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**LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, January 27, 2022 Meeting**

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, January 27, 2022. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on Wednesday, January 5th, 2022.

Mr. Amato chaired the meeting.

Ms. Benco took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Kent Herman, Dennis Klusaritz, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Christina Morgan, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, Kevin Schmidt and Irene Woodward.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Jessica Cope, Liesel Dreisbach, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, Dan Engle, John Gallagher, Darlene Heller, Susan Lawless, Carl Manges, William McGee, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Tina Smith, Gerald Yob and Tara Zrinski.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Steven Glickman, Michael Harakal, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Joshua Siegel and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Lamont McClure, Scott Minnich, Salvatore Panto and William Reynolds.

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Brian Hite, Sue Rockwell and Jill Seitz

Public Present: Gary Asteak, Polly Beste, Robert Blanchfield, David Cluncie, Charles Cole, Sharon Duffield, Fred Fromhold, David Friedman, Victor Grande, Joe (Guest), Judith Henckel, Richard Wilford Hunt, Diane Kelly, Dolores Laputka, Mark Mezger, Nate Pritchard, Tina Roseberry, Jeff Ward, 610-390-0337 and 610-392-0426.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Amato welcomed the newest members of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission board. He asked if any of the new members wanted to say a few words. Mr. Klusaritz, Ms. Cope, Ms. Morgan, Ms. Zrinski and Mr. McGee expressed their excitement and appreciation for being on the Commission. Next, Mr. Amato congratulated the LVPC Certified Citizen Planner recipients for 2022 and highlighted the Lehigh Valley Government Academy. Ms. Roseberry also recognized Brian Hite as the recipient of the Outstanding Planning Education Achievement Award for completing 40 hours of the PMPEI Planning, Zoning and Subdivision course program.

MINUTES

Mr. Amato stated that the minutes of the Thursday, December 23rd, 2021 LVPC meeting are attached, and he then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Melnick made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Mr. Klusaritz, Mr. Gallagher, Ms. Cope, Ms. Woodward, Mr. Engle and Ms. Zrinski abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: PennStro Leasing – Glendon Borough

Ms. Bradley informed the Commission that the LVPC currently has two plan reviews for proposed projects in Glendon Borough. She also informed the Commission of their role in reviewing plans for municipalities that do not have their own adopted Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. She stated that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission acts as the municipal planner, which is a very different process than the review as county planners. Ms. Seitz provided a brief overview of the submitted final plans for the project. Ms. Wall, the Glendon Borough Engineer, gave an overview of the technical review comments and noted no substantial issues. Mr. Melnick complimented the parties involved with the project. Mr. Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Molchany made the motion; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion, with Mr. Charles Elliott abstaining. Motion passed. Mr. Amato called for a motion to pass the resolution pertaining to the project. Mr. Dougherty made the motion; Ms. Moore seconded the motion, with Mr. Charles Elliott and Ms. Cope abstaining. Motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: Chrin Maintenance Building – Glendon Borough

Ms. Seitz informed the Commission that LVPC has received a final plan review for the Chrin Maintenance Building and the comments will be brought to the February Comprehensive Planning Committee and Commission for review.

ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – RPL East Planned Industrial Park

Ms. Seitz provided an overview of the project, which proposes to construct a 388,800-square-foot industrial building and associated site improvements at 5027 River Road. Ms. Seitz explained that the proposal is located along the Delaware River and is part of a larger planned industrial park, River Pointe Logistics. The project poses substantial impacts to Township character, infrastructure and quality of life if left unmitigated. Ms. Seitz presented reasons for why the building proposed exhibits inconsistency with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. She presented the reasons dealing with the natural and scenic area, the limited transportation capacity, sewer capacity and aspects of the site design. Ms. Seitz noted possible issues and safety concerns with the low clearance train bridge on River Road. She also highlighted several areas in which the project can improve, including the access driveways, emergency services coordination, tractor-trailer parking, snow/ice removal, multimodal infrastructure opportunities, environmental impacts and landscaping. Mr. Melnick made a comment about wetlands and environmental impacts surrounding the site. Mr. Repasch discussed the Interstate Route 80 rock wall and truck traffic, as well as if this project would have any impacts across the Delaware River in New Jersey. Mr. Amato responded that the proposal would impact the area surrounding the River. Ms. Bradley acknowledged that the Northampton County Conservation District could help answer questions. Mr. Melnick echoed statements regarding truck traffic issues. Mr. McGorry echoed concerns over the proposal. Ms. Zrinski discussed the I-80 Coalition meeting on the rock wall and S curve in the road. Mr. Amato commented on environmental and safety concerns, as well as the potential for a National Park in the Delaware Water Gap. Mr. Engle emphasized infrastructure concerns in the nearby municipalities. Ms. Lawless asked about an Environmental Impact Assessment and Ms. Bradley provided an answer. Mr. Pritchard mentioned that certain environmental questions can be directed to the Conservation District. Ms. Henckel, a member of the public, thanked the Commission for their review and discussed concerns over the proposal. Mr. Cole, a citizen of Upper Mount Bethel Township, commented on impacts to the Delaware River and concerns surrounding the proposal. Mr. Joe (Guest), a concerned citizen in the Upper Mount Bethel area, commented on truck traffic. Mr. Wilford Hunt, a resident of Upper Mount Bethel

