



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

Section Council Monthly Meeting

Thursday, July 11, 2024

[Virtual – Microsoft Teams](#)

Section Council in Attendance: Craig Beavers, Samantha McLean, Charlie Schmehl

Section Members in Attendance: Jamal Abodalo, Meredith Keller, Corinne Ruggiero, Craig Peiffer, Jeff Witman

1. Welcome

Craig Beavers opened the meeting at 12:05 PM.

2. Minutes Approval

Craig Beavers asked if there were any corrections to the June minutes. There were none. The minutes stand approved.

3. Reports 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.

4. Planning Partner Reports

a. Berks County Planning Commission

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

b. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Corinne Ruggiero provided an update for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

LVPC is busy working on several development reviews as construction activity continues to remain steady. LVPC is continuing to prepare to launch their Housing Plan to assess housing need and strategies in the region. Work continues on the PLAN Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan, and they will be holding meetings for feedback in the coming months.

Corinne Ruggiero also 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.

c. State Planning Board

No report from the State Planning Board: a representative was unable to attend.

d. Lehigh Valley Consortium of Professional Organization

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

5. Pennsylvania Chapter Reports

a. Executive Committee

Craig Beavers reported that there have been no new items from the Executive Committee since the last meeting.

b. Legislative Committee

Charlie Schmehl provided an update from the Legislative Committee.

The four proposed bills related to housing, and the proposed bill related to regional impact developments are effectively dead. The legislature received intense pushback on the proposals and will not be bringing them to a vote after committee.

The General Assembly still intends to pass some form of legislation to help address housing issues in the Commonwealth. The leading option is providing a menu of choices that municipalities can select to promote housing development, and it would be required for certain sized communities in counties with a growing population between the latest Census counts. There is currently no proposed legislation for this.

c. Professional Development Committee

Samantha McLean provided an update from the Professional Development Committee.

The August 7th webinar presenter fell through, and they need to find a presenter ASAP. If anyone would be interested, please let Sam know if you have something ready to go.

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.

6. Section Updates

a. Committees – Education and Events

Craig Beavers provided an overview of this agenda item.

The Section is still looking for members who would like to sit on our two new committees. Information on their tasks can be found below. These are open to members and non-members; anyone who has an interest or talent in either of these areas can join.

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.

b. 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

Jeff Witman asked about Second-Class Townships to First Class Townships. Charlie mentioned Lower Macungie Township's experience.

Craig Peiffer said that Bethlehem is looking for a Zoning Officer.

Jamal Abodalo spoke about Reading's upcoming updates to their SALDO and Zoning Ordinance. The City would like to add provisions for changing uses with redevelopment, but wanted clarification about if that is authorized by the MPC. Charlie said that the MPC does have provisions for requiring land development review, but said that alternative reviews like site plan might also be effective to minimize impact to developers.

Craig Beavers mentioned that Allentown is hosting its final public meeting tonight to gather data on the draft Zoning Ordinance and SALDO. It is anticipated to be revised and brought back later this fall.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 8th at 12noon, TBD.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48 PM.