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Vice Chair

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Treasurer

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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes from the Thursday, August 28, 2025, Meeting

The LVPC held a public meeting on Thursday, August 28, 2025. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on January 8th, 2025.

LVPC Vice Chair Tori Morgan chaired the meeting.

Mr. Joey Dotta took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Michael Drabenstott, Bob Elbich, Sunny Ghai, Philip Ginder, Steve Glickman, Jennifer Gomez, Kent Herman, John Inglis, Diane Kelly, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Santo Napoli, Owen O'Neil, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt

Northampton County

Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, John Gallagher, Judith Haldeman, John McGorry, Steve Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Crystal Rose, Tina Smith, Jean Versteeg and Basel Yandem

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Ron Beitler, Percy Dougherty, Dennis Klusaritz and Matthew Tuerk

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Jessica Cope, Ken Kraft, Rachel Leon, Carl Manges, Lamont McClure, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, Jr. and J. William Reynolds

Staff Present: Becky A. Bradley, David Cohen, Joey Dotta, Jillian Seitz, Matt Assad, Susan Myerov, Christian Martinez, Corinne Ruggiero, Mackenzie Geisner, Subham Kharel, Clay Karnis and Faria Urmy

Public Present: Amy Unger, Phil Gianfarco, Craig Beavers, Mike Siegel, David Brooman, David Manhardt and Melissa Velez

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

CHAIR'S REPORT

Vice Chair Morgan welcomed Clay Karnis, GIS Planner, to the LVPC. Mr. Karnis introduced himself and gave background on his education and work experience.

MINUTES

Vice Chair Morgan stated that the minutes of the Thursday, July 24, 2025, LVPC meeting are attached. Vice Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Repasch made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Molchany seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed. Commissioners Drabenstott, Glickman, Kelly, Gallagher, and Haldeman abstained.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Hanover Township (LC) – Land Use of Regional Significance – Lehigh Valley International Airport Runway 6-24 Rehabilitation Program

Mr. Dotta presented a proposal to improve the existing runway and associated taxiways at the Lehigh Valley International Airport (LVIA) facility at 3311 Airport Road. Proposed is the construction of new Taxiway D and a new cargo apron with the addition of two stormwater infiltration beds. The proposal supports interregional transportation services and the expansion of local business operations that diversify the regional economy and strengthen economic resilience.

Vice Chair Morgan called for a motion to accept the staff review. Commissioner Elbich made the motion, and Commissioner Ghai seconded the motion. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions.

Commissioner Versteeg requested a copy of the submitted site plan and Ms. Bradley said the LVPC would send it.

Vice Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed. Commissioner Versteeg abstained.

ACTION ITEM: Whitehall Township and City of Allentown – Land Use of Regional Significance – Riverside Drive Revised Plan

Ms. Seitz presented a revised proposal to construct a new local road and multi-use trail in Whitehall Township and City of Allentown. The staff review noted the project's support of *FutureLV* by expanding multimodal transportation options, improving mobility and supporting emergency response. Ms. Seitz discussed revisions to the plan, including the straightening and reconfiguration of the Wood Avenue access to the Riverside Drive, addition of speed humps, and inclusion of bus stop landing pad.

Vice Chair Morgan called for a motion to accept the staff review. Commissioner Ghai made the motion, and Commissioner Melnick seconded the motion. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions.

Vice Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed. Commissioners Ginder and Gomez abstained.

ACTION ITEM: City of Bethlehem – Land Use of Regional Significance – Commonwealth Charter Academy Cyber School

Mr. Dotta presented a proposal for the conversion of a 46,670-square-foot building into office space for teachers and staff of a cyber charter school at 2200 West Broad Street. Proposed is parking improvements, a full interior renovation and structural repairs to the exterior. The existing building is proposed to remain. The redevelopment proposal serves to 'expand access to education and job training' and invests in schools located along corridors, and the staff review recommends that educational institutions incorporate environmentally sensitive building and landscape design.

Vice Chair Morgan called for a motion to accept the staff review. Commissioner Elbich made the motion, and Commissioner Ghai seconded the motion. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions.

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

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Melnick briefed the Commission on the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet that featured a comprehensive zoning ordinance update and a comprehensive subdivision and land development ordinance update from the City of Allentown, a zoning ordinance amendment from South Whitehall Township, a zoning map amendment from Macungie Borough, a zoning ordinance amendment from Lower Saucon Township and a zoning ordinance amendment from Lowhill Township.

