

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

December 7, 2023 – 7 PM, Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor: Steve Reider, Marissa Donnelly
East Bangor:
Lower Mount Bethel: Jen Smethers, Sandra Newman, Susan Disidore
Pen Argyl: Robin Zmoda, Tyler Kemp
Plainfield: Terry Kleintop, Don Moore
Portland: Lance Prator, Stephanie Steele
Roseto: Cathy Martino, Carl Renna
Upper Mount Bethel: Dave Friedman
Washington: Justin Huratiak
Wind Gap: Louise Firestone, George Hinton

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Millie Beahn – Plainfield Township
Judy Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel Township

Planning Partners in Attendance:

Sue Rockwell – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Jill Seitz – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Roll Call

Ms. Rockwell informed the committee that Ms. Bradley was unable to attend the meeting since she had to attend the Northampton County Council meeting. Ms. Rockwell introduced Jill Seitz, senior community planner at the LVPC, who joined the meeting for the evening.

Ms. Rockwell called roll. East Bangor Borough was unable to attend the meeting.

Minutes from the November 2, 2023, Meeting

Ms. Zmoda called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2023, meeting. Mr. Prator made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Reider seconded the motion. Ms. Rockwell took a roll call vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Discussion on Township Comments

Ms. Rockwell asked the townships if they had comments they wanted to provide as discussed at the November meeting. Mr. Moore said he felt they already provided comments. He said the land use plans need to be addressed. He said the LVPC should give a presentation on the detailed maps, explaining what's in them. He said he does not understand why existing versus future uses are mixed and that the section on how to use the General Land Use Plan was not good enough. Mr. Huratiak said what will happen with the next wave of development over the next ten years is unknown, so the map is critical. Ms. Newman said they don't care if it takes several more months; the map is critical. Ms. Zmoda asked LVPC staff to bring these comments back to Ms. Bradley. Mr. Moore added that his question about whether they can just adopt parts of the plan has not been answered yet or about not adopting the implementation agreement.

2. Intermunicipal Agreement

Ms. Rockwell asked the committee if they would like to discuss the intermunicipal agreement. Ms. Zmoda said her Board gets the packet every month, but they are very busy now. The discussion about the agreement will probably be beyond February. Ms. Newman noted that when they did their zoning ordinance, they designated the industrial district for solid waste, quarry and warehouse. They did the best they could. Mr. Kleintop asked if they were saying they won't participate in the Plan Slate Belt effort. Ms. Newman said they did their best to prepare just in case. Mr. Moore said if it comes down to it, he doesn't feel they need to share uses. Mr. Kleintop asked if it was possible for the boroughs to just move ahead without the townships. Mr. Huratiak said the boroughs need to consider the long-term effects. Ms. Zmoda said that is why they have been waiting; so they could take the townships' concerns into consideration. Mr. Reider said the longer they delay, the developers are here now. They do not have the luxury to wait. He said they are looking to strengthen their 2018 ordinance based on the Slate Belt effort. Ms. Zmoda said they need to take a good long look at their ordinance to prepare themselves. Mr. Kleintop noted that definitions are supreme.

3. Zoning Ordinance Update Costs

Ms. Seitz discussed the zoning update cost spreadsheet attached to the agenda packet. Ms. Smethers said, based on the discussion at the November meeting, the total costs on the spreadsheet don't align with the total cost previously discussed, which was \$24,166 per community if the ordinance was completed together but could be apportioned based on population, or the cost would be \$54,000 separately, including an Official Map. They need some clarification on that. In addition, it appeared that the populations shown on the spreadsheet for Wind Gap and Washington were switched. Mr. Kleintop said the costs for Northern Lehigh were much higher than what the spreadsheet shows.

New Business

1. Next Meeting

Mr. Prator made a motion to cancel the January meeting. Mr. Reider seconded the motion. Mr. Kleintop wanted to add to the motion that they wanted an updated spreadsheet. Mr. Prator amended the motion and Mr. Reider seconded the motion. Ms. Rockwell called for a roll call vote, which passed unanimously.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on Thursday, February 1, 2024 at the Pen Argyl Borough Hall.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Moore said that certain entities are challenging the state law on sewage sludge application on farmland. Mr. Kleintop said the state is using taxes to preserve the best farms and the best soils,

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then turn around and let biosolids on protected farms and soils. Ms. Beahn said this is going on everywhere. Once you apply sludge on farmland, she considers it contaminated. Crops are being grown in contaminated soil and are being fed to animals and people.

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion

- Known Plan Activity in Slate Belt Communities (November 2023)

Mr. Friedman said Lots 4 and 5A/5B are being combined through Conditional Use. Ms. Seitz said land development plans have not been submitted to the LVPC yet.

Mr. Kleintop said there was a proposal for three warehouses along Male Road in Bushkill Township, bordering Wind Gap. It wasn't listed on the plan activity sheet. Ms. Seitz said, if it was in Bushkill, it would not be on the activity log. Mr. Kleintop thought it should be since it borders the Slate Belt.

Adjourn

Ms. Zmoda called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Prator made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Reider seconded the motion. Ms. Rockwell took a roll call vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Attachments

- November 2, 2023, Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
- Zoning Codes Update & Official Map Creation Worksheet
- Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log (November 2023)

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.