



# Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

STEVEN GLICKMAN  
Chair

CHRISTOPHER AMATO  
Vice Chair

KEVIN SCHMIDT  
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP  
Executive Director

## LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes from the Thursday November 16, 2023, Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, November 16, 2023. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on December 28, 2022.

LVPC Chair Steven Glickman chaired the meeting.

Mr. Joey Dotta took Roll Call.

### Members in Attendance:

#### Lehigh County

Michael Drabenstott, Bob Elbich, Philip Ginder, Steven Glickman, Jennifer Gomez, Kent Herman, Rick Molchany, Christina Morgan, Owen O'Neil, Kathy Rader, Stephen Repasch, and Kevin Schmidt

#### Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Charles Elliott, John Gallagher, John McGorry, and Stephen Melnick

### Members Absent:

#### Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty, Jamie Johnson, Dennis Klusaritz, Joyce Moore, Santo Napoli, and Matthew Tuerk.

#### Northampton County

Jessica Cope, Andrew Elliott, Dan Engle, Judy Haldeman, Darlene Heller, Rachel Leon, Carl Manges, Lamont McClure, William McGee, Scott Minnich, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, William Reynolds, Tina Smith, Taiba Sultana and Tara Zrinski.

**Staff Present:** Joey Dotta, Steve Neratko, Becky Bradley, and Matt Assad

**Public Present:** Jeff Ward, Phil Gianficaro, Dennis McCarthy, Corena Munroe, and Robert DiLorenzo

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chair Glickman notified the Commission about the Lehigh Valley General Assembly that is happening virtually November 29<sup>th</sup>, at 7 P.M.

### COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

No members of the public spoke.

### MINUTES

Chair Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, October 26, 2023, LVPC meeting are attached, and Mr. Dotta presented the previously voted on agenda items. Chair Glickman then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Charles Elliott noted that he abstained from Action Item 13: Bethlehem Landfill Phase V Expansion. Commissioner Rader noted their abstention from Comprehensive Summary Sheet item in Upper Macungie. Commissioner Molchany made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion. Chair Glickman asked for any comments or

questions. There were none. The motion passed. Commissioners Ginder, Gallagher, and Drabenstott abstained.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Comprehensive Planning Committee:**

#### ***ACTION ITEM: UHS/LVHN Behavioral Health Hospital - Land Use of Regional Significance – Hanover Township NC***

Mr. Neratko presented the first item. There are development plans that depict two access sites. A main access on Macada Road and an emergency access at the back of the site which would connect to an assisted living community driveway. It was noted that having an emergency access connected to the driveway of another property could make locating the access challenging for emergency services. The LVPC recommends signage to alert responders of the access point.

Mr. Neratko noted that the corner of Schoenersville Rille Road and Macada Road has pedestrian lights, pavement marked crosswalks, and tactile paving. The LVPC recommends that the developer work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to add sidewalks along both roads, and connect them to the existing crosswalk infrastructure.

The LVPC applauds the sidewalks around the building and the crosswalk from the building to the parking lot. The LVPC recommends that this internal pedestrian network be extended down the length of the driveway entrance/exist so that those walking/rolling will be able to access safely out of the way of vehicles.

The LVPC recommends that traffic circulation between the passenger vehicle parking areas and truck delivery areas on the plans be marked to help minimize interactions between passenger vehicles and truck traffic. Additionally, the LVPC recommends directional signage and pavement markings for the flow of traffic and to communicate vehicle routes (of *FutureLV* Policy 1.2). The LVPC also recommends a movement and routing study be done for fire and garbage trucks to determine the quickest and safest routes for these vehicles.

Chair Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Repasch made the motion, Commissioner McGorry seconded the motion. Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Commissioner Molchany asked about the existing sidewalk network and how it relates to the recommendation to add more sidewalks.

Chair Glickman called for a vote to accept the staff comments. The motion passed. Commissioner Amato abstained.

#### ***ACTION ITEM: 795 Roble Road - Land Use of Regional Significance – Hanover Township LC***

Mr. Dotta presented the proposed development plans including the demolition of an existing 198,167-square-foot warehouse that is currently in operation and the construction of a new, larger warehouse facility in its place. The proposed project site is located within LVIP III (Lehigh Valley Industrial Park) within Hanover Township. The 19.93-acre parcel is zoned as Planned Industrial Office according to the Hanover Township Zoning Ordinance Map and current use can be best categorized as primarily industrial and commercial offices. This area is just south of the Airport and the new facility fits with the surrounding uses. There are sidewalks located adjacent to the proposed warehouse but nowhere else on site. The LVPC strongly recommends that sidewalks be added to the proposed site connecting to Roble Road and, ultimately, Marcon Boulevard. Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) would strongly consider relocating the existing bus stop to the nearside of the Marcon Boulevard and Roble Road

intersection to access the recommended sidewalks on the project site. A crosswalk should be added from the building to the parking lot to promote safety. Mr. Dotta noted that the LVPC applauds the inclusion of Americans with Disabilities Act compliant ramps and parking spaces and urged them to be located closest to the entrance of the building.

There are two current site accesses that are going to remain the main accesses to the site connected to Roble Road. The plan seems to be removing a third access point connected to Marcon Boulevard, but the LVPC suggests that the third site access remain and potentially be used as an emergency access point. The developer could also consider connected access to North Irving Street used as either an emergency access driveway or potentially another truck specific access. There is only one proposed access drive that tractor-trailers can utilize so if a separate site access for tractor-trailers was added connected to North Irving Street, the movement of trucks on site would be smoother. Mr. Dotta also mentioned that the developer should clarify the intended truck sizes that will service this building.

