

Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council

General Meeting Agenda

November 5, 2020

Attendees: EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair), Mike Topping (Vice Chair), Elisabeth Cichonski (Secretary), Brian Nicas, Ben Guthrie, Ben Felzer.

Joe Klinkhoff (Bethlehem Food Co-Op [BFC]), Kathy Fox (BFC), Katharine Targett Gross (Lehigh University Office of Sustainability), Jane Cook (Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife, Monocacy Creek Watershed Association), Josie Miserendino,

Call To Order @ 7:02 PM

1. **Approval of minutes (October):** Motion to approve the October meeting minutes made by Ben Felzer, seconded Ben Guthrie. The minutes from October's EAC meeting are approved unanimously.
2. **Place citizens' comments on agenda:** None.
3. **Chair's comments & amendments to agenda:** None.
4. **Board comments and announcements:** Ben Felzer has volunteered to continue serving on the EAC. At the Nov. 17th City Council meeting, Ben Felzer's reappointment will be on the agenda.
5. **Bethlehem Food Co-Op Presentation by Kathy Fox:**
 - a. The Bethlehem Food Co-Op is one of 250+ other food co-ops in the United States promoting social, physical, and economic health. Bethlehem's Food Co-Op has recently selected a location for their new proposed grocery store which will aim to provide organic, sustainably and humanely produced food and products. Because co-ops support the local food system, the shorter travel distances have many indirect benefits including reduction of GHG emissions, resilience of communities, and generation of more jobs than conventional agriculture. Produce that cannot be sourced locally will need to be shipped in, but locally-sourced produce/products will be the focus.
The City of Bethlehem is considered a food desert meaning residents have limited access to fresh, healthy food options. The BFC also focuses on community empowerment and outreach activities to improve access to healthy foods and provide benefits to people of all communities. The proposed grocery store will support government programs and have improved walkability and bike access to promote access to fresh, healthy foods, particularly for lower income families.
 - b. Currently, the lease is still being negotiated. There are two applications for grants in right now. This grant money will be used for operating costs for the proposed store.
 - c. There are currently 733 members. Equity in the co-op (and benefits) costs \$300. There is a 30-month installment option to extend payments that was created to aid those whose income suffered from the pandemic. There is also organizational membership.
 - d. To stay up to date on BFC news, a new mobile-friendly app is now available.
 - e. Money for the new co-op location has been raised through equity from members, grants, and loans.
 - f. There are many active BFC committees. The Hubs Committee is involved in education throughout the Lehigh Valley. THE BFC collaborates with a school (currently William Penn Elementary) and families interested in healthier living (including nutrition, exercise and other lifestyle choices) and community activities can participate in quarterly sessions at the school. If the selected students are available at all the information sessions, they are eligible for a BFC scholarship.

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6. Committee reports:

- a. **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW):** No new report.
Monocacy Creek Watershed Association: The MCWA and volunteers planted 100 trees at the Gertrude Fox Nature Center, south of Monocacy Park. Live stake plantings will be held in November.
- b. **Green Committee:** On the second weekend of October, there was another clean-up at Monocacy Creek. The City picked up all the garbage that volunteers collected including recyclables and a mattress.
The City-wide tree inventory is ongoing, but is expected to wrap up by the end of the year.
Work on Rose Garden improvements, including replacing the asphalt and planting improvements, has been delayed. It is unknown when this work will commence.
Next month, Elisabeth will provide an update/analytics on Facebook page and Brian will do so for the website.

7. External committee reports:

- a. **City Council:** No report.
- b. **Planning & Zoning:** There is a Zoning Hearing meeting on December 9th at 6 PM for the Creek Road property.

8. Unfinished business

- a. **Climate Action Plan:** Comments after the last public engagement meeting on the draft of the CAP were due on November 1st. Many EAC members were asked to participate. Katharine Targett-Gross is working on Lehigh University's CAP. Lynn is representing the EAC on an external advisory group; Ben F. is on an internal committee. The goal is to do a preliminary presentation of the proposed strategy to Lehigh's Board of Trustees in February and revise to present the final strategy over Earth week (April 2021). The initial focus will be on buildings that have highest energy use intensities (EUI).

9. New business:

Attendees had questions about the operating hours of the recycling center, wondering if hours had been reduced in light of the pandemic.

Meeting adjourned @ 7:59 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Elisabeth Cichonski, Secretary