



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

Section Council Monthly Meeting

Friday, April 12, 2024

Upper Macungie Township Building, 8330 Schantz Rd, Breinigsville, PA 18031

Section Council in Attendance: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Rick Roseberry, Charlie Schmehl, Molly Wood

Section Members in Attendance: Corey Gray, Darlene Heller, Meredith Keller, Taylor Lawrence, David Manhardt, Stephen Nowroski, Gabriella Sabwa, Kal Sostarecz, Matt Sprung, Chris Stroehler

1. Welcome

2.

Craig Beavers opened the meeting at 12:01 PM. The Section welcomed Corey Gray, the new Senior Planner for the City of Bethlehem. Welcome Corey!

3. Minutes Approval

4.

Craig Beavers asked if there were any corrections to the March minutes, to which there were none. The minutes stand approved.

Motion: to approve the March 2024 Minutes. Moved by Rick Roseberry. Seconded by Craig Beavers.

Ayes: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Rick Roseberry, Charlie Schmehl, and Molly Wood. Nays: none. Passed 5-0.

5. Reports

a. Treasurer's Report

Rick Roseberry provided an update on Section funds.

The account has a balance of \$5624.71. An invoice for CM credits for the PA Land Institute is the only current invoice to be paid.

b. Berks County Planning Commission

No report from Berks County Planning Commission: a representative was unable to attend.

c. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

No report from Lehigh County Planning Commission: a representative was unable to attend.

d. State Planning Board

No report from the State Planning Board: Tina Roseberry was unable to attend.

e. State Chapter Updates

i. Legislative Committee

Charlie Schmehl provided an update from the Legislative Committee.

The General Assembly is still discussing amendments for local zoning and affordable housing. Democrats and Republicans have introduced differing bills to address housing shortages and redevelopment. There's an additional proposal to increase the NPDES permit minimum acreage from 1 acre to 5 acres. An affordable housing coalition of 50 coalitions was formed to advocate for passing legislation to allow for more housing to be built.

ii. Professional Development Committee

No Professional Development Committee update: Tina Roseberry was unable to attend.

There will be a CM event near Harrisburg on May 17th to obtain all four specialty credits for CM certification. Additional information is on the Chapter website.

iii. Executive Committee

Craig Beavers provided an update from the Executive Committee.

The Board of Directors recently voted to adopt the Communications Strategy Plan and is continuing to update the website.

iv. Student Engagement Committee

David Manhardt provided an update from the Student Engagement Committee.

The committee is seeking municipalities and offices who are hosting planning internships, as they wish to spread the word about them for planning students. The committee is also planning a podcast for high schoolers and college students to engage them in planning. They are seeking feedback on potential topics and formatting, and a survey is open if anyone has any feedback.

f. Lehigh Valley Consortium of Professional Organization

Rick Roseberry provided regarding LVCPO.

LVCPO consists of local professional organizations to get together and host workshop events and tours around the valley; the section has been participating for about five years. Recently, they requested that member organizations pay an annual fee of \$100 for membership. Rick requested guidance from the Section Council if we should continue to be a member and pay the fee or leave the organization. There was unanimous concurrent to pay the dues and continue membership.

Rick then asked if anyone else would like to serve as the Section's representative for LVCPO, as his schedule conflicts with meetings. Samantha McLean volunteered to serve as the new representative, and the Section Council was in unanimous consent.

6. Section Updates

a. By-laws Update Discussion

Craig Beavers provided an overview of this item.

The current section's bylaws are inconsistent with the Pennsylvania Chapter's, which is not allowed under its regulations. Additionally, numerous sections are outdated and unfollowed, such as the council organizational structure and election procedures. These proposed amendments would standardize existing practice to match Chapter regulations and peer sections across the state. Craig asked for a motion to approve opening a vote on the amendments.

Motion: to open a vote on the proposed amendments. Moved by Rick Roseberry. Seconded by Samantha McLean.

Ayes: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Rick Roseberry, Charlie Schmehl, and Molly Wood. Nays: none. Passed 5-0.

b. Meeting Time – Alternating to Wednesday

Craig Beavers provided an overview of this item.

Previously, there was a discussion of changing the meeting time to Wednesday to allow for LVPC members to attend, who have regular conflicts with Fridays and Mondays due to their working schedules. After a brief survey of members, 73% were in favor of having the meeting on Wednesdays.

Charlie suggested holding the meeting on Thursday, which would avoid potential conflicts with BCPC staff.

Samantha suggested that if a proposed Wednesday meeting conflicts with a Wednesday Webinar, the Section could host a watch party and open discussion on the topic afterwards.

Craig suggested that we try alternating meetings for a period to see what attendance is like, starting with the June meeting. We can set at the next meeting if we would like to hold a Wednesday or a Thursday meeting.

c. Website, Social Media, and Emails

Craig Beavers provided an overview of this item.

The Section recently launched new social media channels, which everyone is encouraged to follow and share with others. This will be used to share local news and updates, CM event opportunities, and interesting articles from planning sites.

Craig is working to gain access to the website from LVPC and switch it into our control. Once this happens, we will need to pay for hosting and domain fees.

David commented that he was actually the last person to update the site, back when we worked for LVPC.

7. CM Events

Chris Stroehler and David Manhardt suggested hosting an agricultural panel, based off of a similar event they held for their open space plan update. This would explain different aspects of agriculture planning, as well as potential topics in zoning, agritourism, etc. Chris and Dave would be willing to organize the event for later this summer. The Section Council was unanimous in agreeing to this and will help with planning.

8. Round Robin Updates – Local Initiatives and Events

Rick Roseberry shared news about new affordable housing legislation passed in New Jersey. He will circulate a memo he prepared on the topic.

Samantha McLean shared about Allentown's Safe Streets For All Action Plan, which will be kicking off in late April. They will be aiming for zero traffic deaths and coordinating community engagement to identify corridors and intersections for improvements. Additionally, she shared about Allentown's new draft Zoning Ordinance and SALDO, which is the Lehigh Valley's first form-based code, and include many substantial changes.

Craig Beavers shared about Palmer Township's Active Transportation Plan, which will be holding public engagement meetings in April and May to improve bicycling, walking, and transit usage in the community.

Chris Stroehler shared about South Whitehall Township's Transportation Plan, which will be including an active transportation plan and safe streets for all action plan to create a comprehensive document for these improvements. Additionally, they are working on a Landscapes Plan for open space, historic resources, and agriculture.

Molly Wood shared about the PA Public Transportation Association Conference in Lancaster. LANTA is well ahead of other transit agencies in terms of coordinating land use and transit, especially with providing review comments and coordination. She thanked everyone for their assistance with that at the municipal level.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Friday, May 10th at 12noon at South Whitehall Township. The Section will be providing lunch from Wegmans. Please let Craig know if you plan on attending so he orders enough food.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM.