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**LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes from the Thursday, March 24, 2022 Meeting**

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, March 24, 2022. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 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, Christina Morgan, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch and Kevin Schmidt.

**Northampton County**

Christopher Amato, Jessica Cope, Liesel Dreisbach, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, Dan Engle, John Gallagher, Darlene Heller, Susan Lawless, Carl Manges, William McGee, John McGorry, Scott Minnich, Grace Smith, Tina Smith, Gerald Yob and Tara Zrinski.

**Members Absent:**

**Lehigh County**

Phillips Armstrong, Bob Elbich, Michael Harakal, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Joshua Siegel, Matthew Tuerk and Irene Woodward.

**Northampton County**

Lamont McClure, Stephen Melnick, Salvatore Panto and William Reynolds.

**Staff Present:** Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Paul Carafides, Hannah Milagio, Sue Rockwell, Dean Severson and Jill Seitz.

**Public Present:** Gary Asteak, John Bermingham, Samantha Burns, Charles Cole, Cori Eckman, April Fisher, Joe Guest, Judith Henckel, Monica Hodges, Diane Kelly, Regina Marinelli, Mark Mezger, Sandra Newman, Emily Oberg, Ben Schwartz, Fred Stine, Fran Visicaro, Jeff Ward, Faith Zerbe, 570-656-0932, 610-390-0337, 610-392-4142, 610-533-4750, 610-762-5885 and 717-991-6334.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

Mr. Amato shared sentiments regarding development and *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Glickman welcomed the newest members of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission staff, Hannah Milagio and Dean Severson. Ms. Milagio, Program Associate for Community Engagement, introduced herself and described her previous professional experience. Mr. Severson, Director of Regional Planning, also introduced himself and summarized his work in planning. Next, Mr. Asteak reminded the Commission of their role in reviewing Land Uses of Regional Significance, in which their comments should be professional, objective and constructive.

## **MINUTES**

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 LVPC meeting are attached, and he then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Morgan seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Ms. Lawless and Ms. Cope abstaining.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Environment Committee:**

#### ***INFORMATION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet***

Mr. Repasch presented the Environment Committee Summary Sheet and noted that Ms. Rockwell could answer any questions. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Mr. Amato asked about abstaining from motions and Mr. Glickman responded. Motion passed, with Ms. Rader abstaining.

### **Comprehensive Planning Committee:**

#### ***ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – RPL Subdivision & Roadway Infrastructure***

Ms. Seitz provided an overview of the project, which proposes the reconfiguration and subdivision of 25 lots totaling 804 acres of land, to create 12 individual building lots ranging in size from nine acres to 158 acres, four open space areas, an onsite walking trail and the development of internal roadways throughout the site. Ms. Seitz explained that a portion of the site is in the Preservation Buffer area of General Land Use Plan and may be able to accommodate development if the necessary transportation and utility infrastructure is available or planned to accommodate the scale of future development. Ms. Seitz highlighted comments related to the lot sizes, landscaping, multimodal transportation, the proposed River Pointe Drive and the proposed onsite walking trail. She outlined additional considerations regarding large-scale development impacts such as, the rail overpass over River Road, Interstate 80 access, environmental impacts and stormwater. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty made the motion; Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Mr. McGorry commented on the project. Mr. Molchany commented and asked questions regarding truck amenities, the rail overpass, greenfield development, any remediation efforts, any tax incentives involved and the public sewer opportunities. Ms. Seitz and Ms. Bradley responded. Ms. Bradley also reminded the Commission that this review was solely in regard to the subdivision and roadway infrastructure of the project. Mr. McGorry commented on the project and Mr. Glickman, Ms. Bradley and Mr. Molchany responded. Mr. Amato asked about the staff comment regarding lot sizes and emphasized issues surrounding air pollution. Mr. Glickman asked for any questions or comments from the public. Mr. Cole, a resident of Upper Mount Bethel Township, thanked the staff for their letter and commented regarding truck traffic and environmental impacts. Ms. Henckel also thanked the staff for their review and commented on farmland preservation and the overall project. Mr. Guest, a resident of Lower Mount Bethel Township, emphasized the impacts the project will have on surrounding municipalities and areas. Mr. Wilford Hunt, a resident of Upper Mount Bethel Township, asked about the zoning for certain parcels and commented on the combination of the preliminary and final review, as well as development on a greenfield. Ms. Visicaro commented on the air pollution and truck traffic near her residence. Mr. Stine, of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, thanked the Commission for their review letters and mentioned the impact of this project on the viewshed and natural area. Mr. Birmingham, a resident of Upper Mount Bethel Township, thanked the LVPC for their recommendations and discussed increases in truck traffic. Mr. Amato added a comment regarding funding and greenfield development. Motion passed, with Mr. Minnich abstaining.

