. Molchany asked to amend the letter to include the traffic comments mentioned. Ms. Rader specified the language that should be included in the letter to mention adjacent municipalities. Mr. Glickman commented on the potential for truck traffic concerns between the truck traffic and the school age center nearby to the property, as well as emissions impacts to adjacent properties. Mr. Molchany highlighted an area of the letter that discusses emissions. Ms. Mitman, a resident of the City of Easton, discussed her concerns over warehousing and quality of life issues in the region. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Melnick presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Ms. Moore made the motion; Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Environment Committee:

INFORMATION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Glickman presented the Environment Committee Summary Sheet, which included a solid waste permit renewal application in Lower Saucon Township. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Melnick made the motion; Ms. Zrinski seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Transportation Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – Utica Street – City of Allentown

Mr. Stewart presented the proposed street vacation petition for Utica Street in the City of Allentown, which is intended to be consolidated into The Waterfront development. Mr. Stewart recommended that, if the petition is granted, the City of Allentown study parking regulations on the short segment of remaining Utica Street to mitigate impacts or obstructions to the access of emergency response personnel and equipment to the residential properties of *FutureLV* Policy 2.2 and 5.1. 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.

ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – North Penn Street – City of Allentown

Mr. Stewart presented the proposed street vacation petition for North Penn Street in the City of Allentown. Mr. Stewart recommended that, if the petition is granted, the petitioner provide, maintain and improve full pedestrian access and maintain access to various infrastructure above and below ground to minimize

disruptions to utility service currently being provided. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Herman made the motion; Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed, with Mr. Brace abstaining.

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 April, which included 14 Subdivisions, 31 Development proposals, 15 reviews for Stormwater Management, and three Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 63 reviews. The reviews included 477 housing units and 4,750,896 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Molchany commented on the square footage of warehousing seen in the month of April and Mr. Glickman discussed his comment. Mr. Molchany asked if the Location of Development map on the BuildLV Subdivision and Land Development Monthly Report could be edited in the future to delineate between residential and non-residential development. Ms. Bradley responded that staff could meet that request.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Stewart provided the details of the April traffic counts that showed us at similar levels compared to April 2021 and in early March 2020 before the pandemic. Route 309 near Coopersburg had very similar numbers compared to April 2021 and before the pandemic in 2020. Trucks on Interstate 78 closed out April at 21,596 vehicles, which indicated a new normal with the influx of ecommerce and the private development of warehousing and logistics centers. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Executive Director's Report:

INFORMATION ITEM: Update on the Lehigh Valley's Industrial Market

Ms. Bradley presented an updated on the industrial market within the Lehigh Valley and surrounding regions. She discussed how the Lehigh Valley's inventory of industrial facilities compares to other regions, how the industrial market in 2022 compares to past years, industrial lease rates, vacancy rates, leasing activity by industry type and how the LVPC's work ties in with this data. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Melnick commented on the data related to institutional investors. Mr. Molchany asked about the difference in land availability in eastern Pennsylvania as opposed to central New Jersey and Ms. Bradley responded on rent prices and available land. Mr. Glickman discussed how the price of diesel will influence the markets to locate their facilities near other industrial markets.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Business Cycle column that was published in the Sunday, May 8th Morning Call. That column focused on what is in the TIP, how quickly the \$80 million from the Federal Infrastructure Law will be expended and why it's important that the urgency created by the Infrastructure Law become the new normal in making infrastructure investments a priority. He stated that the next column was scheduled to publish June 19, 2022 and it will focus on electric vehicles.

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 which covered the Transportation Improvement Program, and included an additional live 30-minute call-in show on the Transportation Improvement Program. He stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, June 6 and will focus on electric vehicles and feature Department of Environmental Protection Energy Program Specialist, Colton Brown.

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program

Mr. Assad announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a full schedule of classes coming up through May and into June. Anyone can sign up at lvpc.org/ltap or contact Brian Hite.

INFORMATION ITEM: Transformative Talks

Mr. Assad reminded the Commission that the Transformative Talk series is back. The first one of the year on coordinated zoning was on February 1st and the recording can be found on our website. He announced that two more were scheduled for 2022, including Zoning 101 – What Communities Need to Know on August 9th and Act 209 – Transportation Impact Fees on October 11th. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Ms. Mitman, a resident of the City of Easton, made a general comment for the Commission on a planning conference in October that could be useful to attend.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on June 23rd. 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