

SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2009
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Hellertown Borough

- A. **Call to Order:** The Saucon Valley Partnership meeting was called to order by Chair, Ed Inghrim, on January 14, 2009 at 7:05 PM at Hellertown Borough Hall.
- B. **Roll Call: Present:** Ed Inghrim, Chair; Glenn Kern, Mayor Fluck, Jane Balum, Priscilla deLeon, Jack Cahalan, Charlie Luthar. Margie Segaline arrived at 7:07 PM; Jennie McKenna arrived 7:08 PM; Susan Baxter arrived at 7:25 PM.
- C. **Election of Officers (One Year Term)**
1. **Election of Chair:** Ed moved to nominate Glenn as Chair, second by Jane. All in favor.
 2. **Election of Vice Chair:** Priscilla moved to nominate Ed for Vice Chair, second by Glenn. All in favor.
 3. **Appointment of Secretary-Treasurer:** Ed moved to nominate Jack as Secretary-Treasurer, second by Glenn. All in favor.
- D. **Council of Governments**
1. **Minutes of December 2008 Meeting** - Motion by Ed, second by Priscilla to approve the minutes of December 10, 2008. All in favor.
 2. **Treasurer's Report** - Jack said for the month of December 2008, the fund balance for the checking account as of December 31, 2008, is \$19,627.78. There were no payments out of that account. In the Treasurer's account, the fund balance as of December 31, 2008 is \$7,755.35. During the month of December, there were payments made for transcriptions services of \$60.00 and to the Valley Voice for advertising of \$86.00. Motion by Glenn, second by Jane, to approve the Treasurer's Report. All in favor.
 3. **Approval to pay bills (if any)** - Jack said there are three bills to pay. The first one is to EPD for services November 1 to November 30, 2008 in the amount of \$1,560.36. The second bill is January 8, 2009 for their services rendered December 1 to December 31, 2008 for \$1,868.44. Motion by Priscilla, second by Ed, to approve the bills dated December 11 and January 8. All in favor.
- Jack said he has an invoice from Diane Palik for transcription services for the month of December for \$60.00. Priscilla moved for approval, second by Jane, for approval of the December 2008 invoice from Diane Palik. Priscilla said at their Township Council meeting, there was discussion on the format of the minutes, and she told Council that the SVP thought the minutes were very good, and were pretty thorough. Glenn said Ron Horiszny prefers the abbreviated version of minutes. Ed said he prefers they do the minutes the way they are done here. Priscilla said we'll be talking about this in the future. Glenn said it's good to get feedback. Ed said quite often we'll have problems trying to identify certain individuals with statements that were made publicly at a meeting, and the minutes certainly help. Jane said if the transcriptionist is taking minutes off of a recorder, you can't get it any more thorough than that. They are very good.
- E. **Citizens Commenting On Agenda Items:** The floor will be open if anyone wants to speak. No one raised their hand. Priscilla said she suggested moving the non-agenda item down as some people come in

later. Ed said last night they had a meeting and a guy sat there for three hours waiting to speak. Jack said is he hearing we can drop No. E, agenda items. Glenn said yes.

F. Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

1. Comp Plan Update & Schedule - Discussion (Note: EPD will not be attending meeting)

Jack said we reported at the last meeting that a copy of the public draft of the comp plan was distributed to the adjacent municipalities and the school districts and they have another week to send back comments to us. We also sent a copy to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) and we received two separate requests from them for additional information and we have been going back and forth with Carolyn and AJ at EPD to put together the information that the LVPC requested. They have indicated to us that they normally see a lot more data in comprehensive plans that they review. Ours is really not written that way. It does cite the sources, but those are appendixes at the end of the report which were given to them. We've been working with Carolyn to get the information put together on that.

Glenn asked is the information actually in there but not in the format that they are used to? Jack said we presented it a little bit differently. First thing, we wanted to make sure that what was in there met the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requirements for comp plans, and we wanted to make sure that was taken care of. The next issue was the format for a comprehensive plan and it appears that our plan is not in the format that the LVPC usually sees. Charlie said that a lot of what we cited was action plans – works in progress. Charlie said he thought they were looking for something more definitive, they want the paper, the volume, the back-up, etc.

Priscilla said the italics wording is what the LVPC had questions about, then who filled in the rest? Jack said Carolyn did. Priscilla said was this included in our email? Jack said no, we just received it from EPD today.

