



**Lehigh Valley-Berks Section of the
Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association**

Section Council Monthly Meeting

Friday, February 9, 2024

Via Zoom

1. Welcome

Craig Beavers opened the meeting at 12:01 PM.

2. Reports

a. Treasurer's Report

Rick Roseberry was unable to attend. Craig provided his update. The current balance of the section account is \$4,851.

b. Berks County Planning Commission

David Hunter provided updates from the Berks County Planning Commission.

He spoke about the upcoming PA Land Institute being held at Albright College on March 2nd; the event offers 4 CM credits (3 regular and 1 law) and will cover recent law updates and topics about multi-municipal zoning.

David also spoke about difficulties regarding codification of zoning amendments and being able to access them. Some platforms take up to two years for full codification, which presents difficulties in accessing the amendments. He would like to hear any feedback or ideas from the group regarding solutions.

The Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority was awarded funding through the Federal Corridor ID program to study Amtrak service from Reading to Philadelphia. A consultant has been selected to create a service plan, and more information will be coming in the future.

c. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Joey Dotta provided updates from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

LVPC is focusing on the development of a Priority Climate Action Plan. Draft documents are being finalized and will be shared with the public for comments shortly.

LVPC is also working on finalizing their Annual Report, and is preparing to move to their new office at the Waterfront in Allentown.

d. State Planning Board

Tina Roseberry was unable to attend. Craig provided her update. The State Planning Board is looking to update their Land Use and Growth Plan, and they are seeking comments from the public.

e. State Committee Updates

i. Legislative Committee

Charlie Schmehl provided updates from the Legislative Committee

The committee is working with other organizations to provide update to housing legislation. Representative Siegel recently introduced several bills to provide updates to zoning regulations and housing, which are still pending. More information will be forthcoming.

ii. Professional Development Committee

Tina Roseberry was unable to attend. Craig provided her update. Planning for the 2024 State Conference is underway; requests for proposals are open for sessions.

iii. Executive Committee

The Chapter is finalizing their Communications Plan and will be releasing it later this year. Several recommendations will help keep the members updated. One notable recommendation is the update of the chapter website.

f. Lehigh Valley Consortium of Professional Organizations

Rick Roseberry was unable to attend. Craig provided his update. LVCPO is hosting a networking event at Smooth-On on February 13th in the morning.

3. Section Updates

a. Beginning of the Year Feedback

Craig provided some opening remarks for the start of the year. He announced the new section council members: Craig is serving as chair, Sam McLean is serving as Vice-Chair, and Rick Roseberry is serving as Treasurer/Secretary. For Council-at-Large, Molly Wood

and Charlie Schmehl have been appointed. There are still vacancies for Council-at-Large for professional and citizen planners if anyone is interested. Additionally, the Nominating Committee currently is fully vacant if anyone is interested in serving.

Craig and the Section Council are seeking feedback from members to help guide the future of the section. A survey will be sent out to learn how the section can engage with local planners and planning commissions, provide more useful events and information, and grow our membership.

b. Workplan for 2024

Craig discussed a draft Work Plan for the upcoming year, outlining goals and priorities for the section. First, is to engage with local municipal and private sector planners and grow a diverse Section membership. Second, is to provide meaningful communication to and from the Lehigh Valley-Berks membership. Third is to support our AICP candidates, certified planners, and members in their professional development. The draft Work Plan will be voted on by the Section Council at the March meeting.

David Hunter is glad to hear about updates, especially regarding the outdated website. Craig agreed and mentioned he is working to update the website. It is currently hosted by LVPC, and they are currently going through internal website updates themselves. Chris Stroehler asked if for the time being if the website url and redirect to the Facebook page. Steve Neratko said that he can help coordinate that from LVPC's end for the time being. The Section URL is held by LVPC, but the hosting site is difficult to update. Steve is happy to discuss the future of the website once the LVPC website updates are finished.

Chris Stroehler asked about CM events and if the section would sponsor other events for credit. The WeConserve conference is being hosted in Bethlehem this spring, but there are no AICP CM credits offered. Charlie mentioned that they have in the past, but usually its done at a workshop or related organization. He said there's no reason we couldn't. Chris hopes the section could help sponsor the conference, and also hopes the Chapter would work with WeConserve to help sponsor and partner to share costs or provide CM credits.

Craig agreed that it would make sense to work with WeConserve to provide CM credits for planners. He said he will speak with both WeConserve and the Chapter Board of Directors about this moving forward.

4. Local Initiatives and Events

Craig provided updates on upcoming events.

The Maryland Department of Planning will host a webinar on Affordable City Solutions on February 22nd and will provide 1.5 CM credits.

The PA Land Institute will be held on Saturday, March 2nd at Albright College and will provide 4 CM credits.

The Chapter will host their next Webinar Wednesday on March 6th at noon and will provide 1 CM credit.

The Chapter will also be hosting an AICP Prep Session on Saturday March 9th all day.

As mentioned, WeConserve is posting the Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference in April at the Wind Creek Casino in Bethlehem.

5. Round Robin Updates

Samantha McLean mentioned she is excited to hear about the new goals of the section and to gain feedback from the section. She asked about the length of the survey. Craig said he anticipates it being open for about a month or so, depending on responses.

Samantha also agreed that the Section has a great need for more outreach and connection with local planners, as she didn't even know about the section until a year ago.

Charlie Schmehl asked if emails were being sent to all members of the section, rather than only active participants. Craig said he requested an updated list from Kim Gusic for all section members, so we can make sure everyone is sent emails moving forward.

Craig mentioned he hopes to reach out to municipalities to share information about Organizational Memberships. The cost is relatively low, especially for State Chapter only membership, so he believes we can reach more planners and commissioners this way.

Craig thanked everyone for coming, and he welcomed anyone to send individual emails with feedback for suggestions moving forward.

6. Adjournment

Craig Adjourned the meeting at 12:36 PM