Township, thanked the Commission for listening to their comments and listed his concerns. Ms. Duffield, a resident of Upper Mount Bethel, echoed the public's concerns over quality of life issues. Ms. Moore asked to add language involving an Environmental Impact Study and agreed to add language about traffic increases to the South. Mr. Melnick commented on the Environmental Impact Study language in the letter. Mr. Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. McGorry made the motion; Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Joint Environment and Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Lehigh Solar Facility, City of Bethlehem, Northampton County

Ms. Seitz provided an overview of the project, which proposes to construct a solar farm field on an existing 14.5-acre agricultural site. The proposal generally exhibits consistency with *FutureLV* because it reduces climate change impacts by supporting renewable energy sources (of Policy 3.4). However, site design and aesthetics of the proposal must also be taken into account to limit adverse impacts to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Mr. Melnick asked for any comments or questions. Ms. Laputka, a resident of Saucon Fields, nearby to the site, commented on the proposal's possible impacts to nearby residents. Ms. Beste, also a nearby resident, emphasized that municipalities should be prepared for future solar development. Ms. Bradley echoed her comments and mentioned that more guidance on this topic will be provided to municipalities in the near future. Mr. Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Beste asked if a moratorium could be placed on future solar developments and Ms. Bradley responded based on the law in the MPC. Ms. Zrinski recognized the need for smart land use planning regarding solar. Ms. Morgan asked to add to the letter a request for mature tree plantings on the perimeter. Mr. Melnick made the motion; Mr. Dougherty seconded the motion, with Ms. Heller abstaining. Ms. Heller noted that a glare study will be completed with the project. Motion passed.

Environment Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Repasch presented the Environment Committee Summary Sheet. Mr. Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Mr. Engle seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Transportation Committee:

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Transportation Study Brief

Mr. Hite provided a brief of the most recent Lehigh Valley Transportation Study meeting, which included the Highway Status report, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the new officers of the LVTS.

Old Business:

INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports

Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report

Ms. Bradley presented plan and review activity for December, which included 14 Subdivisions, 30 Development proposals, 17 reviews for Stormwater Management, and five Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 66 reviews. The reviews included 718 housing units and 764,174 square feet of non-residential development. She informed the Commission that the 2021 Annual Report will be presented at the February Commission meeting. Mr. Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Hite provided the details of the December traffic count update that showed a slight dip reflecting the time between Christmas and New Year's Day. Route 33 came in at 76,251 vehicles at the end of the month. Interstate 78 East of 309 in Lehigh County came in at 69,277 vehicles and Interstate 78 East of 33 in Northampton County end the month with 69,254 vehicles. Route 309 north of Coopersburg in Lehigh County came in at 33,956 vehicles. Truck traffic showed a similar if not more pronounced holiday dip, as Interstate 78 east of Route 33 in Northampton County had 22,621 at the end of the month and I-78 east

of Route 309 in Lehigh County finished at 18,738 trucks. Mr. Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

New Business:

INFORMATION ITEM: LVPC Mission and Purposes Annual Review

Ms. Bradley provided an overview of the LVPC Mission and Purposes.

INFORMATION ITEM: Joining the LVPC Committees

Mr. Herman provided an overview of the LVPC Committees, including the Executive Committee, Comprehensive Planning Committee, Environment Committee and Transportation Committee, and encouraged all Commissioners to join and attend. Mr. Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Executive Director's Report:

INFORMATION ITEM: Annual Statement of Financial Interests Requirement

Ms. Bradley notified the Commission of the Annual Statement of Financial Interests Requirement that needs to be filled out by Commissioners and provided back to LVPC by May 1st.

Communications:

INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Morning Call Business Cycle column that ran in January. The January column called for long overdue changes to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, better known as the MPC. After listing the many ways the MPC is letting Lehigh Valley communities down, the column, with a headline "Stop the Insanity" talked about the growing movement by Lehigh Valley mayors, judges, planners, and community leaders to develop a unified platform and advocacy strategy designed to help legislators see the constructive changes that can be made to help communities better control development. He stated that the next column was scheduled to publish February 13th.

INFORMATION ITEM: Plan Lehigh Valley radio show on WDIY NPR 88.1FM

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley 30-minute radio show, which was a replay of the 30-minute expert panel done for the LVPC 8th annual Gala + Awards. The panel featured experts talking about the future of societal shifts and local government, and they talked a lot about how the future of transportation spending is evolving because of the Federal Infrastructure Law. Mr. Assad informed that the 30-minute show is currently streaming at WDIY.org. He stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, February 7 and will be about the draft Transportation Improvement Program, with PennDOT District Engineer Mike Rebert as the guest.

Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: 2022 Lehigh Valley Government Academy

Ms. Bradley highlighted courses offered under the Lehigh Valley Government Academy, including the 2022 courses offered in the Pennsylvania Municipal Education Institute Training Partnership and recent Transformative Talks on zoning coordination.

Additionally, Mr. Hite announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a full schedule of classes coming up. The virtual classes include: Curves on Local Roads, Issues and Safety Tools on February 1, Stormwater Facility Maintenance Program on February 3, Temporary Work Zone Traffic Control on February 8, Work Zone Traffic Control Workshop on February 9, Local Road Safety Plans on February 15 and Safe Driver on February 22. Anyone can sign up at lvpc.org/lvap or contact Brian Hite. Mr. Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Amato stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on February 24th. Mr. Amato then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Dougherty made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and
Julie Benco, Regional Planner