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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, September 22, 2022 Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, September 22, 2022. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on Wednesday, January 5th, 2022.

Mr. Glickman chaired the meeting.

Ms. Griffin Rivera took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Christina Morgan, Kathy Rader and Stephen Repasch.

Northampton County

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

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Bob Elbich, Philip Ginder, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Dennis Klusaritz, Owen O'Neil, Kevin Schmidt, Joshua Siegel and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

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

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Bambi Griffin Rivera, Brian Hite and Steve Neratko.

Public Present: Gary Asteak, Kurt Bresswein, Bruce Haigh and Jeff Ward.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Amato shared his appreciation for being on the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission board among community-minded individuals and recognized a trend in certain types of development growth seen within the region. He mentioned an article shared among Commissioners that discusses health and air pollution. He emphasized the need for meaningful discussions that lead to solutions to quality-of-life issues and to advocate for the goals within *FutureLV*. He encouraged the board, stakeholders and strategic partners to remember that 'it is our job to plant the tree whose shade we shall never enjoy'.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Glickman highlighted the Eastern PA Greenways & Trails Summit, taking place on September 26th through 28th at the State Theatre in Easton. He described the event that includes biking, walking and water trail tours as well as workshops. He mentioned that registration is open through the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor website. He also mentioned that the first-ever Pennsylvania Sustainability Summit will be taking place the first week of October, with most of the sessions taking place on the first day of the event. He added that the conference is free, open to all, and virtual, with attendees

getting an inside view of the policies, programs and funding initiatives designed to help advance energy efficiency, climate resiliency and create a more sustainable future for Pennsylvania.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, August 25th, 2022 LVPC meeting are attached and Ms. Griffin Rivera read the previously voted on agenda items. Mr. Glickman then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Moore made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed, with Ms. Lawless abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: City of Bethlehem, Lehigh County – Land Use of Regional Significance – Tower Place

Ms. Griffin Rivera provided an overview of the project, which conceptualizes the consolidation of two adjacent lots of about 51 acres, followed by a subdivision to create three lots to redevelop the Martin Tower site and the construction of two three-story medical office buildings totaling 101,821 square feet on two lots with the third lot to be developed in the future. Ms. Griffin Rivera noted that the location of this development supports reuse and redevelopment within an urban area of Policy 1.1. Ms. Griffin Rivera highlighted comments to support the overall goals of both *FutureLV* and the City of Bethlehem, related to sustainable design, multimodal transportation opportunities, the sidewalk network, electric vehicle charging, adjacent congested corridors and woodlands. Ms. Griffin Rivera added that the Comprehensive Planning Committee on September 20th discussed recommendations for green building design but moved the letter forward to the Full Commission as written. The Committee supported a conversation between the LVPC and the City of Bethlehem to work towards a possible language addition for consideration at the Full Commission that reads as follows: “The LVPC supports the City of Bethlehem’s goal of a sustainable and climate resilient community. This City goal is consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. The LVPC further supports the City as it works with the developer of the Tower Place site to include green infrastructure and building technologies”. Mr. Melnick emphasized that his remarks at the Comprehensive Planning Committee are reflected in the language addition and referenced the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments with the addition of language moved forward to the Full Commission in partnership with the City of Bethlehem as stated herein. Mr. Dougherty made the motion; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Molchany asked about the connectivity between the Tower Place site and the Burnside Plantation and Ms. Griffin Rivera responded that the specific connected portion would be addressed in the future phases of the proposal. Mr. Glickman mentioned the zoning amendments that the proposal received to accommodate the development. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions from the public. Motion passed, with Ms. Heller abstaining.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Melnick presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which included a Bethlehem Township Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment and a Williams Township Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Amato made the motion; Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

Environment Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Repasch presented the Environment Committee Summary Sheet, which included two Act 97 Waste Permit Modification Applications in Wilson Borough and Lower Saucon Township. Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Charles Elliott made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Motion passed.

Transportation Committee:

INFORMATION ITEM: Next Committee Meeting on October 27th at 5:30 PM

Mr. Herman informed that the Transportation Committee did not meet this month, but the next Committee Meeting will be October 27th at the usual time of 5:30 PM. The Committee plans to discuss the draft of the Northampton County land use guide for industrial management. He added that even if anyone was not a Committee Member that they are welcome to join and concluded the Transportation Committee report.

