



## Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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Vice Chair

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Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP  
Executive Director

### LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

#### Minutes from the Thursday, June 27, 2019 Meeting

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Thursday, June 27, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's conference room located at 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA.

Mr. Repasch chaired the meeting.

Ms. Vazquez took Roll Call.

#### Members in Attendance:

##### Lehigh County

Steven Glickman, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt, Leonard Lightner, and Donna Wright

##### Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Janell Connolly, Malissa Davis, Liesel Dreisbach, Charles Elliott, Susan Lawless, Robert Lammi, William McGee, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, David O'Connell, Pamela Pearson, Spirit Rutzler, Tina Smith, Gerald Yob, and Greg Zebrowski

#### Members Absent:

##### Lehigh County

Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Mike Gibson, Julio Guridy, Miriam Huertas, Owen O'Neil, Marty Nothstein, and Kathy Rader

##### Northampton County

Darlene Heller, Kevin Lott, and Carl Manges

**Staff Present:** Becky Bradley, Bethany Vazquez, Tracy Oscavich, Charles Doyle, Geoff Reese, Matt Assad, Peter Barnard, and John von Kerczek

**Public Present:** Emily Opilo, Steve Althouse, Michael Stadulis, and Christine Weaver

#### COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

#### MINUTES

Mr. Repasch stated that the minutes of the May 28, 2019 LVPC meeting are attached. Mr. Lammi made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Pearson seconded the motion. With Mr. Molchany abstaining from the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### *1. New LVPC Commissioner*

Mr. Repasch notes that Mr. Carl Manges, alternate for Mayor Panto in the City of Easton, will be joining the Commission.

### *2. Commissioner Leaving: Christine Weaver, Catasauqua Borough*

Mr. Repasch informs the Commission that Ms. Weaver will be stepping down. Mr. Repasch thanks Ms. Weaver for her service on the Commission and presents her with a thank gift.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Comprehensive Planning Committee**

#### *1. Lehigh Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Lehigh Valley Resort + Spa*

Mr. Barnard presented the Lehigh Township Land Use of Regional Significance. The subject application proposed the adaptive reuse and development of the Mary Immaculate Seminary property for a resort complex. Mr. Barnard reviewed the details of the letter including LVPC comments and recommendations. The LVPC recognized that the project meets many of the goals of the County Comprehensive Plan, however, the proposed project is in an area designated for Rural Development that does not currently have public sewer or water service. Extension of these systems to serve these properties puts adjacent rural and agricultural areas at risk for higher intensity development, and is not consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the presented staff comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### *2. Allen Township – Zoning Ordinance Challenge/Curative Amendment*

Mr. Barnard presented the zoning ordinance challenge and curative amendments for Allen Township. The applicant has submitted a challenge and three curative amendments for an approximately 211.5-acre property located west of Willowbrook Road and south of West Bullshed Road. The challenge and amendments propose rezoning the property to a mix of R-1, R-2, and R-3, to allow the maximum number of townhouse units per structure to be eight, and amend both section 252-406.K of the municipal Subdivision and Land Use Development Ordinance and Chapter 22 of the municipal zoning ordinance to ensure consistency of language with respect to residential road widths. Mr. Barnard reviewed the challenge and curative amendments in detail with the Commission, as well as the related LVPC recommendations. The LVPC reviewed the challenge and amendments against the County Comprehensive Plan, and other pertinent documents, and have concluded it appears the first two curative amendments may not have merit, the third curative amendment may have merit, and that the proposed mix of development types is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The decision whether to up-zone the property is a matter of local concern. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Rutzler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### *3. East Allen Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Challenge to Zoning Ordinance and Curative Amendment*

Mr. Barnard presented the challenge to zoning ordinance and curative amendment for East Allen Township. The applicant has submitted a challenge and request for a curative amendment for properties located west of Weaversville Road and east of the FedEx facility in Allen Township. The challenge consists of four counts: de jure exclusionary zoning, de facto exclusionary zoning, arbitrary zoning, and bad faith. The challenge requests a curative amendment to change the

zoning from Agricultural (AG) to Light Industrial/Business Park (LIBP), and add logistics Center as a defined use to the municipal zoning ordinance. Mr. Barnard reviewed the challenge and curative amendment in more detail with the Commission, as well as reviewed LVPC recommendations and comments. After reviewing the documents, it appears that the first three counts do not have merit – potentially negating the need for a curative amendment. The LVPC has no direct knowledge of the fourth count and has chosen not to comment. However, if the municipality chooses to move forward with rezoning the property, the LVPC finds that the proposed land use is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Ms. Dreisbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. *Lower Macungie Township – Zoning Ordinance Comprehensive Update*

Mr. Barnard presented the zoning ordinance comprehensive update for Lower Macungie Township. The proposed revision is generally consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan, and substantially advances several County Comprehensive Plan goals and policies related to farmland preservation, multimodal mobility, housing variety and accessibility, high-quality community design, conservation design, and open space preservation. Mr. Barnard reviewed the LVPC comments, recommendations, and commendations in detail with the Commission. A main area of inconsistency was related to residential densities below those recommended in the County Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the presented staff comments. Mr. Lammi seconded. The motion passes unanimously.

5. *Lower Macungie Township – Official Map*

Mr. Barnard presented the Lower Macungie Township Official Map Amendment. The proposed amendments to the Official Map are being made to depict modifications to future road extensions, additional preserved farms and additions to open space and the existing agricultural security area. These amendments are consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan and the Southwest Lehigh County Comprehensive Plan. Several of the changes are related to the Weiner Farm Subdivision, a 191-acre property that has been subdivided to create seven separate non-building lots for agricultural preservation, recreation and environmental protection, and one building lot. While the County Comprehensive Plan discourages agricultural preservation in areas designated for Urban Development, the LVPC recognizes the recreational and environmental benefits the particular subdivision will provide the community. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the staff comments. Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. *Project Review, Summary Sheet*

Mr. Barnard presented the Comprehensive Committee Project Review Summary Sheet. Five items were reviewed in the Comprehensive Committee Project Summary Sheet. All are either consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan or matters of local concern. Ms. Wright made a motion to approve the comments as presented in the summary sheet. Ms. Lightner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Environment Committee**

With Ms. Weaver leaving the Commission, Mr. Repasch announced that Mr. Lammi will serve as interim Environment Committee Chair for the Commission.

1. *Project Update + Build Grant: Closing the Delaware + Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Gap*

Mr. Reese and Ms. Oscavich presented information on the BUILD Grant application for Riverside Drive. Mr. Reese began by providing the Committee with a brief background of the project's master plan as well as reviewed the vision for the closure of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor between Allentown and Whitehall/Northampton generally. Proposed renderings of locations along the trail were also shared with the Committee. PennPraxis is the consultant on the project. Mr. Reese also reviewed the catalytic mobility network concept diagram. Ms. Oscavich reviewed the purpose of the United States Department of Transportation Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant as well as the grant's importance to projects. Criteria for receiving the grant was shared with the Committee along with a set of goals that grant recipients are expected to meet with their projects. Ms. Oscavich shared some logistical information with the Committee such as timeline, location of the proposed project, and financial information as it pertained to the project and grant. The Committee was encouraged to spread the word and raise awareness to the importance of receiving the BUILD Grant and the gap that needs to be closed on the D+L Trail.

## **Transportation Committee**

### *1. Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan*

Mr. Reese gave a summary of the Walk/RollLV Launch Event that took place in the City of Bethlehem on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and shared a news coverage clip from PBS 39 regarding the Walk/RollLV Launch. Ms. Bradley and Mr. Repasch also shared highlights from the event with the Committee. The next Multimodal Working Group meeting will be June 26<sup>th</sup> at America on Wheels beginning at 3:00 pm.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *1. FutureLV*

Mr. Reese and Mr. Doyle presented information on the FutureLV: The Regional Plan. The draft maps for Natural Resources, Farmland Preservation, Open Space, Centers and Corridors, and General Land Use were reviewed with the Committees. Ms. Bradley reviewed the draft goals, policies, and actions with the Committees and reminded the group that comments on the draft are due by Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup> to Carol Halper. A timeline of the plan was also shared with the Committees.

- a. Working Group Meeting:* The next FutureLV Working Group Meeting will take place on July 15, 2019 at the LVPC office from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *1. LVPC Gala + 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Lehigh Valley Awards*

Ms. Oscavich presented the updated 2019 LVPC Gala + Awards Nomination packet to the Commission. Guidelines for nominations as well as sponsorship levels were also shared. The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual LVPC Gala + Awards will be held on October 16<sup>th</sup> at DeSales University. Networking begins at 4:00 pm and the program + dinner will begin at 5:00 pm.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### *1. Morning Call: How to Support Farms Column*

Mr. Assad shared a Morning Call article with the Commission written by Executive Director Becky Bradley that spoke on the importance of supporting farms and agriculture.

2. *WGPA Radio Show: Closing the D+L Trail Gap + Walk/Roll LV*

Mr. Assad shared with the Commission that on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 am, Ms. Oscavich and Mr. Reese will be going on WGPA Sunny 1100 AM to discuss the D+L Trail Gap and Walk/RollLV. Listeners can tune in at WGPA Sunny 1100 AM or online at Sunny1100.com

3. *2020 Census Proclamation*

Ms. Bradley gave a brief summary of the 2020 Census Proclamation received by Lehigh County Executive, Phillips Armstrong.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. *Monthly BuildLV: Subdivision and Land Development Report*

Ms. Bradley presented information on the May Monthly BuildLV: Subdivision and Land Development Report. The report will be distributed publically around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and is available at lvpc.org.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS TO ATTEND THE FOLLOWING WERE MADE:**

1. *Planning + Pizza @ LVPC Office, 12:00 – 1:00 pm*

The next P+P sessions will be held on July 31<sup>st</sup> discussing the topic of Freight.

2. *Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) @ LVPC Office*

The upcoming LTAP class will be and ADA Transition Plans + Self Evaluations, August 6<sup>th</sup> (8:00 am – 12:00 pm)

3. *Freight Advisory Meeting*

The LVPC Freight Advisory Meeting will be held at the LVPC office on August 7<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00 am.

## **Adjournment**

With no further business, Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director  
Bethany Vazquez, Program Associate