#### ***ACTION ITEM: City of Easton – Land Use of Regional Significance – The Confluence***

Mr. Severson provided an overview of the project, which proposes the construction of a seven-floor, mixed-use apartment building consisting of a basement parking garage, apartment units, condominium units, retail space and commercial space. Mr. Severson offered several comments regarding multimodal transportation, landscaping and floodplain analysis. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff

comments. Ms. Dreisbach made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions and commented on the landscaping around the property. Motion passed.

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

Mr. Glickman presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Ms. Dreisbach made the motion; Mr. McGee seconded the motion. Motion passed, with Ms. Rader abstaining.

**Joint Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committees:**

***ACTION ITEM: Hanover Township, Lehigh County – Land Use of Regional Significance - LVIA - Runway 6-24 Rehabilitation Program***

Mr. Carafides provided an overview of the project, which proposes improvements to the existing runway 6/24 and associated taxiways within the Lehigh Valley International Airport facility. Mr. Carafides noted that the proposal generally exhibits consistency with *FutureLV: the Regional Plan* because it is located in the development area of the General Land Use Plan and serves to provide a safe well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently, while capitalizing on existing infrastructure. 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: Forks Township Land Use Assessment Review, as part of Township Act 209***

Mr. Carafides provided an overview of the Act 209 Land Use Assessment Review in Forks Township, which provides the basis for the preparation of a transportation impact fee program. Mr. Carafides highlighted several comments on the report. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Herman made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

**Transportation Committee:**

***ACTION ITEMS: Street Vacation – Pine Street from North Front Street to the East, City of Allentown***

Mr. Carafides presented the proposed street vacation petition for Pine Street from North Front Street to the East in the City of Allentown. Mr. Carafides recommended that, if the petition is granted, the City of Allentown and the petitioner provide continued access from North Front Street to the parking lot to provide continued access to utility companies and visitors. 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. There were none. Motion passed.

**Old Business:**

***INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports***

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

Ms. Bradley presented plan and review activity for February, which included 13 Subdivisions, 22 Development proposals, 14 reviews for Stormwater Management, and four Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 53 reviews. The reviews included 111 housing units and 1,135,502 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Glickman asked about the distinction between apartments and condominiums. Mr. Molchany commented on the need for housing in the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Bradley commented on the housing trends and issues in the region. Mr. Molchany asked about the data available on warehousing in the region and Ms. Bradley responded.

***Highway Traffic Monitoring***

Mr. Carafides provided the details of the February traffic counts with overall traffic almost back to the levels of where the reporting began in March 2020. Interstate 78 east of 309 closed out February with 21,136 trucks, an increase of 2,129 trucks from the beginning of March 2020. This increase of trucks

shows the impacts of industrial development as well as the shift to e-commerce purchases. February's traffic report looked a little different than the past reports due to the counter on Interstate 78 east of Route 33 being temporarily deactivated because of an equipment issue. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

#### **New Business:**

##### ***INFORMATION ITEM: LVPC Commissioner Retreat***

Mr. Glickman announced that a new Doodle Poll was being sent out for the LVPC Commission Retreat, in which the Commissioners and Staff will go over key documents and rolls of the Commission. The last poll did not have enough consensus so a new date will be chosen in May.

#### **Communications and Public Engagement:**

##### ***INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column***

Ms. Milagio summarized the next Business Cycle column that was scheduled to run in the Sunday, March 26th Morning Call. In the column, Becky Bradley uses the 2021 BuildLV Annual Development Report numbers to show the busiest housing development year since 2007 and provides good context for the monumental housing shortage we're in.

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

Ms. Milagio summarized the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley 30-minute radio show which took a deep dive into our overheated housing market. LVPC Senior Community Planner, Jill Seitz, joined Becky Bradley and Matt Assad in discussing the housing shortage that got us here and what's happening right now to get us out of this. Ms. Milagio informed that the 30-minute show is currently streaming at WDIY.org. She stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, April 4 and will be about the non-residential side of the BuildLV Development report.

##### ***INFORMATION ITEM: Grant Opportunities***

Ms. Milagio alerted the Commission to grant opportunities available, consisting of Northampton County Livable Landscapes grants, WalkWorks grants and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Multimodal grants.

##### ***INFORMATION ITEM: 2022 Lehigh Valley Government Academy***

Ms. Milagio reminded the Commission that the Lehigh Valley Government Academy Classes are back in 2022, including Zoning Administration on April 4, 11 & 18, Subdivision and Land Development on May 3, 10 & 17, Community Planning on September 7, 14 & 21 and Zoning on October 6, 13 & 20. Anyone can sign up online at [lvpc.org/lvga](http://lvpc.org/lvga).

##### ***INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program***

Ms. Milagio announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a full schedule of classes coming up through April and into May. Anyone can sign up at [lvpc.org/ltap](http://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 April 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Glickman then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Dougherty made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

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