



10 East Church Street  
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018  
[www.bethlehemeac.org](http://www.bethlehemeac.org)

December 14, 2021

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 2021. In 2021 we continued to hold our meetings virtually. In accordance with the Sunshine Laws, our virtual meetings are open to the public via zoom and we have had outside attendance.

Our most important work this year has been supporting the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), which aims to reduce our carbon footprint, increase sustainability and utilize alternative energy sources. In order to realize the goals of the CAP, we revised our 2019 proposal for a ban on single use plastics bags and submitted a draft ordinance for Council's consideration. In addition, we are currently working with the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Fire Chief to amend the City's solar ordinances. The Department of Planning and Zoning has been giving us the opportunity to comment and make recommendations for proposed developments. Our recommendations are based on furthering the goals of the CAP.

**Accomplishments for 2021 include:**

Letters (All of our correspondence can be found on our website ([www.bethlehemeac.org](http://www.bethlehemeac.org)))

- Support of the Chimney Swifts
- S. New Street
- Martin Tower
- Wawa Route 412
- 250 East Broad Street
- Support Nomination of the CAP for the PA Chapter of APA Planning Award
- Bethlehem Parking Authority
- Royal Farms
- 143 West Broad Street
- 4<sup>th</sup> & Vine Streets
- Boyd Theater Redevelopment
- 295 & 2970 Linden Street
- 14-36 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- Proposal for Single Use Plastic Bag Ban
- Support for Purple Air Monitor
- 3<sup>rd</sup> & Taylor Streets

- Pollinator Habitat in Solar Field
- 117 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street

#### EAC Activities

- EAC member served as panelist at Bethlehem Area Public Library's forum *Modeling a Solution of Cooperation between Conservation and Development* (April)
- Hosted virtual forum with Allentown & Easton EACs and the Alliance for Sustainable Communities emphasizing volunteer opportunities in the Lehigh Valley with panelists from multiple organizations (Earth Day)
- EAC member participated in the Community Engagement Panel for the May 2021 PA EAC Network Conference
- Tabled at the Inaugural Rose Fest at the Rose Garden (June)
- Tabled at the Environmental Defense Fund Conference at Steel Stacks celebrating important climate work being done across the Lehigh Valley (August)
- Tabled at the Climate Strike Rally on Payrow Plaza (September)
- Membership on the Pedestrian Bridge Working Group and focus groups
- Held two successful clean-ups of the Monocacy Creek in partnership with the Monocacy Creek Watershed Association
- Bethlehem, Allentown and Easton EACs coordinated the second Lehigh Valley EAC Network Meeting (September)
- EAC members mentored two Lehigh University Students in Environmental Justice Internships
- Member of External Advisory Group for Lehigh University's Climate Action Strategy
- Continued maintenance of our website and Facebook page with increasing numbers of followers
- Continued to welcome members of the public to raise issues and voice their concerns at our meetings

#### Speakers at EAC Monthly Meetings

- All candidates for Bethlehem City Council and two of the three Mayoral Candidates took the opportunity to introduce themselves and speak about environmental issues at the April EAC meeting
- Tracy Sameulson, Assistant Director of Planning & Zoning
- Lehigh University Students Ben Murphy-Schmehl and CJ Marina: Environmental Justice and the Climate Action Plan
- Elisabeth Cichonski: Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and community scale solar
- Isaac Weber, intern with LV Alliance for Sustainable Communities: Sections of Bethlehem's zoning code that could be amended to support the strategies in the CAP
- Lehigh University Students Alyssa Klinger, Katie Goettle, Morgan Murray: Designing a biodigester for dog waste.

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife is an active standing committee of the EAC with a dedicated group of volunteers. Please see pages 3 & 4 of this report for an overview of their mission and activities in 2021.

In January 2022 EAC members Brian Nicas and Elisabeth Cichonski will no longer serve as council members. Both Brian and Elisabeth have been invaluable members, bringing forth and

working on new initiatives, as well as overseeing our website and fb page. While they will be missed as council members, we look forward to their continuing involvement 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 and City Council. Additional appreciation to Wm. Alexander Karras, Chief of Staff, for facilitating communication with the Mayor's office.

We recognize and appreciate our City Council liaison, J. William Reynolds, for his assistance, and continued efforts on behalf of climate action. We also acknowledge and thank Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works, Matt Dorner, Deputy Director of Public Works, Darlene Heller, Director Planning & Zoning, Tracy Samuelson, Assistant Director of Planning & Zoning, and Steven Fernstrom, Executive Director of the Bethlehem Parking Authority, for their ongoing contributions to climate action. We commend City Council and the Administration for their support of the CAP and initiatives to make Bethlehem a greener, more pedestrian and bike friendly city. In 2022 we will continue to assist in implementing the goals of the CAP.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lynn Rothman*

Lynn Rothman, Chair

Bethlehem, EAC

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC:

Elizabeth Behrend	Ben Guthrie, Secretary
Elisabeth Cichonski	Brian Nicas
Ben Felzer	Mike Topping, Vice Chair

cc: Department of Public Works  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Bethlehem Parking Authority

## **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW) - Overview 2021**

**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 BFFW or in partnership with other organizations:**

Sand Island Native Plant Preserve, Meadow on the Southside Greenway, ArtsQuest Butterfly Garden, Millers House Garden, Illick's Mill Native Garden

**Parks certified by the city:**

Friendship, Sand Island Children's 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.** We will be reapplying for certification in 2022.

**Native Plant Demonstration Gardens maintained by BFFW committee volunteers:**

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

### **2021 Highlights:**

**Rose Garden Pollinator Garden** – expanded and maintained by irrigating and weeding the two native perennial gardens on 8th Ave that BFFW designed and planted in 2019

**Rose Garden Redevelopment** – assisted with planting the areas of the Rose Garden

### **On-going projects:**

**In 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lifted by the City, we were able to work on maintaining the Hoover-Mason Trestle on a regular basis, which was a huge improvement over 2020. Our routine debris removal, weeding and pruning during the spring and summer months were aided greatly by the City work crew, who met us after each cleanup event and loaded up the piles of debris, hauling it to the Recycling Center. Ongoing restrictions from other volunteer groups who have assisted us in the past, prior to COVID, meant we had lots of maintenance to do with a limited number of volunteers. We are hopeful that in 2022 we will return to a full complement of volunteers to maintain the Hoover Mason Trestle and the other native garden areas, all of which are such a valuable asset to the City of Bethlehem.**