



10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018
eacbethlehempa@gmail.com

November 29, 2019

Dear Mayor Donchez and Honorable Members of City Council,

In accordance with the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council Bylaws, we submit the following report for the year 2019.

Accomplishments for 2019 include:

Letters

- February: After researching and meeting with local businesses, proposed ordinance banning single-use plastic bags
- March: Recommended rules for rentals at Park Pavilions to eliminate glitter, confetti and balloons from entering waterways and posing a threat to wildlife, implemented thanks to then Director of Recreation, Jane Persa
- April: Reviewed concept plan for Martin Tower development and sent recommendations regarding density, shared parking, trees, green space, buffer areas, energy and stormwater management
- April: Letter on behalf of Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (EAC committee) to Mr. Eric Evans, City Business Administrator, copied to Mayor and City Council, regarding proposed sale of City owned properties
- April: Sent letter to City Council proposing an ordinance requiring new or retrofitted buildings over a certain size to obtain a Solar Energy System Assessment and, dependent upon the assessment, install solar panels
- April: Submitted a cost analysis of electric vehicles versus gasoline vehicles for municipal operations to the Department of Public Works for consideration
- July: Letter to Bethlehem Parking Authority concerning proposed and existing parking garages in the City of Bethlehem, including recommendations for sustainable design and incorporation of solar panels

- September: Reviewed City's Request for Proposal for firms to write a Climate Action Plan for Bethlehem City and subsequently reviewed proposals from firms and sent recommendations to the City

EAC Events and Presentations

- In conjunction with BASD, organized a contest for students to create designs for reusable bags. Money raised goes toward environmental education and activities
- By invitation, spoke at Beth Township Commissioner's meeting to explain the role and potential benefits of an EAC
- Presentation about our EAC, plastics and spotted lanternflies at Moravian Church's Care for Creation Committee
- Presentation to local Girl Scout Troop concerning recycling and spotted lanternflies
- Community Energy Efficiency Committee participated in a back to school event at the Hispanic Center, distributing flyers in English and Spanish regarding energy efficiency in homes
- EAC member was a panelist at the YWCA Great Decisions Lecture Series preview lecture "Climate Change: Lehigh Valley Strategies for Today & Tomorrow"
- EAC member was guest speaker at the Bethlehem Public Library program: "Plastic Waste and Its Impact on our Community"
- Initiative to form a LV Climate Action Network to bring together climate policy actors in the LV to strategize and prioritize climate positive policies and actions that will be both effective and actionable
- Tour of the recycling and composting facilities led by Michael Halbfoerster, Director of Recycling

Speakers at EAC Meetings

- Sierra Club
- Northampton County Councilwoman Tara Zrinski: Plastics presentation
- Lehigh University graduate students: "Sustainability Impact Assessment on the Future Closure of Packer Avenue on Lehigh's Campus"
- Liberty High School Conservation Club Representatives: Proposal for recycling bins along Sand Island
- City of Bethlehem Director of Recycling Michael Halbfoerster
- City of Bethlehem Forester David Shaffer

- Michael Gibson, Chair of the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's Energy & Environment Committee
- City of Bethlehem Department of Public Works
- Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife is a standing committee of the EAC. Please see page five of this report for an overview of their mission and activities in 2019.

During the course of the year the EAC continued strengthening relationships with city departments, attended and spoke at City Council meetings, continued our facebook page with increasing numbers of followers and attended meetings of other EACs in the Lehigh Valley to create the ability to work cooperatively and share information.

In 2020 we plan to host a meeting of all Lehigh Valley EACs (March 11), update our portion of the City website, finalize design of promotional/educational flyers and continue to work with the City to bring a Climate Action Plan and proposals that support climate action to fruition.

Increasing numbers of residents have been attending our meetings, bringing ideas for projects with them. We hope to support and serve these residents, either by working with them on their projects or connecting them with other organizations or City staff that can assist.

In November, EAC member Kathy Fox resigned to focus on her work with the Bethlehem Food Co-Op. It is anticipated that in January member Brian Hillard will resign due to a move outside of the city limits. Both Brian and Kathy have been invaluable members, bringing forth and working on new initiatives. While they will be missed as council members, we look forward to their continuing connection with the EAC.

Our great appreciation goes to Robert Vidoni, City Clerk, and Judy Kelechava, Assistant City Clerk, for their assistance. They respond immediately to all of our requests and questions, place meeting notices in the newspaper and facilitate communication between the EAC, City Council and the Mayor's office.

We recognize and appreciate our City Council liaison, J. William Reynolds, for his assistance, attendance at our meetings, initiative and continued efforts to bring a Climate Action Plan to fruition. We also acknowledge and thank Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works, and Matt Dorner, Deputy Director of Public Works, for their work on the City's greenhouse gas inventory and on the selection process for a consultant to write the Climate Action Plan. We commend City Council and the Administration for budgeting funds for a consultant to complete a Climate Action Plan in 2020. The EAC is proud of Bethlehem City's commitment to climate action and we will continue to assist in the climate action planning process in every way possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rothman

Lynn Rothman, Chair

Bethlehem, EAC

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC:

Elizabeth Behrend

Elisabeth Cichonski

Brian Hillard

Brian Nicas

Mike Topping

cc: Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW) - Overview 2019

Our mission: To work with the city of Bethlehem to support biodiversity and minimize negative environmental impacts by encouraging city residents, schools, businesses, and **other organizations to implement wildlife friendly and sustainable garden practices.**

Bethlehem is a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Community Wildlife Habitat

Bethlehem registered in 2009 and became certified in 2012. BBFW fulfills requirements to recertify every year. Requirements for recertification: Maintain website (facebook page), conduct educational events, participate in community service, increase NWF certified spaces.

More than **250 Bethlehem residences** are registered as NWF wildlife habitats.

Schools: Calypso, Buchanan, East Hills, Freedom, Lehigh University

Public spaces certified by BBFW or in partnership with other organizations: Sand Island Native Plant Preserve, Meadow on the Greenway, ArtsQuest Butterfly Garden, Millers House Garden, Illicks' Mill Native Garden

Parks certified by the city:

Friendship, Sand Island Children's Garden, Westside Community Garden (no longer a community garden), Bethlehem Sculpture Garden, Bethlehem Public Library Garden, Illick's Mill Nature Area and Trail, Saucon Park

NWF Wildlife Habitat Certification requires: Habitat providing food, water, shelter, place to raise young, sustainable gardening practices

Native Plant Demonstration Gardens maintained by BBFW committee volunteers:

Meadow on the Greenway, SINPP, Hoover-Mason Trestle, Rose Garden Pollinator Garden

2019 Highlights:

Spring Native Plant Sale- Unitarian Universalist Church

Arbor Day- planted native trees at the Christopher Columbus monument with City Forester

Display Tables & children's nature activities- Monocacy Park Day, Bethlehem Food Coop Artisan Fair, Moravian College Health Fair

Rose Garden Pollinator Garden-designed gardens, purchased native pollinator plants & organized volunteers to create 2 new gardens on 8th Ave.

2nd Nature Photo Contest--display of photos of Bethlehem in Public Library

Climate Action Plan- researched and reviewed **CAPs** of other NWF Community Habitat communities, with the intention of providing input to the Bethlehem CAP consultant

DCNR Grant- worked with City and MANA to obtain \$210,000 matching grant for improvements to Rose Garden Park

On-going projects:

In 2019 we clocked more than 200 volunteer hours engaged in weeding, pruning, mulching, path maintenance, and litter removal in city gardens.