

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council  
General Meeting  
January 4, 2024**

**Attendees:** EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair - Virtual), Ben Felzer (Vice Chair), Ben Guthrie (Secretary), Vibhor Kumar, Katie Trembler (Virtual), Mandy Tolino (Virtual), Mike Topping (Virtual)

Guests/Community Members: Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm (Virtual), Steve Olshevski, Peg Church, Anthony Bronico, Megan Lysowski, Kathy Fox, Molly Bilinski (Virtual), Elke Rockwell (Virtual)

**Call to Order – 7:00 PM**

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of minutes (December):** Motion by Ben Felzer, seconded by Lynn Rothman. Approved unanimously.
- 3. Chair’s comments and amendments to agenda**
  - a. Annual Report** - Lynn Rothman drafted the EAC Annual Report. Ben Felzer and Jane Cook presented the report to City Council.
  - b. Living Lighter: Practical Steps to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint** - The Bethlehem Food Co-Op and Bethlehem Area Public Library will be hosting a webinar on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7:00 PM to discuss energy-efficient practices, waste reduction strategies, and sustainable home habits.
  - c. Revised Agenda** - Add planning and zoning update to the agenda.
- 4. Board comments and announcements -**
  - a. Mandy Tolino** - The City of Allentown will be hiring a new sustainability coordinator.
- 5. Committee reports**
  - a. Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (Jane Cook)** – No report.
  - b. Green Committee (Ben Felzer)** – Taking a break for winter. The next meeting will be held on the second Thursday March 14, 2024 at 7:00 PM. The committee is still waiting to receive a copy of the Urban Forestry Master Plan.
  - a. Bird Town PA (Vibhor Kumar)** – The Bird Town annual report is due at the end of this month. Vibhor will coordinate with Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife, MCWA and the City for the report.
  - c. Waste Reduction Committee (Katie Trembler)** – The Ambler EAC is encouraging citizens to perform self-guided cleanups on Martin Luther King Jr Day. The EAC would provide gloves and bags to support their efforts. The Waste Reduction Committee is interested in initiating a similar service effort throughout the year in Bethlehem.
  - d. Transportation Committee (Ben Guthrie)** - Miles Zakos and Steve Olshevski are working to advance a pilot project for pole mounted EV chargers. Miles met with Mike Alkhal (Director of Public Works), Greg Cryder (City Electrician), and

Basel Yandem (Deputy Director of Public Works) on December 11, 2023. City staff indicated that the City does not have the resources to own and maintain pole-mounted EV chargers. They may be able to assist, but they recommend talking with the Bethlehem Parking Authority about the BPA potentially owning and maintaining.

## 6. External committee reports

- a. **Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (Lynn Rothman on behalf of Jane Cook)** – The PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is currently accepting public comment regarding a proposed warehouse at the Best Western Hotel site near Routes 512 and 22 in Hanover Township. Monday, January 8, is the deadline for public comment to the DEP. The MCWA is concerned about the impact on water quality of the Monocacy Creek.
- b. **Saucon Creek Watershed Association (Mike Topping)** – No report.
- c. **City Council (Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm)** - City Council held their reorganization meeting on Tuesday, January 2. Councilmembers Wandalyn Enix and Paige Van Wirt completed their terms on council. New council members Bryan Callahan and Colleen Laird were sworn in.
- d. **Planning and Zoning (Lynn Rothman)** - The Bureau of Planning & Zoning forwarded the EAC a copy of the land development submission for the proposed parking garage at 33 West Walnut Street. The EAC has until Tuesday, January 23, 2024 to submit comments.

## 7. Old Business

- a. **Climate Action Plan (Lynn Rothman)**
  - i. Representatives of the City's implementation committees will provide reports to the EAC again in 2024. The presentations will be monthly beginning in March.
  - ii. The Nurture Nature Center is beginning work on their grant-funded CREATE Connections project. They have four years of funding. Plans for Year 1 include work on building partnerships, business survey and storefront campaign, research for climate action strategy spotlights and defining messaging, PA Youth Climate Summit, intern recruitment and other efforts. They are looking for feedback from the EAC.

## 8. New business

- a. **2024 EAC Network Conference** - The conference is scheduled for February 24, 2024 from 9:00-3:30. It will be a virtual conference. The individual registration is \$35 per person. The group registration rate is \$75 for up to five EAC members. Lynn Rothman, Ben Felzer, and Vibhor Kumar are interested in attending. EAC members should reach out to Lynn by January 25 to express interest in attending. More information can be found on the conference webpage: <https://weconservepa.org/eac/eac-network-conference-registration/>
- b. **Priorities and Projects for 2024** - There is an opportunity for a Lehigh University student to do a summer research fellowship if any EAC members can

suggest a project. The deadline will be in February. There is already ongoing student research related to the Bi-County air quality project.

- c. **Heritage Tree Program** - Steve Olshevski is interested in helping further establish the program. Lynn will provide an email introduction to the City Forester.

**9. Citizen's comments**

- a. **TREX Plastics Drive-By Drop-Off (Elke Rockwell)** - The Bethlehem-area Moravian Churches are leading an effort to divert plastic waste for reuse. TREX has a new initiative (NexTrex) to establish centralized drop off locations for recycling polyethylene films.
- b. **Skip The Stuff (Peg Church)** - Effective July 31, 2023, New York City food service establishments providing take-out and delivery service may not provide utensils, condiment packets, napkins, or extra containers to take-out or delivery customers, unless requested by the customer.

**10. Next Meeting**

- a. **Meeting Date** – February 1, 2024

**11. Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Guthrie, Secretary