

**ANIZDA Board**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 14, 2024**

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
615 Waterfront Dr., Suite 201, Allentown, PA

**Attendance:**

Board Members: Seymour Traub, Esquire (Chairperson), Tiffany Polek, John Stanley, Esquire, and Pedro Torres attended in person. Dr. Ann Bieber attended via Zoom video conference. Absent were Eileen Aguilera, Stephen Breininger and Nelson Diaz.

Board Staff: Steve Bamford (Executive Director) and Selma Ritter (Manager, Finance and Administration) attended in person. Jerome B. Frank, Esquire (Solicitor) attended via Zoom video conference.

Presenters: Becky A. Bradley, AICP, Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission; Joseph Dotta, Regional Planner, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission; and Jill Seitz, Senior Community Planner, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Members of the public and media were present.

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson S. Traub, Esquire, at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was met.
2. **Approval of April 03, 2024 Meeting Minutes.** A motion to approve the April 03, 2024 meeting minutes, as written, was made by J. Stanley and seconded by P. Torres. The public was given the opportunity to comment. No comment(s) or change request(s) were received. The minutes were approved by a vote of 5-0.
3. **Public Comment on all Matters to be Acted Upon.** Comments were deferred until matters were to be acted upon.
4. **Old Business** - None.
5. **New Business.**
  - a. **Transfer of Preliminary Excess NIZ Revenue for 2023 to Commonwealth – Resolution R2024-315.** S. Bamford stated on January 31, 2016, ANIZDA entered into an “Agreement” with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (the “Commonwealth”) acting through its Department of Revenue (“DOR”) and through its Office of the Budget providing for distribution of the excess funds to the DOR, among other things.  
  
S. Bamford reported the Commonwealth has remitted \$102,972,569.54 in certified NIZ revenue to the Escrow Agent for program year 2023 and the Final Accountant’s Allocation

Report has been issued. Of the funds remitted, \$55,889,933.81 has been allocated to the debt service on developer dedicated indebtedness and \$47,082,635.73 has been pledged to the debt service on the Arena bonds. The 2024 debt service on the Arena bonds is \$12,566,430.00.

In accordance with the terms of the Agreement, Resolution R2024-315 authorizes the transfer of \$22,000,000.00 in Preliminary Excess NIZ Revenue from the Surplus Fund to the Excess NIZ Revenue Account and payment of the Initial Annual Excess NIZ Revenue to the Commonwealth, the execution of an Officer's Certificate, and the transfer request to be delivered to the Master Trustee, Bank of New York Mellon.

A motion to approve Resolution R2024-315 was made by P. Torres and seconded by J. Stanley. The public was given the opportunity to comment. No public comment was received. Resolution R2024-315 was approved by a vote of 5-0.

**b. Public Improvement Project Credit Facility annual payment – Resolution R2024-316.** S. Bamford summarized the resolution before the Board. ANIZDA established a Credit Facility with Peoples Security Bank and Trust Company (“Peoples Security”) to borrow funds through a revolving line of credit to finance approved public improvement projects. An annual payment is due on this line to be paid from Excess NIZ Revenue, to the extent there is any, after making debt service payments on developer dedicated indebtedness and the arena bonds and after returning \$22,000,000 to the Commonwealth.

Resolution R2024-316 would authorize the Master Trustee and Escrow Agent, Bank of New York Mellon (“BNY Mellon”), to transfer \$4,000,000 from the Surplus Fund to the Excess NIZ Revenue Account and then to Peoples Security for payment of debt service on the line of credit.

S. Bamford reported the current outstanding balance on the line of credit is \$4,141,263. After the \$4,000,000 annual payment is made, the outstanding balance on the \$10,000,000 line of credit will be approximately \$141,000.

A motion to approve Resolution R2024-316 was made by J. Stanley and seconded by A. Bieber. The public was given the opportunity to comment. No public comment was received. Resolution R2024-316 was approved by a vote of 5-0.

**c. Assessment of The Effectiveness of the City of Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone – Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.** S. Traub provided a brief introduction to the *Assessment of The Effectiveness of the City of Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone 2011-2023* report (the “Assessment Report”) prepared by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (“LVPC”). He stated LVPC was selected by ANIZDA to prepare the Assessment Report because it is a neutral independent agency with great knowledge of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley.

Becky A. Bradley, Executive Director, LVPC, explained the LVPC is a neutral entity, a bi-county planning commission, which on occasion prepares local assessments under the condition that they are fair, impartial and fact based. This assessment evaluated the effectiveness of the NIZ since inception and whether it met objectives. She stated the NIZ is meeting the broad objectives of the City of Allentown (“COA”) and FutureLV, The Regional Plan, an official adopted bi-county comprehensive plan for Lehigh and Northampton Counties accepted by the State and Federal Governments as a comprehensive community economic development strategy.

B. Bradley then introduced LVPC team members that prepared the Assessment Report, Regional Planner Joseph Dotta and Senior Community Planner Jill Seitz.

The planning team discussed some of the terminology within the Assessment Report including the distinction between the NIZ Boundary and the larger Study Area surrounding and including the NIZ. The LVPC report was organized in three main conclusions:

- (1) The magnitude of investment/development
  - a. \$1.15 billion of completed investment
  - b. Over 5,000 additional employees
- (2) The significance of density
  - a. Smarter, denser development has concentrated 4.3 million square feet of occupiable space, including class A office, retail, restaurant and entertainment space, apartments, hotels, and parking structures within the downtown.
- (3) The community impacts
  - a. NIZ developments have guided more eyes to the street, which has contributed to a 50% reduction in violent crimes, outpacing the rest of the city, surrounding communities and other Pennsylvania cities.
  - b. Developments in the NIZ have supplied an additional \$5.4 million in new annual revenue to the Allentown School District and an additional \$2 million for the City and County combined.

The benefits of smarter and denser development, and improvements to streetscapes, parks, plazas, and infrastructure were discussed. Safety and crime, neighborhood change, and housing considerations were addressed in the presentation.

The public was given the opportunity to comment. Deidra Vachier, CEO/President of Community Services for Children, Veronic Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of Valley Health Partners Community Health Center, Lin Erickson, Executive Director and CEO of the DaVinci Science Center, Dr. Carol Birks, Superintendent of the Allentown School District, and Jon Schwartz, Lead Pastor of Life Church, all provided examples of how the NIZ has positively impacted their organizations and the communities they serve.

The full report prepared by LVPC is available to the public.

6. **Executive Director's Report.** None.
7. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

**Next scheduled ANIZDA Board Meeting:** Wednesday, June 05, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Pedro Torres, Jr.', written over a horizontal line.

Pedro Torres, Jr., Secretary