



**Lehigh Valley/Berks Section of  
APA Pennsylvania**

**Section Council Monthly Meeting**

Thursday, November 14, 2024

[Virtual](#) - Microsoft Teams

**Section Council in Attendance:** Craig Beavers, Molly Wood

**Section Members in Attendance:** Benjamin Dinkel, Joey Dotta, Isabella Fiume, Evan Gardi, Corey Gray, Scott Greenly, Brian Hite, AJ Jordan, Meredith Keller, Taylor Lawrence, Humaira Nabeela, Sam Pearson, Chris Strohler

**1. Welcome**

Craig Beavers opened the meeting at 12:03 PM. Craig welcomed several new members, such as Samantha Pearson, Isabella Fiume, and Humaira Nabeela.

**2. Minutes Approval**

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

**3. Treasurer's Report**

Craig Beavers provided the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Rick Roseberry. The current balance is \$5142.11.

**4. Planning Partner Reports**

**a. Berks County Planning Commission**

Taylor Lawrence provided an update for the Berks County Planning Commission.

BCPC continues to work on multi-municipal planning efforts across Berks County, in both pre-planning and planning phases.

**b. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission**

Joey Dotta and Ben Dinkel provided an update for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

LVPC continues to work on the Housing Attainability Study, partnering with the Urban Land Institute on outreach planning and preparing a kickoff in the near future.

LVPC is finalizing the updated Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan, which focuses on the mobility and accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities. The transportation team is anticipating starting a roadway functional class review in the near future.

**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**

Craig Beavers provided the LVPCO report on behalf of Samantha McLean. LVPCO is planning two events: one is a post-election analysis tonight and the other is a post-holiday party in January. Additional information will be provided shortly.

**5. Pennsylvania Chapter Reports**

**a. Legislative Committee**

Charlie Schmehl was unable to attend; there is no Legislative Committee report this month.

**b. Professional Development Committee**

Craig Beavers provided the Professional Development Committee report on behalf of Samantha McLean.

The Stevens and Lee Land Use Seminar event was very successful and had a good turnout. Upcoming Webinar Wednesdays will be posted on the section and chapter websites.

**c. Other Committee**

There were no other Chapter Committee reports this month.

**6. Section Updates**

**a. Recap and Discussion: APA PA State Conference**

Craig Beavers introduced this item.

The APA PA State Conference was held a few weeks prior in October, and anyone wishing to share some takeaways from the conference are welcome to do so.

Chris Stroehler commented that the conference was enjoyable despite the distance. There were several engaging events for emerging planners, including good turnouts from local universities. There are many items that would be beneficial to replicate when our section hosts the conference in 2026. Molly Wood and Corey Gray echoed the sentiment and shared their own experiences and connections to help strengthen that idea.

**b. 2025 Section Budget**

Craig Beavers provided an overview of the proposed 2025 Section Budget.

The budget is required to be approved by the Section Council and sent to the Chapter in early 2025. This will be on display on our website until the proposed adoption at the January meeting.

The proposed revenue consists primarily of carryover funds from 2024 and the typical Chapter reimbursement, for an approximate total of \$5,000. Registration fees for events are proposed for 2025 to fund future events.

The proposed expenses reflect several new initiatives for 2025, including funding for education and event committees, a scholarship for AICP Exam fees, website hosting, and other smaller expenses for an approximate total of \$1,760.

**c. Education Committee – Molly Wood**

Molly Wood provided updates of the Education Committee.

Meredith and Molly met to discuss a potential plan of action and brainstorm ideas for the committee. One big question is the interaction between the section and the Chapter Student Engagement Committee. Molly said one area of interest is student involvement at local colleges that have majors related to planning, providing exposure and information about the profession.

Craig agrees that further conversation with the Student Engagement Committee will be needed to coordinate and not duplicate, but there are a multitude of opportunities for engaging students like Molly mentioned. Craig thanked Molly and Meredith for their work so far and future efforts with the committee.

**e. Events Committee – Samantha McLean**

Samantha McLean was unable to attend; there is no Events Committee report this month.

**7. Upcoming Events**

Craig Beavers provided an overview of several upcoming events, including the Post Election Analysis – November 14<sup>th</sup> at 5PM; Annual Holiday Event – December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6PM; Agriculture Panel – Spring 2025; and 2026 Conference – Bethlehem.

Chris Strohler spoke about the planning for the Agriculture Panel. They are looking at March at Eight Oaks Distillery, holding an hour-ish event in the afternoon.

Molly Wood mentioned that she has a great potential speaker in mind for 2026 - Veronica Davis, who wrote a book on inclusive transportation. She will reach out to see if she is interested or available.

**8. Open Floor and Updates**

Chris Strohler agreed with previous comments about the committees and determining an action plan. He also spoke with Isabella Fiume at DCED to discuss a Land Planning 101 type of event, hoping that his can be discussed in 2025. South Whitehall continues work on their Comprehensive Transportation Plan, finalizing drafts of their active transportation plan and safety action plan. The next phase for congestion management and roadway reclassification will be put out for RFQ in 2025. South Whitehall also received an LSA grant to complete a road safety audit along Hamilton Boulevard near Dorney Park to explore safety solutions.

Corey Gray gave several updates from the City of Bethlehem. The City will be kicking off their Parks and Recreation Master Plan soon, with Omnes as the consultant. The ADU Alley House project is also progressing, with a consultant chosen from Oregon. The City also recently closed on the purchase of the missing gap between the South Bethlehem Greenway and the Saucon Rail Trail, which will be explored at the next THE LINK Trail Network meeting. Finally, the City is preparing to release an RFP for a Complete Streets Plan and Bike Infrastructure Study to be due in January.

Taylor Lawrence asked is anyone had any experience with tracking and organizing updates and amendments with zoning ordinances. In Berks County, any municipalities do not have the ability to make their documents

accessible or comprehensive, leading to major difficulty in tracking amendments. BCPC wants to keep a digital database or spreadsheet for this effort and wants to see if anyone has any suggestions. Craig and Chris agreed that they have similar problems to try and update ordinances comprehensively, and locally its usually piecemealed. A lack of funding for digitizing is also very difficult to keep tabs on ordinance updates. Craig will include a request in this email blast if anyone has any recommendations for this request.

Craig Beavers shared a few updates from Palmer Township, who will be looking at updating a 30-year old SALDO and launching a Bushkill Creek Greenway study in 2025. In Allentown, the city is continuing to work on the Zoning and SALDO updates, with additional revisions needed based on public feedback. Finally, Craig reminded everyone to share the open planning positions in the area with their networks, such as the vacancy at Lower Macungie.

#### **9. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at noon – virtual.

#### **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:59 PM.