



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes from Thursday, January 23, 2025, Virtual Meeting

The LVPC held a public meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2025. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on January 8th, 2025.

LVPC Chair Dr. Chris Amato chaired the meeting.

Mr. Joey Dotta took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Ron Beitler, Michael Drabenstott, Bob Elbich, Sunny Ghai, Philip Ginder, Steve Glickman, Jennifer Gomez, Kent Herman, John Inglis, Diane Kelly, Dennis Klusaritz, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Santo Napoli, Owen O'Neil and Stephen Repasch.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, John Gallagher, Judith Haldeman, Darlene Heller, Carl Manges, John McGorry, Steve Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen and Tina Smith.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Percy Dougherty, Kevin Schmidt and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Jessica Cope, Ken Kraft, Rachel Leon, Lamont McClure, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, Jr., J. William Reynolds, Grace Crampsie Smith and Jean Versteeg.

Staff Present: Joey Dotta, Jill Seitz, Scott Greenly, Becky Bradley, Corinne Ruggiero, Subham Kharel, Faria Army, Christian Martinez, Susan Myerov, Brian Hite and Matt Assad

Public Present:

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Amato introduced two new members of the LVPC staff, Dr. Subham Kharel and Faria Army. Both gave a brief overview of their background and LVPC projects they are looking forward to contributing to in their role.

Chair Amato recognized the individuals who completed the required hours of training to receive the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) award for Certified Citizen Planner. Three individuals were recognized for their achievements in earning the Outstanding Planning Education Achievement Award.

Chair Amato honored long-time City of Bethlehem Planning Director and LVPC Commissioner Darlene Heller, whose retirement was scheduled for January 31. Several Commissioners spoke kind words and congratulated Ms. Heller on her regional impact.

MINUTES

Chair Amato stated that the minutes of the Thursday, December 19, 2024, LVPC meeting are in the meeting packet. Chair Amato asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Glickman made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Elbich seconded the motion.

Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed. Commissioners Kelly, Klusaritz and Charles Elliott abstained.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy

Ms. Seitz shared details about the upcoming Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy that will be released. The event will be a part of a three-part series with key stakeholders to address housing shortages across the Lehigh Valley.

Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. Commissioner Melnick asked about the effects on the local market, and it was discussed how the strategy can be used by municipalities as an informational tool.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Melnick briefed the Commission on the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet that featured four zoning ordinance and map amendments reviews. There were zoning map amendments in Bethlehem and Hanover Townships, a zoning ordinance amendment in Whitehall Township and a zoning ordinance and map update in Alburtis Borough.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Morgan made the motion, and Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Amato called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

INFORMATION ITEM: Greater Lehigh Valley Regional Climate Action Overview

Ms. Myerov gave a brief synopsis of the ongoing Greater Lehigh Valley Regional Climate Action Plan. The Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG), a program funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), features four main parts. The third component of the series is in the works currently. The purpose of the plans and featured findings were shared.

Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There was brief discussion about the federal funding freeze and it was emphasized that the LVPC would monitor the situation and report if anything drastically changes with the 2025 workplan.

ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet

Commissioner Repasch briefed the Commission on Environment Committee's business that included two Delaware River Basin Commission items involving wastewater treatment plant and discharge renewals in Lehigh Township and North Whitehall Township. There was one Agricultural Security Addition reviewed for Lower Nazareth Township.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Molchany made the motion, and Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Amato called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed. Commissioner Klusaritz abstained from the item for North Whitehall Township.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Transportation Committee Chair Herman briefed that the Transportation Committee was cancelled in January but encourages increased attendance going forward. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

OLD BUSINESS:

PRESENTATION ITEM: Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinances/Plans Report

Mr. Dotta reviewed development review data for the month of December. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

PRESENTATION ITEM: 4th Quarter Traffic Monitoring Report

Mr. Hite reviewed the traffic count numbers tabulated by the LVPC during the fourth quarter of 2024. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

PACKET ITEM: Monthly Traffic Monitoring Report

Chair Amato notified the Commission that the monthly traffic monitoring report is in their packets. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

PRESENTATION ITEM: Training - The Role of LVPC Commissioners

Ms. Bradley gave an overview of the LVPC's functions and legal authority under the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code. Ms. Seitz gave information about the Community Planning team's responsibility and objectives during the land development review process. Mr. Dotta briefed the Commission on their roles relating to the letters and reiterated the importance of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. Commissioner Molchany asked for the Commission to be sent a copy of the training slides and LVPC staff confirmed it would be done.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MANAGING EDITOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Bradley and Mr. Assad gave an overview of the latest Morning Call column which talked about the Regional Watershed Management Plan, the Greater Lehigh Valley Regional Climate Action Plan, a focus on the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) Bus Rapid Transit, and the previously presented on Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Chair Amato notified the Commission that items for communications and public engagement are featured in the meeting packet. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Amato stated that the next LVPC meeting will be on Thursday, February 27 at 7 pm. Chair Amato then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Molchany made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and Joey Dotta, Regional Planner