Charlie said we really should go through it, maybe over the phone with Carolyn and ask her to walk us through it. The other handout lists the background data elements that will go to LVPC on a disk. Jack said we need a positive review letter from the LVPC. Charlie said we tried to give them as much of the information as they requested as possible so they are satisfied. Jack said if you are comfortable with these responses to the questions, he and Charlie will submit it to the LVPC with the data on the disks. Charlie said the LVPC is going to meet at the end of the month to discuss their review. Glenn asked if the LVPC has seen the responses yet? Jack said no. Glenn said would it be beneficial for Carolyn to come out and talk to LVPC in person so that we get the positive response? Jack said they believe that this submission will be adequate for the LVPC to conclude their review. Ed said you might also want to suggest that if it would be helpful, she would be willing to come out.

Priscilla said since they asked the questions and the answers were provided, does it mean that the draft has to be revised to reflect this? The final plan is going to include whatever we give them? Charlie said yes, you are going to take another look. Priscilla said after the three entities look at the draft version and it gets changed, does it then have to go back to the adjacent municipalities for another 30 day clock? Charlie and Jack said they did not believe so.

Glenn said he's looking at question 2. LVPC is looking for specifics and there are no specifics to be given, as it's a plan of what we want to do. Charlie said there is information added on the disk that Carolyn has created, which is going to answer a lot of those questions. It was to be worked on, that's the point on it. They seem to want to have all of the solutions. Jack said we also emphasized and the LVPC acknowledged that this would be only the second multi-municipal comprehensive plan to be approved in the Lehigh Valley.

Priscilla said going back to no. 2, she's raised the question that there are many community stakeholders who are ready, willing and able to assist in the collection of needed information, what

does that mean – who are those stakeholders, what is their role, what is the process? Charlie said say you identify the Recreation Authority as action items - then you have a certain audience and constituency that would be involved with that issue and they would address that.

Jennie said it seems the LVPC is asking us to be more specific, but she still doesn't think we are answering their question as it looks like they are asking us to be more emphatic on what we are going to do. That came up on some of the reviews we've done. Is anyone else reading it the same way? Jack said what is confusing is they are asking us to lay out the whole plan of action from what we are going to accomplish and say here's where we are going to be, and it could be a period of six months or a year, or two years. He doesn't think that's the way we have it planned. What we have here is working towards that and getting these groups together and coming up with a joint solution for that process. They are looking for "get it done and put it in the comp plan".

Jennie said LVPC's role in reviewing this is to make sure we fit the MPC. Are we being too ambiguous? Jack said as far as the MPC compliance, EPD is a firm that has done ten or fifteen multi-municipal comp plans and they have assured us that our plan is in compliance with the MPC. Glenn said we are just trying to be LVPC compliant to get the gold star? Jack said yes. They have a checklist and they check it off (a.) if a traffic study was done, (b.) if a parking study was done, etc. Jennie said that with the reports, we are probably going to satisfy them. Jack said he hopes so. Jennie said she hopes it's a fluid dialogue with them. Charlie said whatever goes back to them, it will have that kind of tone on it, that we want to work with them and make sure we cover all of the bases. Priscilla said in all fairness, the MPC is a skeleton version of what they want and it's up to the municipalities then to expand on it as long as it is within the law and we look to the LVPC just like we look to our Planning Commissions and our EAC and the various other committees in our entities to make recommendations, to go one step further, and to make it a better community. She thinks the LVPC looks at these things.

Charlie said no. 9 is interesting as they talk about population and housing projections. They are looking for something very specific. It says you are going to have this and this after such a point, and you'll have such a school population. He thinks that the way he interprets it, and the economy as we just experienced right now, tells you that you can't make those projections because all of a sudden people aren't buying houses, people aren't doing things they used to do, and the way this comp plan was put together was to look at what is the possibility. In the build-out we emphasize it could be 20 years, 50 years, we don't know, but this is what the land has the capacity of. They are kind of asking something that's a moving target. You don't know, you put black and white numbers on it. Ed said they should read their own comp plan as they don't address the same issues as what our plan does. For example, on the issue of transportation, it addresses parking and future transportation. If you look at their document, they say nothing about it until they get to the very end where they say the LVPC will review and comment on major road improvements, will support road improvements, and will support traffic. There's no point.

Jack said he and Charlie went through the City of Bethlehem's draft comp plan as they were trying to answer these questions, and there's nothing in their plan either, other than they are going to work on the same type of thing. Charlie said they alluded to the Rails to Trails where they gave an example that they are going to expand, and hopefully, extend into Hellertown. Jack said a lot of the transportation things they are asking for are things that the LVPC should be doing the ground work on. They should be doing a lot of these studies, but they are asking each of the municipalities to spend the money and do the heavy lifting and submit this data to them. Charlie said we are still sensitive and want to make sure we are willing to work with them.

