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May 27, 2021

Robert G Vidoni, Esq  
Bethlehem City Hall  
10 East Church Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18018

RE: **Street Vacation**  
**Portions of Luna and Bushkill Streets, City of Bethlehem, Northampton County**

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject amendment at its Transportation Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, please see the meeting details below to attend. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting should the Commission have any additional comments.

- LVPC Transportation Planning Committee Meeting
  - May 27, 2021 at 5:30 PM
  - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - May 27, 2021 at 7:00 PM
  - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm>

Mr. Vidoni,

The proposed street vacation was submitted by the City on behalf of Mr. Michael and Gretchen Devers of 2006 Renwick Street, Bethlehem, 18107, through their attorney Mr. Michael D. Recchiuti, Esquire of Kolb, Valsiliadis, Florenz & Recchiuti, LLC for portions of Luna Street and unopened Bushkill Street. The owner's property is located on address 129 Luna Street, Parcel ID N6SW2C1100204. The owner notes that this proposed portion of Luna Street to be vacated is only used by the petitioner and has a dead end adjacent to his property. Also, the portion of Bushkill Street to be vacated is a 'paper' street that was never built and would only be accessible from the portion of Luna Street which is being sought to be vacated. The petitioner states that, "They are seeking to raze the current improvements on the property and build a new house and a detached garage. The plan requires the vacation of an unused portion of Luna Street and unopened portion of Bushkill 'paper' Street for the plan to coalesce as presently designed due to required setbacks."

The proposed plan, submitted for recommendations under Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, was reviewed for general consistency with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. While the regional plan "encourages as interconnected street network" per policy 2.2, the topography of the site and location near the Monocacy Creek does not

necessarily support further connection to other roads without significant environmental disturbance which is contrary to policy 3.1 which encourages the “protection of high-priority natural lands and water resources and supports the preservation of natural, and scenic assets and maximizes the preservation of woodlands and critical habitats.” Therefore, eliminating the potential for expanding the road network in this location could help to meet environmental goals by reducing further transportation infrastructure in steep slope, wooded and flood plain locations.

Mr. Michael and Gretchen Devers did contact the adjacent landowners to sign off the street vacation petition letter as of receipt of the request for review and provided supporting affidavit as required. Street vacation requests require all abutting property owners to agree to the vacation along with the City.



Image: Courtesy of Google Street View




Image Courtesy of <https://northampton.maps.arcgis.com>

For context, the neighborhood where portion of Luna Street and unopened portion of Bushkill Street are in the edge of wooded residential neighborhood. To the West and North of the two-street vacation requests the LVPC's Natural Heritage Inventory and corresponding Natural Resources Plan from FutureLV: The Regional Plan, note a High Conservation Priority Area, and contains woodlands, steep slopes, and other key environment assets. The Monocacy Creek also, abuts the property. Should the City grant the street vacations request any new development on steep slopes over 25% should be discouraged. Development on steep slopes that are 15%-25% may be suitable for low-density residential per the LVPC's Steep Slope Guide and Model Regulations.

The vacation of both streets will not impact any access to abutting properties because only the property owner utilizes that portion of Luna Street. Furthermore, that portion of unopened Bushkill Street would only be accessible from the portion of Luna Street which is being sought to be vacated. However, the City should ensure that abutting property owners are aware of potential impacts to their properties that may result from this vacation. In addition, the emergency management services team should be contacted to identify ingress and egress point in this site area that can be utilized for emergency purposes. It is recommended that the street vacation request be accepted by the City and any necessary utility or rights-of-way needs be retained by easement, as the request appears to have no direct adverse effect to adjacent

owners or the public. We appreciate the City's consideration of this review as it relates to the unopened portion of Luna Street and unopened part of Bushkill Street vacation request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Okumu  
Transportation and Economic Systems Planner