

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
October 6, 2022**

Attendees: EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair), Ben Felzer (Vice Chair), Ben Guthrie (Secretary - Virtual), Katie Trembler, Mandy Tolino, Vibhor Kumar.
Guests/Community Members: Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm, Anna Lazewski, Kyle Bookman, Shelby Carr, Steve Olshevski, Sara Aldarondo (Virtual), Kathryn Jackson (Virtual), Anna Zawierucha (Virtual), Al Wurth (Virtual).

Call to Order – 7:02 PM

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of minutes (September):** Motion by Katie, seconded by Ben F. Approved unanimously.
- 3. Chair’s comments and amendments to agenda**
 - a. Thank you to Katie for starting EAC Instagram account and updating website layout.
 - b. We received a request for an interview with a reporter from the Brown & White regarding pollution in the Lehigh River watershed. Ben F. will forward the request to Professor Stephen Peters, a colleague at Lehigh.
 - c. The EAC Network Fall Gathering will take place on Saturday, October 22 in Haverford, PA. Register by October 11 for lower registration fee.
 - d. There is an upcoming event, Building a Bethlehem for Everyone: What You Told Us and What's in Store, scheduled for October 26 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the NCC Fowler Center. The event is open to the public, but attendees must pre-register.
- 4. Board comments and announcements**
 - a. **Local news report regarding chemical odor (Ben)** - Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm reported that the resident group that initially spoke about the topic at City Council have been put in touch with the appropriate state officials and official complaints have been logged.
- 5. Committee reports**
 - a. **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (Jane Cook via email)** – BBFW had two weeding and maintenance dates in September, but the one for October 5 was rained out. There is very little needed to be done right now since the weeds have slowed down their growth due to the cooler weather. Our next workdays will be after the hard frost, to remove some of the debris and spruce things up a bit. But we leave most of the plants as is through the winter months to provide food for birds. In March they will trim down all the native grasses and perennials to make way for new growth next spring.
 - b. **Waste Reduction Committee (Katie)** – City Council has received questions from the public regarding the status of the plastic bag ban. The committee will be assisting with some further research.

6. External committee reports

a. **Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (Jane Cook via email)**

- i. During September we continued the ongoing trail work at the Gertrude Fox Conservation Area, designing and preparing to install steps near the beginning of the trail by the springhouse.
- ii. MCWA has ordered three signs: one shows the trail's path as a loop along the floodplain down by the creek, another is a riparian buffer sign that emphasizes the work done along the creek with live stakes and other native tree and shrub plantings, and the third is a large watershed sign that shows where GFCA is within the Monocacy Creek watershed as well as detailed info about other key locations in the watershed. They should be ready to be installed during October or early November.
- iii. The creek cleanup scheduled for October 1 was cancelled due to rainy weather. Given the large number of planting events for the next four weeks, the next cleanup will be the weekend closest to Earth Day in April.
- iv. MCWA will be tabling at the Monocacy Farms Food Festival Day from 11 to 4 on Sunday, October 16.
- v. MCWA has picked up about 175 native trees from the Million Trees in PA program through Penn State Extension. They are healthy and larger than other trees we have gotten in the past. They can be planted on any private or public property, so we are hoping to get them all planted this fall, since that's better than trying to over-winter them. They were received at no charge, so they are free to those who choose to plant and water them.

b. **Saucon Creek Watershed Association (Mike Topping)** – No report.

c. **City Council (Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm)**

- i. Capital Plan – On Tuesday night Council reviewed the five year capital plan. A number of projects in the plan are environmentally focused, such as LED light replacement, Broad Street walking and biking safety improvements, stormwater management improvements, and park improvements such as Friendship Park and Phase II of the Rose Garden.
- ii. Tower Place Plans – Early stage planning is ongoing for future phases. Many of the EAC's comments are reflected in the planning documents.
- iii. Skyline West – The construction of the development will not jeopardize UNESCO World Heritage Site application. A tree survey is planned for the site. The latest design of the building is designed to blend in more than the original plans.

d. **Citizens Traffic Advisory Committee (CTAC)** – The Vision Zero plan was recently updated. The City is applying for federal funding for a Safe Streets for All grant.

7. Old business

a. **Climate Action Plan**

- i. Bethlehem as a Biking City – Successful event with four breakout sessions. There are two follow-up meetings scheduled. The first will be at Linfield on October 17 and the second will be at Pembroke on October 24.

- ii. Solar Ordinance – The first reading of the proposed ordinance revisions occurred on September 6. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission will be voting on the ordinance on October 25. A public hearing will be held at the City Council meeting on November 1.

8. New business

- a. **Bylaws** – Lynn presented proposed amendments to the EAC Bylaws.
 - i. Motion by Ben F. that the Bylaws should be amended as proposed.
Seconded by Mandy. Approved unanimously.
- b. **Bird Town USA** – Following the presentation of new Bird Town signs and a meeting with the Bird Town PA President City Hall, there was discussion of inviting a representative of Bird Town PA to present at a future EAC meeting.

9. Citizen's comments

- a. Steve Olshevski made three project suggestions for the EAC and committees to take on: Food Waste Recycling (Waste Reduction Committee), Electric Vehicle Accommodation (Transportation Committee), and Promoting Electrification of Home Heating (Energy Committee) – Ben F., Ben G., and Vibhor are all interested in the home heating topic.

10. Next Meeting

- a. **Meeting Date** – November 3, 2022

11. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Guthrie, Secretary