

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council  
General Meeting  
October 3, 2019**

**Attendees:** EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair), Mike Topping (Vice Chair), Elisabeth Cichonski (Secretary), Kathy Fox, Brian Hillard, Beth Behrend, Brian Nicas. Martha Christine (Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife [BBFW]), Councilman William Reynolds (Bethlehem City Council EAC liaison), David Shaffer (City Forester), Greg Cook (Appalachian Mountain Club), Josie Miserendino, Elke Rockwell, Andrew Conboy (Lehigh University [LU]), Angie Rizzo (LU), Karen Berry (Great Decisions Committee), Chip Campbell, Isabella Campbell (BASD Teacher, LU Student), Ed Gallagher (Gadfly Blog), Connor Barbridge (Southside Garden Alliance).

**Meeting called to order @ 7:04 PM**

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Made by Brian H., seconded by Brian N. The September minutes were approved unanimously.

2. **Place Citizen's comments on agenda:** No report.

3. **Chair's comments and amendments to agenda:**

Lynn attended a Bethlehem Parking Authority (BPA) meeting to recommend solar panels on Bethlehem parking facilities. BPA did not receive our July letter with this suggestion and recommendations for sustainable design. They are now in receipt of the July letter. BPA relayed that a consultant is currently looking into panels for all their garages. The BPA plans to be 100% LED by next year, currently they have upgrades to about 90% LED. Most lots have electric vehicle charging stations.

The Watershed conference is coming up at Lehigh University on October 15<sup>th</sup> (visit [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com) "Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference" for more information).

4. **Board comments and announcements:**

Festival Unbound (10 days, kicks off tomorrow [10/4]): Community forum at Zoellner on Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> (free) with topics of discussion related to sustainability and climate change. The coordinators are looking for members of different environmental groups to share information about what they have been doing in our community. Kathy will attend on behalf of the Bethlehem Food Co-Op and EAC.

October 29 from 6:30-7:30 PM, the Bethlehem Public Library will host a talk about plastics.

Mike T. provided an update on shad. E&S controls for construction or agriculture in the City of Bethlehem are often lacking, which leads to pollution of local streams. The dirty water blocks the UV rays and impacts shad development and food sources. If you see something, report it to the City.

Josie said the Fourth Friday Film Series hosted at Unitarian Universalist Church had a strong turn-out (75 people) for the presentation on plastic last week. Josie has a petition to sign to help push the EAC's recommended plastic bag ban through. Hoping to present at the Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

5. **David Shaffer, City of Bethlehem Forester** thanked the EAC for a warm introduction and shared his background, and information on his role as the City Forester and intentions for the future of the City's Forestry program. He also gave an update on the spotted lantern fly.

6. **Committee reports:**

- a. **BBFW:** The Nature Photo Contest Award will be presented on Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> at the Public Library. Photos will be on display at the library for about a month.
- b. **Waste reduction committee:** Beth still has extra bags from the BASD fundraiser. The deadline to order is October 30<sup>th</sup> or until bags are sold out.

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- c. **Community Energy Efficiency Initiative (CEEI):** Brian H. identified the next steps for the CEEI. The committee is working to create public education sessions and to begin engaging with other entities (Bethlehem Housing Authority, St. Luke's, etc.). Energy Efficiency needs to be a priority. The Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley's Weatherization program only captures the lowest poverty levels, but they have a sizable budget which comes from government funding (state/federal).
- d. **Climate Action Network:** Brian H. is working to develop a climate action network to get like-minded groups to collaborate on pro-climate plans and climate action policies. Recently, James Rosenberger made a presentation to Hellertown Borough about having EV chargers along the street. As a result, Hellertown is looking into installing EV chargers along Main Street located close to their downtown, using funds from DEP's EV grant/rebate program. Brian H. will be working with James R. to create a presentation package with the ability to bring to other municipalities in the Lehigh Valley, including Bethlehem.
- e. **Proposed Solar Ordinance:** The EAC's solar subcommittee proposed that building owners should have to do a solar assessment for any building over a certain size and based on the assessment, install solar panels where feasible. Lynn met with Darlene Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning for the City of Bethlehem, to discuss this proposal, including financing options. Darlene said that the City is currently working on some new zoning ordinances making this an opportune time to include changes with regard to solar. Lynn and the solar committee will continue to look into this and help research the topic.

**7. External committee reports**

- a. **City council:** City of Bethlehem drafted a resolution, which the EAC reviewed, to be sent to the state to repeal the ban on plastic bag bans by municipalities and in support of statewide legislation banning single use plastic bags. Councilman Reynolds supports passing the resolution, but also emphasized that education to the public about waste reduction is the most important thing we can do. If people are educated about the issue, they will be more inclined to change their behavior. Resolution will be voted on at the next council meeting on Oct. 15th.
- b. **Planning:** No report.
- c. **Zoning:** No report.

**8. Unfinished business:**

- a. **CAP:** Councilman Reynolds spoke with Michael Alkhal, Public Works Director. Michael Alkhal interviewed the two firms that the EAC recommended in our letter and has selected one firm. The decision has not been made public because the City has yet to award the contract, since full funding is not in place. However, it is anticipated that \$80,000 will be in the 2020 budget for the consultant to write the Climate Action Plan.
- b. **Facebook page:** Elisabeth provided an update on the EAC Facebook page, our followers and best posts. Please follow us @BethlehemEAC on Facebook.
- c. **P4:** Brian N. was in touch with David Shaffer about replacing some roadway medians with pollinator gardens to decrease lawn maintenance, improve aesthetics, and benefit pollinators.

**9. New business:**

- a. **Council members' terms:** Elisabeth, Lynn and Beth's terms will be up in January. If they would like to renew, contact Lynn.

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10. **Agenda for next meeting:** Mike Gibson, Chair of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's Energy and Environment Committee will come in to speak with us.

**Meeting Adjourned @ 8:26 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elisabeth Cichonski, Secretary