Vice Chair Morgan called for a motion to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Gallagher made the motion, and Commissioner Ginder seconded the motion. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions and representatives from the respective municipalities gave brief comments.

Vice Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. Commissioners Elbich and Ghai voted in the negative on the South Whitehall Township zoning ordinance amendment. Commissioner Gomez abstained on the City of Allentown ordinance updates, and Commissioners Herman and Kelly abstained from the South Whitehall Township zoning ordinance amendment. The motion passed.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Betz Court - Act 537 Review

Ms. Ruggiero presented a revised sewage facilities planning module for the proposed construction of a 299,880-square-foot warehouse on approximately 52.5 acres located at 2951 Betz Court, Lowhill Township. The development is proposed to be served by on-lot sewage disposal and community water supply via a lengthy extension of the existing Lehigh County Authority water system. The proposed development is in an area designated as High Priority Farmland Preservation, with a portion of the site designated as High Priority Natural Resource Conservation, according to *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, and the extension of the community water system is not recommended in areas designated for farmland preservation or natural resource conservation. The staff review described that any development and associated utilities would need be context sensitive and preserve natural areas and farmland that are matched to the character and intensity of the community.

Vice Chair Morgan called for a motion to accept the staff review. Commissioner Ghai made the motion, and Commissioner Glickman seconded the motion. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

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

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: South Whitehall Township - Street Vacation Request

Ms. Urmy presented a Street Vacation Petition Review for a portion of Orator Street in South Whitehall Township. The request proposes to vacate the rights-of-way for a portion of unopened Orator Street west of North Bird Street in the Township. The vacating of rights-of-way by South Whitehall Township for the described section of Orator Street would not negatively affect current traffic circulation. Staff recommended that the utilities above the proposed street vacation remain accessible as they are today, and that any emergency access to utilities and to access properties be maintained, to sustain the public health, safety and welfare of the community.

Vice Chair Morgan called for a motion to accept the staff review. Commissioner Schmidt made the motion and Commissioner Glickman seconded the motion. Commissioners Herman and Kelly abstained. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh County Industrial Land Use Guide Project Kick-Off

Mr. Cohen introduced the Lehigh County Industrial Land Use Guide, which will help communities address existing industrial impacts and plan for new and emerging industrial land uses including data centers, advanced manufacturing, and alternative energy generation. Mr. Cohen gave an overview of the Land Use Guide, including the who, what, when, where and why of the project.

Vice Chair Morgan asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

INFORMATION ITEM: Trail Gap Analysis Project Kick-Off

Mr. Martinez introduced the Lehigh Valley Trail Gap Analysis project, which will be an inventory of existing, planned and future trail infrastructure in the Lehigh Valley, including the region's top trail gaps. The project will aim to help the public have a greater understanding of the regional trail network and enable stakeholders to better plan for trail infrastructure and acquire funding. Mr. Martinez gave an overview of the Trail Gap Analysis, including the who, what, when, where and why of the project.

Vice Chair Morgan asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

INFORMATION ITEM: Geospatial Land Development Trends

Ms. Geisner described development trends in the region over the last decade, which included a shift toward higher-density housing and essential services and a rise and fall in warehouse and industrial development. Mr. Kharel described non-residential development trends, suggesting that COVID-19 may have caused short-term shifts in demand, particularly in residential or suburban townships. Ms. Geisner discussed a rise in residential development that closely followed a surge in commercial and industrial development.

Vice Chair Morgan asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Vice Chair Morgan notified the Commission that monthly reports are featured in each Commissioner's packet. Vice Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Bradley briefed the Commission regarding the updated Strategic Plan schedule. Mr. Dotta announced that this would be his last Full Commission as parliamentarian and producer.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:***INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Government Academy***

Mr. Assad gave an update on a new LVPC class called Assessing Traffic Impacts in Your Community, to be held Sept. 10 at 11 am and Sept. 11 at 6 pm in the LVPC Conference Center.

INFORMATION ITEM: Big Check Presentations

Mr. Assad gave an update on the media events being held by the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study to distribute \$11.4 million in transportation funding at communities across the Lehigh Valley.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice Chair Morgan stated that the next LVPC meeting will be on Thursday, September 25 at 7 pm. Vice Chair Morgan 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 Christian Martinez, Environmental Planner