

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

May 4, 2022 – 7 PM, Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor:	Steve Reider, James Kresge
East Bangor:	Jason Huggan
Lower Mount Bethel:	Jen Smethers, Susan Disidore
Pen Argyl:	Janell Connolly
Plainfield:	Tom Petrucci, Steve Hurni, Terry Kleintop
Portland:	Lance Prator, Stephanie Steele
Roseto:	Carl Renna
Upper Mount Bethel:	David Friedman
Washington:	Justin Huratiak
Wind Gap:	George Hinton

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Judith Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel
Charles Cole – Upper Mount Bethel
Jane Mellert – Plainfield

Planning Partners in Attendance:

Geoff Reese – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Sue Rockwell – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Teresa Mackey – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Steve Neratko – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Mark Hartney – Northampton County

Roll Call

Ms. Rockwell called roll. All municipalities were in attendance.

Mr. Neratko introduced himself to the committee.

Minutes from the April 6, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Petrucci asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 6, 2022 meeting. Mr. Friedman made the motion, and Mr. Renna seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Plan Map Discussion – Future Land Use Plan

Mr. Reese began the presentation, noting that the four maps provided and discussed at previous meetings are the building blocks of the Future Land Use Plan. A brief overview of how each of the four maps was created and how they can be used was provided by Ms. Mackey and Mr. Reese.

Mr. Kleintop asked about his question from a previous meeting about how erosion issues on farmland are handled. Mr. Reese said, according to Jim Lawrence at the Northampton County Conservation District (NCCD), if a farm is preserved under the county program, inspections are performed by the farmland preservation staff. The staff will refer any erosion issues to the NCCD

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for follow up. There are no regular inspections of non-preserved farms. Any involvement by the NCCD would be on a complaint basis only.

Mr. Reese presented the draft Future Land Use Plan. Each community was provided an individual municipal map as well as the Slate Belt Future Land Use Plan. He said the map definitions are tied to the goals, policies and actions. He noted that the map includes data from the “Where do you wish to grow?” maps provided by the municipalities. Mr. Friedman asked how he can explain what “Character defining” means to his township. Mr. Reese said it is a generalization of the Natural Resources Plan.

Mr. Reese explained that the dark gray areas are designated for Development to be served by public sewer and water. The Farmland Preservation areas are those designated as high preservation priority from the Farmland Preservation map. Other areas could be preserved if desired. Exurban areas are designated for low density development. The urban versus preservation buffer area designation relied on proximity to existing development and sewers that can be extended ¼ mile. Preservation buffers could be vacant or farmland. There is an opportunity to stay farmland or be developed. Mr. Reese discussed the Development Criteria to be used in these instances.

Mr. Huratiak suggested separating farms that are preserved with a different shade of green. Mr. Reese said the Farmland Preservation map would probably be the best place to show that information. Mr. Prator asked why the RPL site is shown as Development since the site doesn't meet the Development Criteria. Mr. Reese said that is why we are having this conversation. Currently, we know development will occur on that site.

Mr. Petrucci asked if there is anything we can do from a planning perspective to help with the problem of costs to develop a single-family dwelling. Mr. Hartney said they can make the process easier if the development occurs where the map recommends it. Ms. Connolly said they could fast-track the development process if it follows the plan. Mr. Huratiak said we need consistency/simplicity in the regulations. There is so much red tape, which becomes very costly.

Mr. Reese said comments on all the maps are due by May 31. Mr. Petrucci said some municipalities won't meet until the beginning of the month. Mr. Reese said to provide comments by the beginning of June. He noted that there will be additional opportunities to comment later.

Next Steps

Mr. Petrucci noted that the next steps are to incorporate comments received on all five maps and the completion of a draft plan later this summer.

Courtesy of the Floor

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion

- Known Plan Activity in Slate Belt Communities

Ms. Rockwell reviewed the projects for April 2022.

2. Municipal Update

No comments were provided.

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Adjourn

Mr. Petrucci called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kresge made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Prator seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Attachments

- April 6, 2022 Steering Committee Minutes
- Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log (April 2022)

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.