Old Business:

INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports

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

Mr. Neratko presented the plan and review activity for August, which included 17 Subdivisions, 29 Development proposals, 24 reviews for Stormwater Management, and five Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 75 reviews. The reviews included 795 housing units, consisting of a significant number of apartment units, and 1,065,179 square feet of non-residential development, with more than half consisting of warehouse proposals. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Hite provided the details of the August traffic counts, which shows the normal end-of-summer uptick in traffic across all four of the continuous traffic counters collecting volume data. He presented the vehicle counts for State Route 33, Interstate-78, State Route 309 and State Route 22, as well as the truck counts for Interstate-78 and State Route 22. Mr. Hite noted that both truck counters showed slightly less traffic than the end of July. Mr. Hite also reported on the classification of vehicles on State Route 22 compared to Interstate-78 using the Federal Highway Administration vehicle classification chart of 13 vehicle types. He pointed out that class 2 passenger cars and smaller SUVs are the predominate type of vehicles on both roads. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Glickman asked how the different classifications are counted and Mr. Hite responded that the sensor reads the spacing of the axels on the vehicles.

New Business:

INFORMATION ITEM: 9th Annual LVPC Outlook and Awards

Ms. Assad announced that the in-person 9th Annual Lehigh Valley Outlook and Awards, previously known as the Gala, will be held on November 15th from 8 – 10AM at the Lehigh University Mountain Top Campus. He summarized what the event will entail, including the Community of Distinction and the *FutureLV* Heroes Awards, as well as the release of new data on greenhouse gas emissions, development trends and broadband connectivity. He mentioned that breakfast is included and that there are several sponsor levels left open. Tickets and how to become a sponsor can be found at lvpc.org/lv-awards.

Executive Director's Report:

INFORMATION ITEM: Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute Partnership

Ms. Bradley summarized the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institutes' (PMPEI) history and vision, that Mike Kaiser, former LVPC Executive Director inspired in 1988, to educate citizen members of planning commissions and zoning heard boards. She explained how LVPC sponsors courses and that she will complete the Educate-the-Educator training for the Community Planning and Building a Strong Planning Commission courses in October. Ms. Bradley emphasized the importance of planning and educating the members that sit on the boards of local government. The Community Planning course hosted by LVPC wrapped up at the end of September and the Zoning course is set to start in October. She added that since 2014, LVPC has educated over 350 people, 77 of which have received the

distinction of Certified Citizen Planner and 16 reaching Outstanding Planning Education Achievement from PMPEI.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Business Cycle column that was published in the Sunday, September 11th Morning Call. That column focuses on the sentimental lure of passenger rail and regional excitement for a chance to bring passenger trains back to the Lehigh Valley, but the column also gives a candid look at what the Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Analysis will and will not do, and the many obstacles that lie ahead. He stated that the next column is scheduled to publish October 23rd, 2022 and will focus on development trends and growth management.

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 that focused on the Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Analysis being done and talked a lot about the lengthy and complex journey the region is about to embark on as it begins an effort to study the passenger rail issue. Himself, Becky Bradley and Greg Capogna, WDIY Executive Director, talked a lot about the many partners that could be involved, whether it be New Jersey Transit, SEPTA, LANTA or Amtrak, and the many routes that will be considered, including those to New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. He stated that the next show was scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, October 3rd and will focus on the 2022 development year and growth management.

INFORMATION ITEM: PennDOT Grant

Mr. Assad reminded everyone that time is running out to apply to PennDOT's' \$5 million Traffic Signal Technologies Grant Program that municipalities can use to upgrade their existing traffic signals, including everything from improving the timing of traffic signals, to synchronizing a corridor of lights and even making the signal system adapt to traffic as it changes. He informed that this is a one-time grant program, with no local match required, that runs through September 30, 2022. More information can be found by searching 'PennDOT Traffic Signal Portal' on the web.

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program

Mr. Hite announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a full schedule of classes coming up through the end of September, into October and November. Anyone can sign up at lvpc.org/ltap or contact himself.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Glickman thanked the LVPC for its contribution to the sold-out Sustainable Warehouse Forum with Green Building United. Mr. Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on October 27th. Mr. Glickman then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:
Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and
Julie Benco, Regional Planner