Jane asked if LVPC was looking for us to come up with answers for 11, 12, 13 and 14? Jack said those are a little bit more difficult because they are based on hard data collection that was not readily available to us. Margie said like the retirement and pension funds, are these all projections? Charlie said police pension fund, for example, they make a projection on expected return, which is about 7%. They were looking at a target number for return. Just like the housing, some of these things you can't make a precise estimate, you can't put a number down. They actually went back

and asked how much land is there that you can do something with, and then EPD came up with 22,000 population and they said that's the most you can get. Instead of saying in 20 or 50 years we are going to reach that, this is what your maximum could be and it could be any time. Margie said the long term is five years and it's not a very long period of time, so considering the economic slump, we may not get out of this for another 2-1/2 to 3 years based on what's being said. There's no way to do an accurate estimate of what the growth is going to be.

Jennie said she was looking at number 5 and why this is a bit of concern for her, she was thinking about how Hellertown recently received a review letter back from the LVPC - the Borough adopted an ordinance on rental conversions, and they kind of busted us by basically really stating they weren't comfortable with that type of housing, and it bothered her because there are hundreds of them, maybe not in that particular zone, but in Hellertown, you find them, and that's one of the things in a consolidated plan that the Borough does for the plan is we provide more dense housing. This idea of the housing issue, she likes their answer, but she also thinks we may be giving a little bit more by saying we are ready to incorporate LVPC's goals. She doesn't think their goals and our goals are similar for some of this dense housing. They don't understand what we are trying to do, so we need to push back a little bit on this one. Jack said that's basically the approach to the whole thing, they don't understand what we are doing with a lot of stuff because it hasn't come across their desk. They are looking for these kind of goals for each of these areas and we tried to put something down that kind of answered it, but didn't commit us to any specific actions.

Jennie said the "Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley", what does that mean to us and is it going to compel us to have more housing in areas where we can't because of our road structure, our water/sewer infrastructure, we're already saturated. Jack said it means just promoting affordable housing. Ed said it also shows that they do not have a plan. One size fits all and that should apply to every community and we should say, you can't apply a Bethlehem plan to Lower Saucon and Hellertown. Priscilla said we don't want to look like the rest of the Lehigh Valley, we want to look like us. In order to do that, we have to stick in our heels. We can zone whatever we want, we can't have just one zone, we have to have a mix. If you're the developer, you can't control what the developer wants to build. The cost of the housing, depending on what his budget is, those are the types of homes the developer builds.

Carolyn was connected on the telephone for a conference call. Charlie said, we the group here tonight, is having a discussion on number 5 housing. Ed, Susan, Mayor Fluck, Glenn, Jane, Priscilla, Jenny, Margie, Jack are all present this evening. Charlie said we tried to give background on why this document was generated. We explained the document has the italics which are the questions that were raised by the LVPC and the straight type is the responses we had. We have gone through many of them, and this is the first time for the group to really see them. One question that was just coming up was the housing number 5 having to do with willingness to continue working with surrounding municipalities and the LVPC and encouraging stakeholders in the Lehigh Valley to implement the strategies of the Lehigh Valley Coalition on Housing. This was one we put in there because the LVPC was using that in their document, thus encouraging the Lehigh Valley region to implement these strategies. There is some concern amongst our group here that we are tying ourselves down too much for a cookie cutter type solution that doesn't really fit the entire Lehigh Valley. Carolyn said this question, in the initial discussion EPD had with the LVPC, they were wondering how the housing strategies were going to be addressed? And what we've done with you is to focus those into the land use discussion in the comprehensive plan meaning the different areas where there are land use recommendations and the intent is that it's not density, but the intensity of housing or residential uses to compliment what you guys have, and then make other recommendations where appropriate.

When Charlie and Jack were able to meet with the LVPC and talk in more detail, they were recognizing that there were some other things, where they as a regional organization are trying to promote. They themselves do not have specific strategies for the region, but in their document, and also in the City of Bethlehem comp plan they reference a report "Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley", so trying to bridge some of all of the LVPC's comments with the basic

strategies that have been put out for the region, that is where this comment came from. When you look into the comp plan draft, there's a land use designation type, and that's how you are going to look at your zoning ordinance and keep what you have or make some updates and changes. You have a lot of control within your municipalities that you are going to be able to use, so that's a little more background on that piece.

Jack said another question we need to address, is our plan compliant with the MPC? Carolyn said yes, in terms of addressing land use and housing types that we've identified through land use, it has the transportation component, it addresses the open space recreation issues and also has different administration and action plan items, so yes, all the major components are addressed. The inclusion of the item regarding working with the surrounding municipalities and the LVPC on this housing aspect stemmed from our desire to keep things going in a positive direction with the LVPC and trying to recognize some of the general ideas they have had as part of their policy documents as well.

