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Executive Director

**LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, January 26, 2023 Meeting**

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, January 26, 2023. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on December 28, 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, Stephen Repasch and Kevin Schmidt.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Jessica Cope, Charles Elliott, John Gallagher, Rachel Leon, Carl Manges, William McGee, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Tina Smith, and Tara Zrinski.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Geoff Brace, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Owen O'Neil, David Petrik, Kathy Rader, Joshua Siegel and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Andrew Elliott, Dan Engle, Darlene Heller, Lamont McClure, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, and William Reynolds.

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Taylor Beasley, Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Joseph Dotta, Bambi Griffin-Rivera, Brian Hite, Steve Neratko, Patrick Osei, Jillian Seitz, and Dean Severson.

Public Present: Jeff Ward, Gary Asteak, Enrique Angelini, Karen Poshefko, Matt Menkowski, Deb Rosene, Jeff Kicska, Kerry Rabold, Kurt Bresswein, Eric Oehling, Peg Church, Tina Roseberry

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were none.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome New LVPC Commissioners

Mr. Glickman welcomed new members of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Rachel Leon, elected member from the City of Bethlehem and Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, citizen member from the City of Easton. Both members introduced themselves. The Chair also asked each member of the Commission to introduce themselves.

Introduction of LVPC Staff Members

Mr. Glickman welcomed new members of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission staff, Taylor Beasley, Graphic Designer and Publications Coordinator, and Joey Dotta, 2022-2023 Community Fellow from Lehigh University and asked them to introduce themselves.

Lehigh Valley Government Academy Ceremony

Mr. Glickman recognized the following participants who completed three of the PMPEI courses offered by the Lehigh Valley Government Academy:

Julie Benco, LVPC staff; Bryan Bilheimer, City of Bethlehem; Jonathan Bolton, Whitehall Township; Matthew Menkowski, Forks Township; and Scott Wilt, City of Allentown.

Mr. Glickman introduced Ms. Roseberry who presented the Outstanding Planning Education Achievement Award. This Award is presented to those who complete all four of the PMPEI courses offered by the Lehigh Valley Government Academy. The following participants were awarded the Achievement Award: Becky Bradley, AICP, LVPC staff; Peter Chase, Bethlehem Township; Brian Fenstermaker, Lower Nazareth Township; Jeff Kicksa, Palmer Township; Kerry Rabold, Salisbury Township, and Jill Seitz, LVPC staff.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, December 22, 2022 LVPC meeting are attached and Ms. Benco read the previously voted on agenda items. Mr. Glickman then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Zrinski made a motion to approve the minutes and Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed, with Mr. Elbich, Ms. Cope and Ms. Leon abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Upper Saucon Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Route 309 Commerce Center

Mr. Hite and Mr. Osei presented the review of the subject application, which is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Warehouse, Logistics and Storage Facilities, Freight Facility, and Local Freight generator category. This project involves the construction of three Truck or Motor Freight Terminals totaling 1,771,110 square feet.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Dougherty made the motion; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Glickman asked about LANTA connectivity on both sides of Route 309 and pedestrians crossing Route 309. Mr. Hite stated that LANTA made a strong recommendation that the entire intersection be studied for northbound and southbound stops along Route 309 and pedestrian crossings. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Plainfield Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Grand Central Landfill

Ms. Griffin-Rivera presented the review of the project, which proposes the subdivision of a 190-acre parcel to create a 22.8-acre parcel for the construction of a 92,000-square-foot recycling facility at 910 West Pennsylvania Ave. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Elbich made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Glickman presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which included a Comprehensive Plan for North Whitehall Township, Comprehensive Plan for South Whitehall Township, and six zoning ordinance amendments for Forks Township, Upper Milford Township, Catasauqua Borough, Lower Nazareth Township, Williams Township, and Lehigh Township. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Gallagher made the motion; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed with Mr. Klusaritz, Ms. Moore, and Ms. Morgan abstaining.

Environment Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Pen Argyl Borough – Stormwater Ordinance Update

Mr. Severson presented the review of the project, which revises several terms and regulations in the Borough's stormwater ordinance. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Melnick made the motion; Ms. Zrinski seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: North Whitehall Township- Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

Mr. Severson presented the review of the project, which is an update to the Township's *Joint Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* adopted in 2009. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Morgan made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Molchany asked if there were any specific identification of opportunities for farmland preservation in the Plan. Mr. Severson noted that farmland preservation was noted in the plan as part of open space. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed with Mr. Klusaritz abstaining.

INFORMATION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary

Mr. Repasch summarized the Environment Committee meeting, including two reviews of applications to renew approvals of existing wastewater treatment plant and discharge from Northampton Borough and Lower Nazareth Township. He also noted the presentation of the Lehigh County and Northampton County farmland preservation programs at the Environment Committee meeting.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Gallagher made the motion; Mr. Charles Elliott seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

Transportation Committee:

INFORMATION ITEM: Transportation Committee Summary

Mr. Herman summarized the Transportation Committee meeting. There were five information items presented. These included: 1. population and employment projections; 2. monthly traffic count report; 3. highway projects status updates; 4. The Long-Range Transportation Plan Update; and monthly status reports on the Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Analysis and the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance Freight Infrastructure Plan.

