



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

Section Council Monthly Meeting

Thursday, June 13, 2024

LANTA Headquarters, 1060 Lehigh Street, Allentown, PA 18103

Section Council in Attendance: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Charlie Schmehl (via Teams), Molly Wood

Section Members in Attendance: Ben Dinkel, Joey Dotta, Evan Gardi, Mackenzie Geisner, Corey Gray, Christian Martinez, Tina Roseberry (via Teams), Corinne Ruggiero, Gabriella Sabwa, Jill Seitz,

1. Welcome

Craig Beavers opened the meeting at 12:05 PM.

2. Minutes Approval

Craig Beavers asked if there were any corrections to the March minutes. Corey Gray provided minor comments regarding spelling corrections.

Motion: to approve the May 2024 Minutes. Moved by Molly Wood, Seconded by Craig Beavers.

Ayes: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Charlie Schmehl, and Molly Wood. Nays: none. Passed 4-0.

3. Reports

a. Treasurer's Report

Craig Beavers provided the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Rick Roseberry. The current balance of the Section account is \$5,342.53.

b. Berks County Planning Commission

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

c. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Several members of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission provided updates.

Jill Seitz spoke about LVPC's upcoming Housing Strategy Plan to address housing shortages in the Lehigh Valley. More information regarding municipal and community outreach will be announced soon.

Corinne Ruggiero spoke about the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, a follow-up to their Priority Climate Action Plan. The CCAP will address all emission sectors in the region and identify goals and actions to reduce emissions. Additionally, LVPC is preparing to update their Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans across the region covering fifteen different watersheds. Municipalities are encouraged to designate representatives who will participate on the advisory committee.

Ben Dinkel mentioned that the comment period for their draft Transportation Improvement Program will close on June 15th.

d. State Planning Board

Tina Roseberry provided an update from the State Planning Board.

The SPB is updating their Growth Management Plan for 2025, which will also include an analysis of policy and funding recommendations. It is currently in the data collection phase, and DCED will be seeking input from planning agencies soon.

e. Lehigh Valley Consortium of Professional Organization

Samantha McLean reported that there have been no new items from LVCPPO since the last meeting. Their next meeting is scheduled in September.

4. Pennsylvania Chapter Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee

Craig Beavers reported that there have been no new items from the Executive Committee since the last meeting. The Board of Directors is scheduled to meet next week on June 21st.

b. Legislative Committee

Charlie Schmehl provided an update from the Legislative Committee.

There are three major bills under discussion involving housing reform:

- HB 782 - Would require more analysis and multi-municipal cooperation for Land Uses of Regional Significance
- HB 1976 - Would allow apartments in commercial districts served by public utilities
- HB 2045 - Would permit duplexes and multifamily houses by right in residential districts based on several population factors

The Legislative Committee does not inherently endorse any specific proposal. Instead, they have provided several suggestions, including requiring municipalities to select from a “menu” of housing reform options that best fit their need.

c. Professional Development Committee

Tina Roseberry reported that there have been no new items from the Professional Development Committee.

Tina requested to step down from the PDC, as she has been busy at her job. Tina provided a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities for the position.

Samantha McLean volunteered to serve as the section’s PDC Representative. The appointment was unanimously approved by Section Council through voice vote.

d. Student Engagement Committee

No report from Student Engagement Committee: a representative was unable to attend.

e. Communications and Membership Committee

Craig Beavers reported that there have been no new items from the Communications and Membership Committee since the last meeting. The Committee continues to seek any guest contributors to the monthly newsletter and social media.

5. New Business

a. Forming an Education Committee and Events Committee

Craig Beavers provided an overview of this agenda item.

At the last meeting, the group discussed the potential of forming two new committees: an Events Committee and an Education Committee.

Education Committee - Focused on providing outreach about planning to educational institutions at various levels. Potential activities include: promoting planning as a career to local university students in related fields; promoting the Chapter scholarship program for students interested in planning; promoting mentorship programs to help students learn about the variety and day to day responsibilities in planning jobs; providing information to high school students or attending career fairs to advocate for planning; promoting internships and entry level positions to college students and recent graduates; coordinating with the Chapter Student Engagement Committee on events and initiatives.

Events and Outreach Committee - Focused on developing and recommending educational and social events for planners. Potential activities include: recommending CM events for the Section Council; working out details for events, such as speakers, venues, hospitality, etc.; planning for the annual event/Christmas party; assisting the Conference Planning Committee when hosting the state conference; planning for outreach events to promote planning to the public, such as booths, tables, etc.; providing content for Section social media, website, and newsletters.

Molly Wood commented that it would be a good idea to start outreach with the local colleges to get students involved in planning. We would have to get contacts into the schools and see what would work with their curriculum and schedules.

Charlie Schmehl commented that the Education Committee would be good to work in conjunction with the Chapter's Student Engagement Committee.

Samantha McLean commented that both committees seem like a great idea to help capture young professionals and keep them in the area.

Motion: to create an Education Committee and an Events Committee. Moved by Molly Wood, Seconded by Samantha McLean. Ayes: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Charlie Schmehl, and Molly Wood. Nays: none. Passed 4-0.

6. Events

Craig mentioned that the Section is planning an Agriculture CM Event for September, involving local farmers and related professions to talk about farmland preservation, agritourism, and zoning/land use.

Craig also mentioned that the State Chapter officially confirmed that our Section will host the 2026 state conference. More information to come.

7. Round Robin Updates

Samantha McLean provided an update on some projects in Allentown. MBI is developing the city's Safe Streets for All Action Plan, and they are collecting feedback via an online survey and will have tables at upcoming events.

Corey Gray provided an update on projects in Bethlehem. The city closed their RFP for their Parks and Recreation Master Plan and will be selecting consultants shortly. The city is also working with Lehigh University on the Alley House pilot project to develop more ADUs in appropriate neighborhoods. Additionally, work is continuing on planning a project with the Sun Inn as a part of America250.

Molly Wood commented that several federal grant opportunities are upcoming, both now and for next year, that would be great to partner with LANTA and local municipalities, especially with Bethlehem and Allentown regarding zoning and housing initiatives. For instance, a TOD Pilot Grant program has been launched which would greatly benefit the area; she would love to collaborate with our municipal partners to develop applications for next cycle.

Craig Beavers spoke about Allentown's new zoning ordinance update. The city will be holding several public meetings during the second week of July to seek public comment.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, July 11th at 12noon, held virtually.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.