

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT

September 7, 2022 – 7 PM, Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Attendees:

Bangor:	Steve Reider, Marissa Donnelly
East Bangor:	Jason Huggan
Lower Mount Bethel:	Jen Smethers, Susan Disidore
Pen Argyl:	Janell Connolly, Robin Zmoda, Jeff Fox
Plainfield:	Terry Kleintop
Portland:	Lance Prator, Stephanie Steele
Roseto:	Carl Renna, Cathy Martino
Upper Mount Bethel:	David Friedman
Washington:	Justin Huratiak
Wind Gap:	Louise Firestone

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Judith Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel
Jane Mellert – Plainfield
Don Moore – Plainfield
Millie Beahn – Plainfield Township
Francois Merle – New York

Planning Partners in Attendance:

Dean Severson – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Sue Rockwell – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Marek Tomanek – Northampton County
Vincent Behe – Slate Belt Rising

Roll Call

Ms. Rockwell called roll. All municipalities were in attendance.

Minutes from the August 3, 2022 Meeting

Ms. Smethers asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 3, 2022 meeting. Mr. Renna made the motion, and Mr. Huratiak seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Draft Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan - Continued Discussion

Mr. Severson discussed the two handouts provided to the group. The list of hyperlinks for the Slate Belt plan was prepared based on discussions at the August 3, 2022 meeting. He requested the committee review the list and provide any other links they would like to include. Ms. Smethers noted that the ecode link for the Lower Mount Bethel Ag Zoning District might not work. Mr. Severson reviewed the list of revisions to the Slate Belt plan. Other revisions included

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formatting and correcting photo captions. He asked the committee to provide any comments on the revisions.

At the August meeting, the committee asked about adding infrastructure improvements. Mr. Severson requested that municipalities provide a list of major new projects they may have to include in the plan for funding purposes, including areas identified for growth that need the infrastructure in place.

Mr. Friedman asked if the group could have a summary of the plan to take to their municipalities, including what a comprehensive plan is, the intermunicipal agreement and what the next steps are. Mr. Severson said that we would prepare a summary, plus LVPC staff would attend the public meetings and hearings. He will prepare a list of upcoming meetings for each municipality. He said the process is that once the steering committee finds the draft plan acceptable, the plan would be presented to municipal planning commissions at public meetings. Then, once the planning commissions approve, the plan would be presented to the supervisors/councils at a public hearing.

The group discussed the need to know the costs involved in updating the zoning ordinances. Mr. Severson said the Northern Lehigh municipalities are considering contracting with one firm, while several Nazareth Area municipalities will be working with one consultant. He said the plan needs to be adopted first, followed by the intermunicipal agreement then the zoning update. Ms. Smethers commented that Nazareth municipalities thought it would probably be better to do the intermunicipal agreement first. Mr. Severson said if one municipality wants to act on their own, they can do that. Mr. Moore asked if a municipality could obtain a consultant before signing on to the plan. Mr. Severson said adopting the plan does not bind a municipality to anything. Ms. Henckel commented that the municipalities just need to agree generally, then each community goes into the detail with zoning, which will ultimately save the communities money. Ms. Zmoda said the current comprehensive plans are outdated, and they are not losing anything.

Mr. Moore said the current comprehensive plans have more detailed maps, demographic data for each municipality and technical studies that should be included in the plan. Several attendees asked how the population projections were developed as they seemed high for the area. Mr. Severson explained about using historical trends but noted the difficulty in projecting at lower levels, such as for municipalities. Mr. Severson said we can provide a list of data items for the committee to review and identify what they would like to include in the plan. He asked the committee what their next steps should be. The group generally indicated that public meetings should be next. Mr. Kleintop said he did not think they could hold meetings without knowing where the different types of uses will go. Mr. Severson asked if the committee was expecting a lot-by-lot General Land Use Plan. Most municipalities said they were not; several said yes. Mr. Moore said the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) identifies different categories of land use, and the draft plan does not meet the requirements of the MPC. Ms. Disidore asked if they do not work on zoning as a group, how do they ensure the strength of each municipality. Mr. Severson said he would encourage everyone to work together with the intermunicipal agreement to decide the types of things they want to agree on. Mr. Kleintop asked if all municipalities adopt and sign the agreement, but one municipality does not update their zoning as needed, are the other municipalities liable. Mr. Severson said they are not. Ms. Disidore wanted to hear from the Boroughs on how they see the plan rolling out. Ms. Connelly said Pen Argyl is interested in working with anybody that is willing. Mr. Huratiak said Washington Township is as well.

Mr. Severson said we will send out the summary, list of potential data items for the plan and municipal meeting dates. He requested that municipalities provide any infrastructure

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improvements to add to the plan. Mr. Kleintop asked about the Northampton County freight-based tool and roundtable minutes discussed at the August meeting. Plainfield Township did not receive the information that was to be provided. Mr. Severson said we will make sure all municipalities receive it.

New Business

None

Next Steps

1. Incorporate draft plan comments

2. Schedule public meetings

Courtesy of the Floor

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion

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

No discussion.

2. Municipal Update

None

Adjourn

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

Attachments

- August 3, 2022 Steering Committee Minutes
- Hyperlinks for Slate Belt Plan
- Revisions to Slate Belt Plan
- Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log (August - September 2022)

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.