Chair Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner McGorry made the motion, Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion. Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Commissioner Gallagher asked why the developer has chosen to demolish the current building instead of expanding it. Chair Glickman responded that sometimes recycling concrete instead of trucking new concrete can be, at best, cost neutral. Chair Glickman added that geotechnical testing may already be required in the building code.

Chair Glickman called for a vote to accept the staff comments. The motion passed.

### ***ACTION ITEM: Project Review Summary Sheet and Summaries***

#### **Comprehensive Planning Committee:**

Commissioner Melnick summarized Tuesday's committee meeting that included a comprehensive zoning ordinance update for Lower Nazareth Township, an official map update for Lower Macungie Township, and a zoning ordinance amendment for structures in floodplains for Lower Macungie Township. There were five other reviews covered like two in Williams Township, one in Fountain Hill, one in Allentown, and one in Walnutport Borough.

Chair Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Elbich made the motion, and Commissioner Melnick seconded the motion. Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Chair Glickman called for a vote to accept the staff comments. The motion passed.

#### **Environment Committee:**

Commissioner Repasch reported that the Environment Committee did not meet this month and notified the Commission about the WorkshopLV Environment/Transportation meeting at the LVPC office on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 A.M.

Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

#### **Transportation Committee:**

Commissioner Herman summarized the Transportation Committee that met earlier in the evening. The meeting included the adoption of the LRTP, 2025-2028 TIP Updates, and a notification about WorkshopLV Freight happening December 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:30.

Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

## **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 October which included five Subdivisions, 27 Development proposals, 21 reviews for Stormwater Management, and six Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 59 reviews on 980.3 acres. 30 of those reviews were in Lehigh County and 29 in Northampton County.

In October, the LVPC reviewed 86 total residential units proposed, consisting of 41 single-family detached, 43 twins and two apartments. While those numbers have stagnated, the amount of non-residential square footage remained high at 1,640,221 total square feet, including 145,739 square feet commercial, 6,139 square feet retail, 21,900 square feet public/quasi-public and 1.4 million SF of industrial, of which about 1.1 million square feet is warehousing. Mr. Neratko mentioned that projects such as River Pointe Logistics, which had a due date in early November, will be reflected in November's numbers and are not included in these numbers.

Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Commissioner Molchany inquired about the number of residential units decreasing from previous months and what it may mean. Mr. Neratko responded that the LVPC is monitoring the issue, and he thinks that it is due to lack of money. Ms. Bradley noted that the cost of the money is often too high to move forward with projects. Commissioner Molchany followed up by urging that the Commission continue to work with the Federal Reserve with the house study going on. Ms. Bradley agreed and expressed a desire to kick off the housing study early in the new year.

#### ***Highway Traffic Monitoring***

Ms. Bradley summarized the monthly traffic report which included Route 22 between airport road and the Lehigh River Bridge ending October at 102,793 vehicles, Interstate 78 located just east of Route 309 recording 70,772, and Route 309 near Coopersburg showing 38,671 vehicles. Commercial truck traffic included Interstate 78 east of 309 with 19,650 commercial trucks and Route 22 just east of the Lehigh River Bridge seeing 13,493 commercial trucks.

Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

## **New Business:**

Mr. Dotta reminded members that next month's Full Commission meeting will be the annual organizational meeting and will be held at an earlier time.

Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

### **Executive Director's Report: Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Training – Part 3**

Ms. Bradley continued a Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Training that was earlier postponed. First, she recapped previous training and gave an overview of the MPC and what it means to the LVPC. She presented what the purpose of the MPC is in context of Section 105. Ms. Bradley next explained how the MPC has been amended and what the MPC means to other planning commissions in Pennsylvania. Ms. Bradley detailed both Municipal and County Planning Agencies and their roles. Ms. Bradley finished by summarizing key sections such as Section 207, 1104, 209.1 and 212.

Chair Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Commissioner Molchany asked Ms. Bradley if there was an update about the speech presented at a previous state representative meeting. Ms. Bradley said that she had been asked to complete a write-up about potential changes to the MPC and will hopefully bring that information next month.

**Communications and Public Engagement:**

***INFORMATION ITEM: Morning Call Business Cycle Column***

Mr. Assad spoke about the most recent Morning Call column called “Are Developers in a Race with Communities.” The next column will talk about how despite all the development, farming remains very much a part of the Lehigh Valley brand. That column will hit doorsteps Nov. 26.

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

Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley radio show aired Nov. 6 on WDIY FM 88.1, and it focused on the flood of projects that came over a very short period in the beginning of October. Ms. Bradley was joined by LVPC Editor Matt Assad and guest Host Sally Handlon to talk about what type of developments came in and what it could mean for the future. That 30-minute show is now streaming at LVPC.org and WDIY.org. The next show will focus on our farming economy and that will air at 6:30 pm, Dec. 4.

***INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Programs***

Mr. Assad presented a few virtual training opportunities coming up through the Local Technical Assistance Program until the end of the year. On November 30 there is Introduction to Traffic Studies, followed by Municipal Stormwater Facilities Program December 6 and then Myths of Recycled Asphalt Pavement on December 7.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm. Chair Glickman 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