

# **The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the SLATE BELT**

**November 2, 2022 – 7 PM, Virtual 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, Jeffrey Fox
Plainfield:	Terry Kleintop, Jane Mellert, Don Moore
Portland:	Stephanie Steele, Lance Prator, Heather Fischer
Roseto:	
Upper Mount Bethel:	David Friedman
Washington:	Justin Huratiak
Wind Gap:	Louise Firestone

## **Members of the Public in Attendance:**

Judith Henckel – Upper Mount Bethel

## **Planning Partners in Attendance:**

Becky Bradley – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
Dean Severson – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
Sue Rockwell – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

## **Roll Call**

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

## **Old Business**

### **1. Status of Municipal Meetings**

Mr. Severson said four public meetings have been scheduled so far to present the draft plan:

- Bangor: November 9
- Washington: November 15
- Upper Mount Bethel: November 16
- Portland: November 21

Ms. Zmoda said a meeting with Pen Argyl has also been scheduled for November 17. Mr. Severson said he will be contacting the last five municipalities to schedule a meeting.

### **2. Plainfield Township Draft Slate Belt Plan Review**

Mr. Severson asked if anyone from the Township wanted to provide a briefing on the status of the Township consultant's review of the draft plan. Mr. Moore said the Township had just received the report from the consultant this morning and hoped it would be discussed at their board meeting next week. Ms. Zmoda asked if the report will be shared with the group. Mr. Moore said that hasn't been discussed yet, but he couldn't see why it wouldn't be shared.

Ms. Bradley said, since we are only in a second draft of the plan and need public meetings to further refine it to move toward a final draft, we need to make sure we are working toward completing the contractual obligations we have to the group and the municipalities are staying

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consistent with their intermunicipal agreement. Therefore, Ms. Bradley said she wants to let the group know that she is formally requesting, which she will follow up with in writing, of Plainfield Township to have a meeting about the letter to advance the discussion in a way that stays consistent with the MPC, professional courtesy and the agreement everyone signed to move forward with the plan. She said we cannot move forward until we have held all the meetings. Also, to reinforce what was said at the last meeting, Ms. Bradley said we are following the standards set out in 2016 and continue through today by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development and staying consistent with the MPC, which she teaches. Ms. Mellert said their board hasn't had the opportunity to review the document yet, but she would welcome a discussion with the LVPC when they have their separate meeting. She hasn't discussed this with the board yet.

## **New Business**

### **1. Lower Mount Bethel Township Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Severson said the LVPC received a draft Township Comprehensive Plan and Official Map Ordinance to review and are in the process of finalizing comments. This item was placed on the Slate Belt agenda to inform other municipalities about the situation.

Ms. Smethers said the Township Board of Supervisors have talked about doing an Official Map for years. She said their current comprehensive plan is out-of-date, but it is best to do an official Map with a current, updated comprehensive plan. They received a grant from Lehigh Valley Greenways for the Official Map. When they were notified of the grant, Plan Slate Belt started coming together, and with some of the difficulties early on with even coming to terms with the agreement, the Board of Supervisors decided to form an ad-hoc committee to update their comprehensive plan, but not a total re-write. The Township wanted to be able to prepare an Official Map and not lose their grant. The Township still wants to participate with the Slate Belt Plan, but they were not sure of the timing. Once the Slate Belt Plan is complete and Township concerns are addressed, they will adopt the plan. Ms. Zmoda thought the Township could have been more transparent, noting the Township shared their zoning ordinance update with the group. Ms. Smethers said she did not think the plan would get as far as it did, especially with all the difficulties with Upper Mt. Bethel. Until the Township knows the plan will go through, they want to make sure they are protected and keep the Township as rural as it is now. Ms. Disidore said it was not done in secret and they just realized this summer they needed an update comprehensive plan if they wanted an Official Map. It could be several years before the Slate Belt Plan is finalized. Ms. Smethers added that they met with Ms. Bradley to explain why they did what they did.

## **Next Steps**

Ms. Bradley said with the second draft of the plan, we are beginning to hold public meetings and will be scheduling the remaining five to further refine the plan, moving toward the goal of adoption over the next few months. She said we will compile a list of notes from the meetings so everyone can see what was said, then we will start to make plan edits to move toward the next step of public review and comment.

## **Courtesy of the Floor**

Mr. Moore followed up on issues he has discussed at previous meetings, including background studies, demographic data and the Future Land Use Plan. He previously brought up the Southwest Lehigh Plan prepared by the LVPC that includes a data companion, 3-4 pages that discuss development of the land use plan and an interim update online that describes the process. This is the information he would have expected to see in the Slate Belt Plan. Ms. Bradley asked if he had looked at the links sent out to the committee that included the data companion on the Slate Belt website, which could answer his questions. Mr. Moore said he had not but would look at it.

Mr. Moore also wanted to discuss the Wind Gap Council minutes from September 20 that documented an arrangement with Waste Management to increase tipping fees and, in exchange, the Borough would actively support expansion of solid waste use in Plainfield. He believes Wind Gap is taking a position on land use in the Township that he thought would be worked on during the period after plan adoption. He thinks that is problematic regarding this current planning effort. Mr. Huratiak noted that the Township recently went out to bid for their garbage contract. They received only one bid, which was a 75% increase. They rejected it, put it out to bid again, and received the same bid. He said decisions being made impact the rest of the Slate Belt. They should collectively be looking at impacts. Ms. Mellert asked if that meant they need to consider a new solid waste zoning district to keep costs down. Mr. Huratiak said no. Waste Management sought after bringing in 60% of waste from outside the Lehigh Valley, which quickly used up capacity of their local landfill. Waste from the Township doesn't go to that landfill anymore. They are not getting any of the benefits the landfill says they are. The costs are not going down. Mr. Kleintop asked if Pen Argyl has been approached. Ms. Zmosa said they have not, but they do have a facility agreement that is already in place.

Ms. Bradley asked if the group wanted to meet next month or wait until January. Ms. Zmoda said she would like to see all the public meetings completed unless something comes up in the initial five meetings. Mr. Reider thought they should meet in December to discuss comments received from the public meetings held in November. Mr. Friedman agreed. Mr. Reider made a motion to meet in December. Mr. Friedman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **Adjourn**

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

Minutes prepared and respectfully transmitted by the LVPC.