



**APA Pennsylvania
Lehigh Valley/Berks Section**

Section Council Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

[Virtual - Microsoft Teams](#)

***Attendance:** Craig Beavers, Molly Wood, Christopher Strohler, David Manhardt, Meredith Keller, Richard Roseberry, Brian Hite, Sean Ziller, and Isabella Fiume*

1. Welcome

Craig provided a brief overview of Section Council responsibilities and reiterated the main purpose of the Section Council, which is to steer activities in the Lehigh Valley/Berks Section.

2. PA Chapter Appointments

Craig reviewed the new chapter and committee appointments as follows and noted we should maintain a yearly review of appointments. Craig opened the floor for discussion of chapter and committee appointments. There are no objections to the list. The following list stands approved.

- a. Board of Directors – Craig Beavers**
- b. Board of Directors (Alt.) – Samantha McLean**
- c. Board of Directors Citizen – Brian Hite**
- d. Board of Directors Citizen (Alt.) – Sean Ziller**
- e. Legislative Committee – Craig Beavers**
- f. Professional Development Committee – Samantha McLean**
- g. Planning Officials Committee – Brian Hite**
- h. Student Engagement Committee – David Manhardt and Molly Wood**
- i. Communications and Membership Committee – Thiago Almeida**
- j. Great Places Committee – Craig Beavers**

3. Section Appointments

a. Nominating Committee

Craig noted that the roles of the Nominating Committee have typically been filled by Section Council. Most recently, Jenn Gomez volunteered, but could use some help. This will be circled back to come time for the next election.



b. Education and Students Committee

Craig mentioned a need for volunteers for this committee. Meredith and Molly are currently involved and working on partnerships with local universities.

Chris brought up an idea for the committee to organize and host a small social event, aimed at encouraging student engagement and participation with the section. Brian offered to assist with making university connections and spreading the word to students at Lafayette. The invitation, ideally, would be extended to students studying related fields at all local schools (e.g., Lehigh, Muhlenberg, etc.).

Molly also mentioned her connection, Karen Pooley, who leads Lehigh University's Small Cities Lab. Molly noted interest in inviting Karen and her colleague, Wes Hiatt, to present at the 2026 APA PA Conference. This would hopefully help to raise student interest and awareness of the conference.

Molly also noted that her forthcoming student engagement updates will be more conference related. She also mentioned the benefits of engaging with students before summer break, so they have a reasonable heads-up.

c. Events and Outreach Committee

Craig mentioned a need for volunteers for this committee. Chris volunteered to continue his involvement in this committee. Sean volunteered to partake as well and Samantha will continue her involvement.

4. 2026 Section Budget and 2025 Section Recap

Craig reviewed our 2025 Section Recap, to be transmitted to the chapter. Craig then provided a review of the proposed 2026 budget, outlining section expenses and foreseeable revenue options.

Meredith asked if there may be any additional incurred costs for hosting in-person meetings that may not be reflected on the budget. Craig explained that at in-person meetings, attendees would typically be expected to pay for their own lunch and we would not be booking any venues that require a fee.

Craig asked for a motion to approve. Motion to approve by Chris, seconded by Meredith. The 2026 budget stands approved.

5. 2026 Section Work Plan

Craig reviewed our 2026 Section Work Plan and asked if anyone had any thoughts, comments, or questions. Chris asked for clarity on 3.2. Facilitate/host at least three CM credit offerings throughout the year. Craig explained that this should be attainable, as there are already ideas for 2-3 CM credit offerings: Berks County; Stevens and Lee, and potentially the data centers panel.

Craig mentioned that the 2026 Section Work Plan can be regarded as a living document. As the year progresses, we can revisit and adjust.



6. 2026 Meeting Schedule

Craig reviewed the following expected meeting dates. To improve attendance and lessen confusion as experienced the previous year, Section Council Officers and Committees meetings will be held separately from Full Section Membership meetings. Meetings will also be moved from Thursdays to Fridays.

a. Section Council Officers and Committees

i. April 1, 2026

ii. July 1, 2026

iii. October 7, 2026

b. Full Section Membership

i. February 13, 2026

ii. May 15, 2026

iii. August 14, 2026

iv. November 13, 2026

7. Education Committee – Molly Wood

a. Engagement with Lehigh University

8. Events Committee – Samantha McLean

a. March Event - Data Center Panel

Craig mentioned a data center event as an idea for the March section event. As event as such would be a moderated panel on data centers including some of the following: design elements; what they are; review processes; land use guide; PPL; Penn Future; etc. Craig will ask Jill Seitz from LVPC to moderate the panel. Meredith offered to reach out to an applicant who proposed a data center in her township.

Due to projected attendance, this event may be best held at a school or university, ideally in-person. Other potential meeting spaces were discussed. Molly will reach out to her contacts at Lehigh University about meeting space potentially open in March for a community panel discussion.

Sean mentioned that he has contacts with Ben Franklin who have many spaces and he will reach out to inquire about March availability as well.

Craig will touch base with Samantha following the meeting to review potential speakers and provide updates. If more time is needed, this event could be moved to April.

b. June Event - TBD



Craig noted thoughts of the section hosting a movie night, mixer, or evening get together or potluck, possibly at a local park.

c. September Event – TBD

Craig said this event may still be TBD, as the section will be heavily focused on conference planning activities. Chris suggested an event geared towards students to encourage them to come to the conference. Molly asked what sort of timeline we would be looking at for student registration and noted this should be kept in mind.

d. December Event – Holiday Event

9. PA Chapter Updates

Craig noted that this year the chapter board directors updates the three-year strategic plan for the PA Chapter. The board will be hosting a retreat sometime in June to review the priorities for the state chapter for the next three years. A previous strategic plan had a focus on communication, developing more legislative capacity, and promoting planning.

Craig will be leaning on the Section Council for feedback and thoughts to take to the retreat.

10. Open Floor and Updates

Craig noted that everyone on the call is involved with the conference. Conference activities are on track and progressing well. Molly reviewed the status of each subcommittee.

The priority this month is the program subcommittee. A draft call for presenters is ready to be submitted to Kim Gusic for feedback.

The sponsorship/fundraising subcommittee has created a spreadsheet for potential contacts. The request for sponsorship will need to be reformatted. A few sponsors are lined up and Dave estimates we are about 20% to our goal.

The special events subcommittee had a list of potential venues. Venues will be chosen in February and ideally nailed down in March. The Sunday night welcome reception is between ArtsQuest and the National Museum of Industrial History.

The speakers subcommittee is in a good spot with planning the historic preservation panel. Dave will procure John Hassell's rate by February. Molly has sent a contract to her contact, Veronica Davis.

Dave asked for the section to contribute funds to the conference, on behalf of the sponsorship subcommittee. Craig agreed.

11. Next Meeting – Friday, February 13th – Virtual



Craig asked for any ideas for a potential venue. Meredith mentioned The Shelby. Craig will share a poll to gauge attendance in the next section newsletter. Once a headcount is acquired, Craig will reserve a space at the restaurant.

12. Adjournment