Jack said we also were looking at the items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. We tried to explain those were not attainable because of lack of data and also there were cost factors that restrained us from working on them. Carolyn said for example, number 14, that type of element is not one that needs to be addressed in a comprehensive plan because of the scale of that, and also, based on many comprehensive plans, they do not get into that level of detail or those type of studies themselves. There's a combination of things that are happening from the scope that you all have defined, the information you have available, what we were able to get, and what we were not able to get from LVPC in the early stages in terms of other background information which would fit in with what they are asking for, and lastly, it's not necessarily a comprehensive plan topic. Some people chose to address it, such as when LVPC was working with some of the communities in the area, but it's definitely a very detailed item. Ed said when he looked through the list of items they brought up, it would appear to him that many of these should be the responsibility of the LVPC, not the local municipality. Carolyn said he's not far off. At different stages, she, Charlie and Jack have been talking with the LVPC, and they brought up some of the examples of work they have done with other municipalities in the multi-municipal effort and some of the things they have chosen to pursue with those communities because of the expertise of the staff or the focus of the LVPC itself in terms of seeing points, regional or broad scale.

Priscilla said if a municipality in the Lehigh-Northampton County area wants to come up with these studies, they would pay the LVPC, correct? Carolyn said they could. Priscilla said she's not asking that we pay LVPC. You went to them for plans in the early stages and some of the plans were unavailable and now they are coming back and asking for data that they should have had. Carolyn said a regional planning organization typically has that information and they make it available to communities, so using transportation and focusing in on that, because a number of those comments at the end, one-third of the comments were focused on transportation. The detail of that work needed is pretty extensive, and from a comprehensive plan standpoint, what you all have information on and what you all have the ability to look at within your boundaries and recognize you have a lot of other influence outside of your boundaries that you need information on, it is very appropriate to look at this on a broader scale with a broader group like the LVPC. Priscilla said everyone should realize that with this enterprise, we did try to work with the City of Bethlehem and they didn't include us in their plan. Reading about the water and sewer issues, with the sewer, the City of Bethlehem has not been forthcoming with information on capacity issues. She knows the Authority has had issues with them for years over what capacity we have left at the City of Bethlehem's treatment plant. Carolyn said one of the most valuable things, here as a group, that you recognized was what the stage of some information you have is in and what you must do to get to the next level to work on the specific strategy. As part of the Action Plan, you outline what those initial steps are and the kind of information that you are recognizing is going to be important to consider. You've initiated concepts behind these comments, like 11 to 15, but in terms of getting to that level of detail that they are inquiring about, it's something you have to do as a next step. You have focused on a lot of other important issues in the comprehensive plan, and

frankly, you didn't need to, by MPC standards, get into a lot of detail of 11 to 15, the comprehensive stage.

Glenn said his main concern with what Carolyn just said is there seems to be a disconnect in what they are expecting from us and what we've given them, and really, we are looking for a gold star from them. Carolyn said the primary two reviewers of the plan, are both transportation engineers or transportation planners. Their area of focus, typically on an everyday basis, is transportation. Statements 11 to 15, she is assuming that one of the reasons they focused one-third of their comments on transportation, is because it's something they are familiar with. Questions 1 through 10, she believes the answers they have put together, plus the information that has all been compiled, that gives you your gold star level. There are certain components in the first ten that identify if there's a minor bit of additional text that is added to clarify some of the points, and then again, additional information on the CD. Beginning with questions 11 through 15, the Action Plan outlines some of the strategies that are going to get you to 11 to 15, but recognizing the way that the scope was put forth, and how you allocated your funding, the tasks that you were focusing on, and the information that is or is not available to the overall community, I think you have a series of actions to identify for the LVPC. We are interested in getting to these points. There is nothing in the MPC that talks about a transportation capital improvements program. That is a comprehensive study in itself, so while LVPC may have done that with other folks in the past, it's hard to do because you need transportation planners who are looking at a whole connection of communities that have some broader problems. She believes that with what you have, what she, Charlie and Jack have worked with LVPC in discussing in the recent weeks, they recognize the enthusiasm that you have and how you are in the process of actually starting the implementation process of some of these identified actions. The combination is very strong.

Ed said, if necessary, would you be willing to come here and sit with the people on the Planning Commission? Carolyn said that's something we can certainly do – yes. Ed said it would be appropriate to at least make an offer to the Planning Commission if you need additional information. We could make Carolyn available to go over the plan with them. Carolyn said sure.

