



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

Section Council Monthly Meeting

Thursday, September 12, 2024

[Hybrid – Microsoft Teams](#) and Upper Macungie Township Building, 8330 Schantz Rd, Breinigsville, PA 18031

Section Council in Attendance: Craig Beavers, Charlie Schmehl, Molly Wood

Section Members in Attendance: Carmen Bell, Benjamin Dinkel, Joey Dotta, Evan Gardi, Jennifer Gomez, Corey Gray, Brian Hite, David Hunter, Meredith Keller, Taylor Lawrence, Laura Mursch, Susan Myerov, Tina Roseberry, Jillian Seitz, Steven Schrayner, Chris Stroehler, Dwayne Tillman, Melissa Velez

1. Welcome

Craig Beavers opened the meeting at 12:02 PM. Craig welcomed several new members, such as Dwayne Tillman from City of Easton and Jennifer Gomez from City of Allentown.

2. Minutes Approval

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

3. Treasurer's Report

Craig Beavers provided the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Rick Roseberry. There was one transaction in the past month: \$23.05 for travel to APA Board meeting.

4. Planning Partner Reports

a. Berks County Planning Commission

David Hunter provided an update for the Berks County Planning Commission.

BCPC is hosting an event on Thursday, October 3rd 8am to noon called Building the Boroughs focused on providing support to borough redevelopment. More information will be provided shortly.

BCPC is inviting the Planning Manager from the City of Reading to present the Downtown Strategic Plan at their next meeting on October 9th. The plan will help provide a blueprint for attracting redevelopment and improve the downtown core.

BCPC is working on updating their Long-Range Transportation Plan, hosting five public meetings across the county in October. Additionally, several other multi-municipal planning efforts are underway.

BCPC and the SRPRA are continuing to advocate for passenger rail service from Reading to Philadelphia.

b. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Joey Dotta, Ben Dinkel, Jill Seitz, and Sue Myerov provided an update for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

LVPC held their first WorkshopLV: Multimodal meeting to discuss updating the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan, which focuses on the mobility and accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities.

LVPC is preparing a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan as 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. An update to the regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory has must been completed, which also includes Carbon and Warren counties.

LVPC is continuing their Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan updates across the region covering fifteen different watersheds. They are currently working on technical studies and reaching out to municipalities for additional information.

LVPC continues to work on the Housing Attainability Study, partnering with the Urban Land Institute on outreach planning and preparing a kickoff for later 2024.

LVPC is coordinating several multi-municipal planning projects across the bi-county area, including the Northern Lehigh Area, River Central Area, and Slate Belt Area.

c. State Planning Board

Tina Roseberry reported that there have been no new items from the SPB since the last meeting.

d. Lehigh Valley Consortium of Professional Organization

Samantha McLean reported that LVCPO is planning two events: one is a post-election analysis in November and the other is a post-holiday party in January. Additional information will be provided shortly.

5. Pennsylvania Chapter Reports

a. Executive Committee

Craig Beavers reported that the Chapter Board has officially selected Wind Creek for the 2026 conference in Bethlehem. Starting next year, we will start to organize our conference committee to begin preparation.

b. Legislative Committee

Charlie Schmehl provided an update from the Legislative Committee.

There has been little movement in Harrisburg, as most officials are concentrated on the upcoming election. Several different bills have been proposed for housing and zoning changes, but nothing additional has gained momentum at the moment.

c. Professional Development Committee

Samantha McLean provided an update from the Professional Development Committee.

Stevens and Lee will be hosting a Land Use Seminar on October 31st at 8AM to 10AM. It will be worth 2 CM credits and breakfast will be provided.

d. Student Engagement Committee

David Hunter provided an update from the Student Engagement Committee.

The committee will be launching a video series at the APA PA State Conference in Erie, focusing on engaging high school students and uncommitted college students with planning. They will also be holding a panel session about entering the planning field, as well as a mentor-mentee program.

6. Section Updates

a. Appointment of Steven Schrayner to Section Council

Craig Beavers introduced this item.

After requesting interest from the membership to fill vacancies, Steven Schrayner requested to be appointed to the Section Council. Steven is from Allentown, previously working with LANTA, but now is involved with the Southeast Section; he desires to get more involved with his home section.

Motion: to appoint Steven Schrayner to Section Council. Moved by Craig Beavers, Seconded by Molly Wood. Ayes: Craig Beavers, Molly Wood, Charlie Schmehl. Nays: none. Passed 3-0.

b. APA PA State Conference – October 13-15 in Erie

Craig Beavers introduced this item.

The Southeast Section is launching a carpooling form with LV/B. If anyone is interested, please check it out. Early Bird Registration for the conference ends tomorrow, so be sure to register soon if you haven't already. For those in attendance, we will be holding a section photo at one of the socials.

c. Committees

Craig Beavers introduced this item.

The Section is desperately looking for volunteers to help with both our Education Committee and our Events Committee. There has been very low interest in volunteering, and we are kindly asking for anyone to help.

Molly Wood stated that she would be happy to help lead the effort with the Education Committee. Anyone interested can reach out and they can start a conversation. She has done work with Lafayette and Lehigh with various classes and thinks there is opportunity to raise awareness about planning.

Tina Roseberry spoke about how she coordinated with Easton Area High School to teach students about planning. Weekly, she would coordinate with students on making a mock land development project. They were each assigned roles in the project, and they would then submit to a mock planning commission made up of teachers and the principal. It educated students on how things get built in the community, and the role that the community and local professionals play in managing development.

David Hunter commented on Tina's previous efforts and said that such an effort would be worth looking into again as a future effort of the Education Committee.

e. Upcoming Events

Craig Beavers introduced this item.

The Section is looking into hosting an Agriculture Panel, but it would be in the Spring at the earliest. Chris Stroehler volunteered to help coordinate the event, but more work needs to be done.

The Section is helping to arrange CM credits for a Land Use Seminar hosted by Stevens and Lee on October 31st.

The Section will be hosting their annual holiday party in December. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

7. Round Robin Updates

Tina Roseberry shared information about HUD's PRO Housing Grant. It helps to break down barriers to affordable housing and provides numerous funding opportunities. Any interested municipalities should consider looking into the program.

Chris Stroehler asked about any interest in starting a Land Development 101 type of workshop, at a lower level than what might be taught at a PMPEI class. It might cover very basic elements for the general public about planning and how to get involved. The Education Committee might be able to help coordinate something. Using information from PMPEI's shorter classes or the PennFuture Citizen Involvement Guide might be a good start. It can also be used to help recruit future PC or ZHB members.

Jennifer Gomez gave several updates from the City of Allentown. The City is working through comments received from their Zone Allentown initiative, which is a comprehensive zoning code rewrite that aims to create a more urban form-based code. The City was recently awarded \$20 million for a Recompete Grant, which will develop a plan and implementation efforts to reduce barriers to the prime age employment gap. The City is also finalizing a Housing Study, providing recommendations to create more affordable housing opportunities. The City also recently received a grant to conduct historic site surveys.

Corey Gray gave several updates from the City of Bethlehem. The City continues to work on their Alley House project recently closed the RFP for updating their zoning for ADUs. The City is also working on creating a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, coordinating SS4A funding for the Broad Street redevelopment, working on a Complete Streets Plan and Bike Feasibility Study, and updating their zoning ordinance for online viewing.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 14th at 12noon – Virtual Only

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 PM.