

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

December 7, 2022 – 7 PM, Virtual Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor:	Steve Reider, Marissa Donnelly
East Bangor:	Jason Huggan
Lower Mount Bethel:	Jen Smethers, Susan Disidore, Sandra Newman
Pen Argyl:	Robin Zmoda
Plainfield:	Terry Kleintop, Jane Mellert, Don Moore
Portland:	Lance Prator, Heather Fischer
Roseto:	
Upper Mount Bethel:	David Friedman
Washington:	
Wind Gap:	Louise Firestone

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Millie Beahn – Plainfield

Planning Partners in Attendance:

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

Roll Call

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

Minutes from the October 5, 2022 and November 2, 2022 Meetings

Ms. Zmoda called for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2022 and November 2, 2022 meetings. Ms. Mellert made the motion, and Ms. Smethers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Status of Municipal Meetings

Mr. Severson said public meetings have been held at six communities so far to present the draft plan. Three additional meetings have been scheduled: Washington and Lower Mt. Bethel on December 20, 2022 and East Bangor on January 3, 2023. A meeting with Plainfield is yet to be scheduled.

2. Comments/questions received to date

Mr. Severson said most of the questions received were procedural, such as where we go from here. There were some questions related to the draft Lower Mt. Bethel comprehensive plan. Ms. Rockwell said there was one question that came out of the two meetings held on December 5, 2022, which was related to the concerns raised during the public engagement process.

Ms. Zmoda asked what happened with the Plainfield Township review of the draft plan. Mr. Moore said additional materials were provided to the consultant for review and comments have

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been received. The Board is scheduled to meet December 14, 2022 to discuss the review. The Township will meet with the LVPC privately after that.

New Business

1. Steering Committee Meetings – 2023

Mr. Severson asked how the committee wanted to proceed with meetings in 2023, to meet virtually or in person. He said that January could probably be a virtual meeting since a meeting to discuss the draft plan with Plainfield has not been scheduled yet and may not be possible until January. With the February meeting, there will likely be more issues and next steps to discuss and could be an in-person meeting. Mr. Friedman and Mr. Huggan agreed that more would be accomplished with in-person meetings. Ms. Mellert said she would need to inquire with the Fire Company whether the meetings could still be held at their facility. Ms. Zmoda asked if there were any other locations to hold the meetings. Mr. Huggan thought the East Bangor Firehouse could potentially be available for the February meeting. He will check into it. Ms. Smethers said the Lower Mt. Bethel Community Room or Visitors Center could be a potential back-up location.

Next Steps

Mr. Severson said if all the communities are happy with the plan, they could vote at the February meeting to move the plan toward adoption.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Kleintop asked about how many municipalities might want copies of the reports from Plainfield. Mr. Severson said the Township could just email them to everyone or send to the LVPC for distribution.

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion

- Known Plan Activity in Slate Belt Communities (October-November 2022)

No discussion.

2. Municipal Update

Mr. Moore raised concerns about the proposed timing of the implementation agreement, saying that adopting the plan first would be a leap of faith. He reiterated previous concerns about Wind Gap taking a position on land use in Plainfield that he thought would be worked on during the period after plan adoption. He thinks that is problematic regarding this current planning effort and could be a deal breaker for the Township. Ms. Firestone disagreed that the Borough is trying to undermine the Township. She said Wind Gap has infrastructure deficiencies and the Borough does not have the financial resources to correct them. The revenue received from the landfill will be used to benefit many municipalities. If the landfill goes out of business, Wind Gap will get nothing. Ms. Zmoda said she does not believe Wind Gap is being difficult. She does not understand how this has anything to do with the multi-municipal plan. Each community has its own autonomy regarding planning and zoning.

Mr. Moore said he knows about the struggles and stress on communities. He said the land use plan is most important. It is not the vision of where Plainfield wants to go. He said we have to be

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careful of what we put in the intergovernmental agreement. If a community does not live up to it, they could be expelled. Mr. Kleintop said CRG impacts the three communities at least. If we are going to make an issue of traffic, Plainfield has to carry the weight and be point person, but they need the support from surrounding communities. PennDOT will not listen to surrounding communities, only Plainfield. Ms. Zmoda said they have attended all the meetings. The Township has kept them involved.

Mr. Huggan said East Bangor Borough rededicated the pavilion at Blaine Reimel Memorial Park in honor of Leslie Couch. About 100 people attended the ceremony.

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

- October 5, 2022 and November 2, 2022 Steering Committee Minutes
- Slate Belt Public Meetings – Comments/Questions Received through November 2022
- Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log (October-November 2022)

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.