Priscilla said following up on the transportation, she'd just be curious how their review of the Sands Casino was because they are stressing transportation. She would like to see their review letter. Carolyn said with the kind of information like that, it's a very valid point. When we were reviewing the information that was available, as part of the casino study or the different stages of the casino study, being able to incorporate that data into something that was understandable or legible for a community to work with in identifying where exactly things were going to happen or what the context of that was. That was not something that you were going to be easily able to do. It's a matter of discussion between PennDOT, yourselves, LVPC, and the other communities. This is a much broader issue. Glenn said that was meant for the multi municipal plan. Clearly, this number 13, plan should include an assessment of future transportation needs based on the recommended land use plan. That's outlined in the multi municipal plan as something we want to do, and clearly it's something we want to do, but the funding wasn't there to get the answer to that in this plan. He can't believe they can't understand that. Carolyn said that is a very valid point and what we were trying to say, the level of existing data is limited. Glenn said the whole point of the multi municipal plan was to point out those exact areas that they are now pointing out so we can study them in the future to give us an approach of where we want to go. We were successful at that, and now they are saying you need to answer that question.

Jack said one of the things that they were not aware of until he and Charlie went up there was how much this plan is a product of what all of you wanted to put in it. It wasn't a plan that was just produced out in Pittsburgh by a planning firm and was just brought here saying "here's the plan". Their first reaction was: who did this plan for you? He and Charlie really spent a lot of time explaining to them how the three entities got together and worked for two years to put this plan together. He thinks they were impressed by that.

Susan asked how is our plan different than others in the area? Jack said format wise, if you look at some of the other plans they have, you can go down the table of contents and it's almost exactly the same. Its local planning firms that do those.

Carolyn said she thought of one thing, back to Glenn's statement, one of the things that maybe we can add under 11 through 15 is to identify in the Action Plan where we have identified that these are things you are ready to look at next, you are getting to that point. The plan has made a step towards these things. The other thing you were just talking about, the way in which the background information, and mapping in terms of existing conditions, was put towards the back of the document, so that the front of the document is able to capture people's attention about what you, as entities, were wrestling with and what you were ready to take on in moving forward. She thinks that the way in which that is organized is different than the other things that come in front of them, where there may be a series of data elements and then there may be some recommendation type statements that are peppered in that, then they get to another series of data, or they present all the data first, and then by the time you get to the back, you are also wondering where is the meat of the actions, and what you guys have taken on, and truly, you've done an amazing job of balancing out what each of you are interested in and you are all ready to build the capacity to do and identify time frames for general goals, so you've really gotten into a lot of excitement to move forward.

Jennie said on question number 5, in your response you mentioned that an additional statement will be incorporated and her concern is we should be pretty firm on a response to them. We had an ordinance in Hellertown where we limited home conversions, in certain zones, and we sent the ordinance to the LVPC, and they came back with an unfavorable response and thought we were being too limited and we should be open to more conversions. It troubled us, as Hellertown Council, as we really felt we offer a lot and they were pushing us to build out. We just can't do it. She's just worried that if we say we are willing to continue to work with surrounding municipalities, then we're leading down a path we are not necessarily prepared to go whole heartedly. She wants to protect us. She could be way off base, but whatever you think is best. Carolyn said she understands her concern and how she is tying it in with this statement. To continue the discussion, you at a municipal level, in both communities, have provided and are providing the broad range from end to end all of the different housing intensities and things like that...things with infrastructure services and things without. The intention is you are going to participate at a regional level in this issue. Glenn said what does that mean? Carolyn said you as a municipality, are providing your fair share to all different types of housing types. It's the trickiest one of all. Ed said why not just make a statement to that effect in the document and say we do have a broad spectrum of housing types and densities, and we'll continue that policy in the future. Carolyn said we can do that. Jennie said we agree it's important. Ed said just make a positive statement..."in accordance with our land use strategies". If you look at their plan, and they pointed out it's four years old, they don't address any of that. They don't even address public transportation, which they are asking us to do.

Jack said to Carolyn, why don't you mention your conversation about the bicycle routes. Carolyn said in terms of the major spine. She said when they were looking at one of the diagrams that showed the major north-south and east-west bicycle route corridor, they asked when you head out of Hellertown and head up toward Wassergass, what is this following? Carolyn said it's on a series of roadways as well as following the creek within one of the valleys. It doesn't continue on the road because of safety concerns, and recognizably, there are going to be discussions down the line of potentially working with the private property, as some would be public property, and some would be to go up to this corridor, and it could be easements and working with the private sector. They really didn't understand why it wasn't on the road and wanted it to be more specific. It was just a very interesting way of looking at things. This wasn't appropriate for a comprehensive plan. Glenn said this is the theme of the whole conversation here tonight.

