

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

October 5, 2022 – 7 PM, Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor: Steve Reider, James Kresge, Marissa Donnelly
East Bangor: Jason Huggan
Lower Mount Bethel: Jen Smethers, Susan Disidore, Sandra Newman
Pen Argyl: Janell Connolly, Robin Zmoda
Plainfield: Terry Kleintop, Jane Mellert, Don Moore
Portland: Stephanie Steele
Roseto: Carl Renna
Upper Mount Bethel: David Friedman
Washington:
Wind Gap:

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Judith Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel
Charles Cole – Upper Mount Bethel
Millie Beahn – Plainfield
Wesley Smith – Wind Gap

Planning Partners in Attendance:

Dean Severson – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Tracy Oscavich – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Sue Rockwell – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Marek Tomanek – Northampton County

Committee Chair Selection

Ms. Smethers nominated Ms. Zmoda to serve as committee chair. Mr. Moore seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Roll Call

Ms. Rockwell called roll. All municipalities, except Washington and Wind Gap, were in attendance.

Minutes from the September 7, 2022 Meeting

Ms. Zmoda called for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2022 meeting. Mr. Kresge made the motion, and Ms. Donnelly seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Draft Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan – Incorporated Comments

Mr. Severson said revisions were made to the plan that included comments received, corrections, formatting, and preservation text. He requested any known infrastructure projects that municipalities would like included in the plan, per steering committee request.

Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2022

Mr. Moore reiterated his concerns about the plan, stating he does not believe it meets MPC requirements. It does not have background studies, demographic data needed to inform the plan. He informed the committee that Plainfield Township hired an independent reviewer to review the plan. He asked why the Future Land Use Plan is so different from municipal plan maps. Ms. Oscavich said planning has changed in a way that makes it more accessible to use, rather than several hundred pages. Mr. Moore said there is no land use planning in the Future Land Use Plan. It's supposed to reflect details of the background studies, which are not included in the plan. Ms. Oscavich said the background studies were done as part of the Issues and Opportunities Report, which is located on the Plan Slate Belt website. The LVPC believes the plan is effective. She said the committee has to decide how to move forward. Representatives from Roseto, Bangor, East Bangor and Portland said they found the plan to be acceptable. Ms. Zmoda said Borough Council had no comments on the plan. Ms. Newman said some municipalities at a recent Slate Belt Council of Governments meeting thought the plan was vague. Ms. Oscavich asked if there were any other comments on the plan, such as any policy changes. Mr. Moore asked how a planner would use the map to develop zoning. Ms. Oscavich said the comprehensive plan is not a regulation, it's a guidebook Ms. Zmoda asked if the LVPC and Plainfield can talk offline. Mr. Moore said they will send something out once their consultant finishes their review of the plan.

Ms. Zmoda suggested pushing back the timeline, which was provided to the committee, to address concerns. Mr. Kleintop asked if the Slate Belt plan was being pushed to be on the same timeline as the Northern Lehigh plan. Ms. Oscavich said no, the Slate Belt plan is 4-5 months behind. Mr. Kleintop asked what Upper Mt Bethel thinks of the plan. Mr. Friedman said it will be difficult to sell the plan to the Planning Commission. Mr. Moore asked what Lower Mt. Bethel thought. Ms. Newman said they had met about the plan, but the minutes have not been approved yet. Ms. Zmoda asked how the committee felt about waiting. Mr. Reider said to keep it moving.

Mr. Severson said the MPC requires a public meeting, which would be held with the municipal planning commission, and a public hearing. After the public meeting, adoption of the plan would occur at the public hearing. If there are substantive changes required, a public meeting should be held again, but that would be up to the solicitor. If there would be major changes after the hearing, the municipalities should probably go through the process again. Mr. Kleintop asked what happens if Upper Mt. Bethel doesn't vote yes. Ms. Oscavich said each municipality individually adopts the plan. Upper Mt. Bethel would still have to pay their planning share. Ms. Connolly said the intermunicipal agreement will only include the municipalities that adopted the plan. Mr. Kleintop said they have to go to their planning commission with the plan. He's anticipating that the Future Land Use Plan isn't detailed enough. The three steering committee representatives need to better understand the plan. Mr. Reider said it appears the boroughs are fine with the plan. Mr. Severson said the LVPC could start meeting with the boroughs. Mr. Reider made a motion to extend everything on the timeline by one month. Mr. Moore seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Huggan asked if the updated timeline will be provided to the committee. Mr. Severson said yes, it will be updated and sent out to the committee.

New Business

None

Next Steps

1. Schedule public meetings

Discussed under Old Business.

Courtesy of the Floor

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion

- Known Plan Activity in Slate Belt Communities (September 2022)

Ms. Rockwell reviewed the projects for September 2022.

2. Municipal Update

Mr. Friedman informed the group about an upcoming traffic issues meeting to be held on October 12, 2022 in Upper Mt. Bethel Township.

Adjourn

Ms. Zmoda called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Reider made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Friedman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Attachments

- September 7, 2022 Steering Committee Minutes
- Intermunicipal Agreement for the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan
- Moving Towards Adoption Flow Chart
- Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log (September 2022)

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.