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 December, which included 6 Subdivisions, 33 Development proposals, 17 reviews for Stormwater Management, and five Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 61 reviews. The reviews included 677 housing units and 911,649 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Industrial Market Report

Mr. Dotta reported on the last eight quarters of the warehouse industrial market with data reported from CBRE Research. Mr. Molchany asked if the CBRE report broke down industrial development on greenfield sites versus redevelopment sites. Ms. Bradley responded that the vast majority of the development was on greenfield sites.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Hite provided the details of the December traffic counts. He presented the vehicle counts for State Route 33, Interstate-78, State Route 309 and State Route 22, as well as the truck counts for Interstate-78 and State Route 22. Mr. Hite noted that significant drop in truck traffic in some areas may reflect stores stocking up on holidays in September and October and less after that. There were also a number of days with subzero temperatures and travel advisories reducing goods movement. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

New Business:

INFORMATION ITEM: Greenhouse Gas Inventory Assessment

Ms. Benco reported on the Lehigh Valley Greenhouse Gas Assessment. A regional greenhouse gas inventory was developed that estimated emissions within Lehigh and Northampton counties for the baseline year of 2019. The first step toward tackling climate change requires identifying baseline emissions levels, and sources and activities that generate emissions in the community.

The Inventory results provide information that is key to guiding regional and local reduction efforts and provide a baseline against which the region will be able to compare and demonstrate progress in reducing emissions. The results of the Regional Inventory and the forecast indicate that an effective plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would need to give priority to industrial electricity and gas uses.

The Lehigh Valley Climate Action Plan will establish emission reduction targets for the region and include an assessment of the region's vulnerabilities to climate change that will identify assets or resources that may be most at risk in the Lehigh Valley.

Mr. Molchany asked if there was, in regard to climate actions required at the local level, anything analogous to the Act 167 stormwater management plan requirements for local units of government. Ms. Bradley stated that we are getting close to a global Act 167 plan for all of the region's watersheds and that green infrastructure requirements will be added to the stormwater ordinances. She also added that with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act there are provisions that support transportation planning and climate change provisions.

Ms. Poshefko asked if recommendations of the International Climate Panel were included and also asked if climate sequestration was looked at. Ms. Bradley noted that the LVPC has looked at climate sequestration and tree cover in our planning efforts. Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen asked about using 2019 as a baseline year due to the irregularities of data from COVID-19, and if emissions of industrial uses can also be broken down by warehouse use. Ms. Bradley stated that 2019 was used as the baseline year because that was the year used in the ICLEI model. She also stated that greater detail will be available for the industrial development in the Annual Report next month and through the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance Freight Infrastructure Plan the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study is working on. Individual monitoring of sites is not part of this project as the project is regional.

INFORMATION ITEM: Annual Website Activity report

Ms. Beasley presented an annual website activity report. The biggest driver to our website is DataLV, with over 9,400 pages viewed. Other major drivers include the staff page, with more than 4,000 views. That's where most people find contact information to reach our office. The meetings page also got more than 3,500 views, likely from people accessing the virtual meetings link or the commission agenda and packets.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Business Cycle column that was published in the Sunday, January 15 Morning Call. That column focuses on the unique feeling of fulfillment of moving into a new home, or even apartment and why that's become so difficult for many in the Lehigh Valley and what we plan to do about it in 2023.

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 aired on January 2 and again January 9 on WDIY and focused on the evolving housing market.

Joining Ms. Bradley and Mr. Assad were LVPC Senior Planner, Jill Seitz and Lehigh Valley Realtors CEO, Justin Porembo. Mr. Porembo offered his expertise on a housing sales environment that still has high demand, but after two years of what was decidedly a seller's market, is swinging back toward the buyer again. Ms. Seitz offered the flip side of that, in using data to show that a lingering housing shortage and inflation are making it more and more difficult for people to afford a home here.

Mr. Assad stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, February 6 and will look at our 30-year population and employment projections with LVPC Economist and Data Scientist David Jan.

INFORMATION ITEM: PADEP Driving PA Forward Electric Truck Grants

Mr. Assad noted time is running out to get in on the \$12.7 million the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is giving in grants for municipalities and non-profits to replace aging fleets of diesel-powered medium- and heavy-duty local freight trucks with new zero emission trucks.

INFORMATION ITEM: PA Build a Better Mousetrap Competition

Mr. Hite alerted our municipal partners that the LTAP Build a Better Mousetrap Competition is ready to take entries. This is an opportunity for the Lehigh Valley Public works crews to show how creative they can be using normal stuff around the shops to build an innovative gadget for use out in the community they serve. LTAP is looking for items that municipal employees or road crews designed and built. Public works or administrators can nominate their projects by visiting PennDOT's LTAP website and look under the news section for the application. Entries are due by Friday March 3.

INFORMATION ITEM: PMPEI Building a Strong Planning Commission

Mr. Assad announced that on March 30th from 6:30-8PM the public has the opportunity to participate in a 101 on planning commissions. It's being taught by our own, Becky Bradley and Stan Lehmbeck. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Programs

Mr. Hite announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a full schedule of classes coming up January through May. 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 February 21 at 7pm. 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
Dean Severson, AICP, Director of Regional Planning