

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

April 6, 2022 – 7 PM, Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor:

East Bangor: Jason Huggan, Susan Ruggiero

Lower Mount Bethel: Jennifer Smethers, Sandra Newman, Susan Disidore

Pen Argyl: Robin Zmoda

Plainfield: Terry Kleintop

Portland: Lance Prator, Stephanie Steele

Roseto: Carl Renna

Upper Mount Bethel: David Friedman

Washington:

Wind Gap: Louise Firestone

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Judith Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel

Charles Cole – Upper Mount Bethel

Roy Bellis – Plainfield

Mille Beahn – Plainfield

Jane Mellert – Plainfield

Heather Fischer – Portland

Wesley Smith – Wind Gap

Planning Partners in Attendance:

Becky Bradley – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Dean Severson – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Sue Rockwell – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Brad Stewart – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Roll Call

Ms. Rockwell called roll. All municipalities were in attendance except Bangor Borough and Washington Township.

Mr. Severson and Mr. Stewart introduced themselves to the committee.

Minutes from the March 2, 2022 Meeting

Ms. Smethers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the March 2, 2022 meeting. Mr. Prator made the motion, and Mr. Renna seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Mr. Friedman abstaining.

Old Business

1. Draft Goals, Policies and Actions Follow-up

Ms. Bradley thanked everyone that submitted comments. Anyone who did not provide comments should submit them by April 13, 2022.

2. Plan Maps: Natural Resources Plan; Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan; and Farmland Preservation Plan Follow-up

Ms. Bradley said comments on the three maps are due by April 13, 2022.

New Business

1. Plan Map Discussion

Mr. Stewart displayed the draft Centers and Corridors Map. He said the purpose of the map is to link land use and transportation. There are two components to the map: Place Type (centers) and road type (corridors). An accompanying chart to the map provides a description of the place and road types. It also includes attributes for each type. To create the map, he used current zoning and aerial imagery. For the corridors, he considered existing PennDOT crash data, count data and existing land use in the area. Mr. Stewart provided examples to explain the map. Proposed development was also considered in development of the map. Place types are not based on zoning but on broader uses. He requested comments on the map by April 13th to help inform the Future Land Use Plan.

Mr. Kleintop asked how the RPL development was handled. Mr. Severson said we were not sure what was actually going to go there and hope to get input from the committee on that. Ms. Steele asked about the Route 611 corridor. Ms. Bradley said it changes character as it goes through the Slate Belt. Mr. Prator said it will be ruined by all the trucks. Mr. Stewart said we need their feedback on how they view all these places. Mr. Kleintop noted that PennDOT count and crash data was used in development of the map. He said it has been their experience that PennDOT does not know what data is being used by developers. PennDOT is only as good as the data they receive from the applicant. Plainfield, Pen Argyl and Wind Gap provided PennDOT with a list of intersections that will be affected by CRG Management/Jaindl Land Companies project.

Mr. Prator asked if they should look at the map as of today or what we think it will look like in ten years. Ms. Bradley said it should be in ten years. Mr. Severson said this is an opportunity to show what you want for your community. Ms. Newman said planning isn't going to keep trucks off the roads. They can't do anything about it. Ms. Zmoda said PennDOT is not listening. Ms. Henckel said instead of giving in, show what we want to be. Mr. Cole talked about the RPL Traffic Impact Study that shows 4,000 passenger cars going through Portland, and of the 3,000 trucks, 15% will be going down Route 611 to Tatamy. Mr. Prator said no truck traffic is allowed on Route 191 coming down from the Kittatinny Ridge, but they do anyway. He said everyone needs to meet in person and talk things out. Ms. Bradley said we currently bring everybody together that is involved with big projects we receive for review, such as RPL. A question was asked about possible assistance from Northampton County. Ms. Bradley said she isn't sure what Northampton County can do about any of this. They have no legal authority. Municipalities need to negotiate with the developer. The area is zoned industrial; the development can't be stopped. Mr. Friedman said all authority has been taken away from them at the Township. Ms. Bradley said they should look at this as an opportunity to collaborate. You can develop tools to manage development. Mr. Kleintop said County Council could decide not to fund their part of LERTA. Ms. Bradley said that is a Council decision.

Next Steps

Mr. Severson asked municipalities to let us know if they want any actions brought forth from their current comprehensive plans. He said the draft Future Land Use Plan will be presented at the May 4th meeting. After that, we will have a draft plan document for review in the summer and anticipate adoption by late summer/early fall.

Courtesy of the Floor

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion
 - Known Plan Activity in Slate Belt Communities

Ms. Rockwell reviewed the three projects for March 2022.

2. Municipal Update

This portion of the agenda was added as suggested by the steering committee as an opportunity for each municipality to inform committee members on the activities occurring within their community. Several municipalities noted they were applying for or received grant funding for various municipal projects. Several are working on ordinances, including zoning and warehouse ordinances. One community discussed a severely deficient bridge they own. They missed putting it on the Transportation Improvement Program and are trying to find support for repairing the bridge.

Adjourn

Ms. Smethers called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Zmoda made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Prator seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Attachments

- March 2, 2022 Steering Committee Minutes
- Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log (March 2022)

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.