Carolyn said for number 5, we can refine. Under 11 to 15, we can add a couple of examples and suggest we are ready and what do we do next. Ed said also suggest we are more than willing to work with them to evaluate public transportation. Jack said you mentioned zoning audit, do you

want to briefly describe that is referred to in 3 and 6. Carolyn said when you all look towards those next steps and recognizably one of the things that communities should be doing in a practice of good planning is making sure there is reasonable relationship or compatible relationship between your comprehensive plan strategies and your zoning ordinances. Talking things through and recognizing there may be some areas appropriate for re-evaluating in terms of your individual zoning ordinances. The audit that is referred to in this recommendation summary is the first step. You as individual municipalities, if you chose, or if you want to do it together, is to potentially come up with an assessment in what ways do your current ordinances fit within the comprehensive plan, recommendations for land use, and different intensities in the relationship between the different areas of the municipality. That's what that audit process would be and it's something that could be completed in a relatively short amount of time and then setting you up with the outline saying here are the parts and pieces of our ordinances that we want to revise or we want to enhance. That's called out in the Action Plan which is one of the initial steps in looking at the ordinances. Margie said she wanted to make a suggestion that the only places that would be possible would be the side streets of Hellertown. The roadways of Lower Saucon would be a problem as speed on the road. Carolyn said we can add a few photos to illustrate some of the issues that would help in addressing the issues. Priscilla said would a solicitor tell us not to do that as it would be pointing out unsafe conditions? Carolyn said she doesn't know if they would or not. It's a matter of a typical problem, like you as many communities wrestle with. Think about it a little bit more tonight and she can talk to Charlie and Jack in the next couple of days. Priscilla said she doesn't want to hold it up; she just wants to give you her thoughts.

Jack said the plan would be for us to make some revisions to this based on the discussion tonight and then put it into a letter to the LVPC responding to their questions and giving them the CD that has all the backup data on it. Carolyn said we'll want to do this in the next two days so they can finish up their review.

Glenn said do you need any official direction from us? Jack said just a consensus that we have some direction from the comments and we can put the response together and send it to the LVPC and we'll also include in it the indication if they want to speak to Carolyn, that is possible.

G. Brief Report and Discussion Items

1. **Casino Impacts Funding - update** - Jack said you asked Charlie and me to find out what we could about any traffic studies that had been done for the casino in the City of Bethlehem. He and Charlie contacted the City Planning Department and were able to obtain copies of minutes of the City Planning Commission meetings, agendas, copies of letter sent to the Sands Bethworks developer indicating certain items they had to address in their land development plan. This was the extent of what was available from the City of Bethlehem Planning Bureau. They directed us to contact Frank Barron who is the City Traffic Director and we had a conference call with Frank and he went on for some time about all of the traffic studies. We put it all down into a chart for you. The various studies encompass the area from Route 78 all the way down 412 past LVIP and further down 412 as you get close to the casino, Daly Avenue, and as you move further down 4th Street to the Hill-to-Hill Bridge and studies were done at the Five Points intersection where they are going to be redirecting traffic. There's a variety of these reports. The only one we have seen before is the one done by Lublanecki Engineering for the Sands BethWorks casino. The others kind of piggyback on each other. One of them did a study, then the next one did a report on the study, and say they looked at it, so it's all kind of a piece meal type of thing. Whether they give us what we want, we can't determine that. Charlie said when he talked to Frank, he suggested Charlie talk to Stan Poplawski from PennDOT. He had talked to the Borough previously about the parking spaces on 412, and Charlie had asked him if he was going to come back and talk to us about how many parking spaces we were going to lose at the northern end of 412. He's going to find out if there was any summary instead of a whole bunch of numbers. Pretty much what he summarized is in the second paragraph that's there's very little work south of the 78. We did have that study, well before the casinos. Peter Terry, who is another consultant, we did some work with him relative to Polk Valley Road and he consulted for one of the property owners, American Family Services, and

he said they looked at Silvex Road north. In terms of 378, the closest they come to that is the Five Points area of South Bethlehem.

