

PLAN SLATE BELT



- Bangor • East Bangor • Lower Mount Bethel • Pen Argyl •
 - Plainfield • Portland • Roseto • Upper Mount Bethel •
 - Washington • Wind Gap •

SLATE BELT MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VIRTUAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 7:00 PM

AGENDA

Open Meeting

- Roll Call
- Minutes
 - October 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes
 - November 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Old Business

1. Status of municipal meetings
2. Comments/questions received to date

New Business

1. Steering Committee Meetings - 2023

Next Steps

Courtesy of the Floor (For items not covered on the rest of the agenda)

1. General Issues and Opportunities Discussion
 - a. Known "Plan Activity" in Slate Belt Communities
 - i. October - November 2022
2. Municipal Update

Adjourn

Next Meeting: TBD

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
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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.

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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November 2, 2022**

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.

Slate Belt Public Meetings – Comments/Questions through November 2022

- What happens if not everyone adopts the plan? Do they revert back to their current comprehensive plan?

Those municipalities would then be responsible for providing for all land uses within their municipality. Their current plan would remain in place.

- Didn't Lower Mount Bethel just revise its Comprehensive Plan? Are they still participating in this multi-municipal plan?

Yes, Lower Mount Bethel Township remains an integral part of the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan. However, the municipality is adopting a new Official Map, a process that state law requires it to update its existing comprehensive plan. Adoption of the map is a positive step that fits in well with the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan

- Will there be a multi-municipal authority created to enforce the plan?

There will be no formal multi-municipal authority. While the Multi-Municipal Plan will give each municipality new tools that will enable them to work together, each municipality maintains its own autonomy regarding planning and zoning approvals.

- Will this impact the flow of municipal revenue? In other words, will municipalities have to share revenue regarding development projects?

While municipalities will coordinate their zoning to better control development, they do not share revenues that are generated by future development projects. The host municipality of each project can expect to garner whatever tax revenues or fees the development generates.

- How does RPL fit in the plan?

The RPL site is zoned for industrial use and is shown for development.

- Is there anyone on the steering committee that seems like they will not adopt the plan?

No one has indicated they will not adopt the plan. We are currently holding public meetings with all the municipalities to obtain comments on the plan. These public meetings will help to further refine the plan and move to a final draft.

- Should the zones be more vague or more specific?

The Future Land Use Plan is a guide for where you want to grow. The map provides more flexibility for municipalities to decide the types of uses they want. Zoning is regulatory and provides more specific uses.

- Are there any examples of similar multi-municipal plans that have already been implemented?

The Nazareth Area and Northern Lehigh Multi-Municipal Plans are similar. All municipalities in both groups have adopted their plan and are working toward intermunicipal cooperative agreements.

- What happens if someone identifies an area to be developed but cites the plan as “prioritizing preservation”? How is the plan reconciled with zoning?

While the site may be zoned for development, the Natural Resources Plan can be used to identify there are significant natural resources on the site, and they should work to preserve those areas as much as possible.

- There is concern about not having the resources to implement the plan.

The Northern Lehigh municipalities are planning on joining together to hire one consultant to update zoning. Some of the Nazareth Area municipalities are considering that option as well.

Slate Belt Communities' Activity Log

Subdivision, Land Development, Municipal Ordinances, Plans & Maps Sent to LVPC for Review

October-November 2022

*Acronyms List: SALDO = Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, MPC = Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, LLA = Lot Line Adjustment, LURS = Land Use of Regional Significance

MUNICIPALITY	PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	DATE ACCEPTED	DATE MAILED
Pen Argyl Borough	Light Industrial, Commercial District	Allow for the conversion of existing buildings into apartments as a conditional use	Zoning Ordinance Amendment	9/8/22	10/8/22
Plainfield Township	WTDWG, LLC LLA	Lot line adjustment between two adjacent parcels to convey 0.4 acres from one lot to the other at 271 E 1st Street.	Lot Line Adjustment	9/9/22	10/8/22
Upper Mount Bethel Township	Franks Deli & Farm Market	Construction of a 1,206 SF bagel shop for retail, production and storage at 2671 N. Delaware Drive.	Land Development	10/24/22	10/31/22
Washington Township (NC)	Tietz, Joe LLA	Lot line adjustment between two adjacent parcels to convey 20.4 acres from one parcel to the other at 601 Richmond Road.	Lot line adjustment	10/31/22	11/1/22
Lower Mount Bethel Township	Official Map	Update to the Township's official map.	Official Map	10/14/22	11/8/22
Lower Mount Bethel Township	Comprehensive Plan 2022	Update to the Township's comprehensive plan, to facilitate the update of the official map.	Comprehensive Plan	10/14/22	11/8/22