Priscilla said is any of this going to help us with the grant writing? Jack said it's hard to tell as it's such a piece meal type of thing. If you read the Planning Commission minutes, they were wading through all of these different studies to see what the impact would be from the casino. Their focus was just on Daly Avenue, 412 and Second Avenue. Priscilla said the traffic study they presented to the City of Bethlehem was very different than the one they presented to the Gaming Commission? Jack said that it is hard to tell with all these different studies. Priscilla said she was hoping to identify traffic counts that would help us with the fifth municipality that is not agreeing with the other four. Jack said that may be something we may have to produce ourselves. Charlie said that is something that Hellertown has at least talked about. If they have to demonstrate that there is an increase in activities you might want to do a baseline study now. Ed said the LVPC has all these traffic studies, why didn't they do them? Priscilla said you have to pay for that.

Charlie said he went over it with Bryan Smith to get a cost estimate for updating their zoning and SALDO, and one of the first things they said was to look at a parking study. Priscilla said awhile back, Mike Kaiser came and gave a presentation, right when we started doing the multi municipal plan and Bob Freeman was there, and Mike said he wasn't sure if they would have it in the budget. They had enough projects that they might not have been able to fit it in to do it. Ed said he wouldn't really want to hire them. Ed said talk about cookie cutter, they probably already had the plan in the drawer.

Glenn said should we suggest, as a COG, to our respective Council's, the possibility of doing a joint traffic study so we can get a baseline? Jack said he sees two things down the road that we will be talking with our group about and one is a traffic study, and the other thing we may be talking about is legal help to try and get the grant money flowing to us. Ed said do you know how much grant money we are talking about? Jack said we are talking about \$1.2 million. Ed said divide it evenly among five, it's \$200,000 each. You have to look at that and figure out what if you do a cost benefit study, you have to hire a lawyer, how much is he going to charge. Jack said that's assuming its allocated evenly five ways, which is what we proposed. The County might make this a full-fledged grant process and you will then have a pot of \$1.2 million and they will say all you guys fight over it. Jack said that they may also appoint municipal representatives to the General Purpose Authority so you might be voting on these grant applications. Jack said that is one of the things we want to talk about with Freemansburg and Hanover Township.

Jack said there are a couple other updates on the casino. We are still working with the four municipalities to put together this intergovernmental agreement that was suggested by Freemansburg. They started out with a resolution. He and Charlie looked at it and said they need an ordinance to go with it. We've now have a copy of the ordinance that is circulating around and they'll also get a copy of the intergovernmental agreement which all of us can sign, and it will have a signature for a fifth municipality which will further strengthen our coalition. The third thing is we're waiting for the meeting of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee of the County Council. Peg Ferraro is the head of that. This is the committee that they want us all to come and discuss how the grant money will be disbursed. They have various ideas. One is to create another Authority. One was to keep the GPA that is in existence. The latest we heard was they wanted a full fledged grant process which means we would have to demonstrate impacts before we get any money. If we have to demonstrate impacts in year 2009, that is going to be a tough one.

Priscilla said what happens with the residual money? Jack said the money goes back into the County pot. We want to avoid that. We'll let you know when this meeting is going to be held so you can attend. Priscilla said it seems they want to make it so hard so it goes back into the pot. Let's look at the host fees from the landfill, it's legislative and in Act 101, it says the operator of the landfill must pay, shall pay a certain percent unless it's contracted by the host community. Lower Saucon has a contract with the landfill and each year it goes up a certain amount, but there's no strings on it. It doesn't say we are going to have to tell you how we're using it. It's given. Jack

said we would not have any problem using the money as the law stated. We would have a problem if we would have to demonstrate the impact to get the money. Glenn said it would cost us money to get the money. Jack said Hellertown would have to show more impacts than Lower Saucon. Ed said you are in a no win situation as some impacts you can quantify very easily, some may be subjective. You have to wait until everyone's impacts are in. Priscilla said that's subjective in itself also. Jack said for example, the emergency calls, if they go up in 2010, you have to tie it to the casino. It is a difficult thing.

Mayor Fluck left. The time was 8:45 PM.

2. **Joint COG Projects** - Jack said we're still working on the Joint COG projects - the Rails to Trails project. The Solicitor said we are getting close to an agreement on the terms of the lease. We are focusing on leasing the surface of the trail, not the infrastructure. Hopefully, we'll have some good news to bring back at the next meeting.
3. **Traffic - Polk Valley Road/Walnut Street Intersections; Speed Limits on Apple, Skibo & Friedensville Roads; School Zones)** - Charlie said Walnut Street, the traffic signals have been retimed. They are in a 30 day study and it looks like it's better. There was an issue with the school district and there was still a problem with the busses coming out, so they've come up with a slightly different adjustment on the lights. We just got that today and they are going to make a little tweak on that. We are still having problems with the handicapped ramps. We installed them the way the permit said in 2003 and PennDOT says they are no longer adequate, so we have to come up with a different design. We are still talking with Permits. We are going to have to do something. Jack said there is nothing new with Polk Valley Road intersection. He does have something that their engineer prepared and he is going to bring it to the Council meeting next week which has to do with the study they did on the speed limits on the roads in the Township coming into the Borough, specifically Skibo, Friedensville Roads and Apple Street. We had brought this up before. The Borough speed limits are 25 MPH and the speed limits coming in from the Township are higher. To enforce the reduced speed area, we looked at that, and both Police Chief's looked at it. The Borough PD was having problems enforcing their 25 mph speed, so we asked the Engineer what we could do on the Township side to reduce that. He's reporting that on Skibo and Apple Street, there doesn't appear to be a problem with lowering the speed limits to 25 mph as those qualify as residential districts. The Friedensville Road is a state highway and under the jurisdiction of PennDOT. Any reduction in the existing 40 mph would have to be approved by PennDOT. The engineer stated that his look at the initial roadway leads him to believe it might not meet PennDOT's criteria for reduction to the speed limit on that section of the roadway. He's going to recommend that we ask PennDOT to do a study, but he's not optimistic that it will be approved.
4. **Joint Enterprise Zone with City of Bethlehem - update** - No update.
5. **Hellertown - Lower Saucon Compost Center – update** – Jack said the Compost Center is closed for the season. It was open this past weekend for Christmas trees. Charlie said Bud Prosser and the Mountain View Moravian Church had a volunteer collection this past weekend for trees. It was on Saturday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
6. **Tax Reassessment - update** - No update.
7. **Fire Services - update** - Jack said we are having a meeting with the DCED representative on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Township. All of the Fire Chiefs will be there from Hellertown and Lower Saucon discussing the fire services task force idea.
8. **Leithsville Act 537 Plan - update** - No update.

9. **Other Issues** -No new issues.

H. **County Report** -Tom Harp was not in attendance.

I. **Citizens Commenting on Non-Agenda Items**

1. Margie said she just wanted to follow up on your discussion about getting the word out about our variance historical groups, etc., and she spoke to the people at the Holiday Express and took some of their literature. She found out they have this huge brochure rack and they had a space and she is going to go to the various historical groups to obtain brochures to give them. To be reciprocal, she took quite a few of their brochures and gave them to each of the historical groups. If people are visiting historical sites, they can say the Holiday Express is the closest. She's been to Hotel Bethlehem and doesn't remember seeing that type of thing, but when she's in Bethlehem she can go and talk to them. She wanted to make the announcement that the Animal Food Bank is now represented by a Board of Directors and they changed the name of the food bank and it's now the Animal Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley. Effective tomorrow, there will be a toll free number to contact the animal food bank.

J. **Events Calendar** - <http://sauconvalleycalendar.blogspot.com>

Priscilla said she changed the format and figured out how to do Google calendar. You can click on the blogspot now and see a calendar. You can now go twelve months ahead. She needs everyone's help so she can fill in all the days on the calendar. Please send her your information. There was a Hellertown – Lower Saucon Chamber Board meeting on Monday night. They do an annual scholarship to present to a student. The student has to do an essay. They are working on that. If anyone knows a senior who would like to apply, the information will soon be available. February 2, the Saucon Valley Conservancy is having a "Meet the Artist" a Monday night from 7 PM to 9 PM. We're having our second young artist exhibit on Sunday, April 5, 2009 from 2 PM to 4 PM and we are working with the school district on that. Jim Sturm, member of our community, is going to be honored at the annual Banquet at the Chamber. She has an extra reservation form if anyone is interested. We're trying to get people attend. It's at the Saucon Valley Acres.

Jack said looking ahead to the plan coming back and getting ready for your consideration of adoption, we were thinking that in lieu of having separate meetings of the school district and Councils, what do you feel about having a joint meeting of all three bodies and have Carolyn and AJ there to do a presentation on the plan and answer questions. It would be a special meeting and there would be no other agenda items, we'd just discuss the comp plan. It would be the last week of February. After considerable discussion, it was decided that they would host the meeting at the school, advertise it for the three entities (Hellertown, Lower Saucon and the school district), present it and then each entity would take it back to their respective boards for adoption at their next meeting. Charlie said it can be adopted by resolution. Ed said we should devote a Partnership meeting to it. Saucon Valley Partnership members agreed the meeting would take place on March 11, 2009. Jack said they will advertise it and open it up to the public.

K. **Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned. All in favor. The time was 9:15 PM.

L. **Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 @ 7:00 PM, Lower Saucon Township [March 11th - SVSD, April 8th - HB]**