



10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018
www.bethlehemeac.org

November 14, 2022

Dear Mayor Reynolds and Honorable Members of City Council,

In accordance with the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council Bylaws, we submit the following report for the year 2022. In June we began to hold our monthly meetings as hybrid meetings at Illick's Mill and via zoom. In September, we changed our meeting location to Northampton Community College Fowler Family Center on 3rd Street, in order to be more accessible in terms of location and public transportation. In accordance with the Sunshine Laws, our meetings are open to the public and we routinely benefit from outside attendance.

Our most important work is 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 worked with the City's Departments of Planning and Zoning, Codes and Fire to update the City's solar ordinances. The proposed amendments were recommended to City Council by the Environment and Human Resources Committee, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and Bethlehem City Planning Commission. City Council will vote on the ordinance at their December 6th meeting.

Additional Accomplishments for 2022 include:

Letters

The Department of Planning and Zoning gives the EAC the opportunity to comment and make recommendations for proposed developments. Our recommendations are based on furthering the goals of the CAP. All of our correspondence can be found on our website

www.bethlehemeac.org and includes the following projects:

- 413 - 415 E. Third Street
- Nurture Nature Center Grant
- Westgate Mall Phase 3
- 218 – 226 W. Union Blvd
- LVIP VII Lot 90
- LVIP VII Lot 63
- 130 W. Geopp Street
- 2040 Ave
- 128 E. 3rd Street
- 2854 Linden Street
- Solar Ordinance Recommendations

- Tower Place
- Frankford Street Townhomes
- 3677 Commerce Blvd.
- 1780 E. Fourth Street; Lots 24A/24B
- 1559 Kelchner Road
- 2897 Easton Avenue

EAC 2022 Activities

- Membership on the Pedestrian Bridge Working Group
- Membership on the City’s Climate and Environmental Justice Council
- Commented on the proposed revisions to the SALDO
- Commented on the Urban Forestry Master Plan
- Held successful clean-up of the Monocacy Creek in partnership with the Monocacy Creek Watershed Association
- Tabled at Rose Fest at the Bethlehem Rose Garden
- EAC members mentored three Lehigh University students in internships regarding Green Restaurants and Tree Ordinances
- Joined the Sierra Club and Coalition for Appropriate Transportation in forums on “Bethlehem As A Biking City”.
- Attended WeConserve PA Roundtable: EACs and Environmental Justice
- Maintained and updated our website and Facebook page with increasing numbers of followers
- Created an Instagram account
- Re-engaged with Bird Town PA; currently working on an annual report on behalf of City
- Bethlehem, Allentown and Easton EACs coordinated a virtual Lehigh Valley EAC Network Forum featuring Becky Bradley, Executive Director of LVPC
- Continued to welcome members of the public to raise issues and participate on committees

Speakers at EAC Monthly Meetings

- Anna Smith, southside resident and community activist: Southside Development and Environmental Justice
- Kathryn Semmens, Science Director, Nurture Nature Center: CREATE Resilience project and NOAA grant
- Angela DelGrosso Stein, Director of Mayor’s Initiatives, and Janine Santoro, Director of Equity and Inclusion: Climate Action Plan
- Lehigh student Kendall O’Farrell: Urban Forestry Master Plan
- Lehigh students Alyssa Klinger and Emilie Cohen: Green Restaurants
- Steve Fernstrom, Executive Director of Bethlehem Parking Authority: Sustainability of operations
- Lehigh students Emily Newman, Corena Munroe, Maddie Watts and Kat Neumann: Southside Permaculture Park
- Anna Lazewski, Liberty High School student: Sustainability on the Monocacy
- Updated EAC bylaws
- Lehigh students Alexa Giraudon and Vaniah Barrera: PromiseCorps
- Heidi Shiver, President: Bird Town PA

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife is an active standing committee of the EAC with a dedicated group of volunteers. Please see page 4 of this report for an overview of their mission and activities in 2022.

In the winter of 2022 Katie Trembler and Vibhor Kumar joined the EAC. In June, council member Beth Behrend stepped down. She was an invaluable member, chairing our Waste Reduction Committee and spearheading our proposed ban of single use plastic bags, for which we continue to work and research. In September we welcomed new member Mandy Tolino in her place.

Our great appreciation goes to Tad Miller, 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 Stephanie Aguello, Chief of Staff, for facilitating communication with the Mayor's office.

We are in debt to Darlene Heller, Director of Planning & Zoning, Chief Building Inspector Mike Simonson, Deputy Chief Baer and former EAC members Brian Nicas and Elisabeth Cichonski for their work on the amendments to the solar ordinance. They were all extremely generous with their time and were of great assistance.

We recognize and appreciate our City Council liaison, Kiera Wilhelm, for her input, support, attendance at our meetings and continued efforts on behalf of climate action. We also acknowledge and thank Craig Peiffer, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning, Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works, and Steve Fernstrom, Executive Director of the Bethlehem Parking Authority, for their ongoing contributions to Bethlehem City.

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 2023 we will continue to assist in implementing the goals and strategies of the CAP.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rothman

Lynn Rothman, Chair

Bethlehem, EAC

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC:

Ben Felzer, Vice Chair Ben Guthrie, Secretary

Vibhor Kumar Mandy Tolino

Mike Topping Katie Trembler

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

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW) - Overview 2022

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.

Native Plant Demonstration Gardens maintained by the BBFW committee and community volunteers:

Meadow on the Southside Greenway, Hoover-Mason Trestle at the Steel Stacks, and the Rose Garden Pollinator Garden on the West Side

2022 Highlights:

Rose Garden Pollinator Garden – expanded and maintained the two native perennial gardens on 8th Ave that BBFW designed and planted in 2019

Rose Garden – assisted with maintaining the refurbished pollinator garden beds at the Rose Garden

On-going projects:

In 2022, we were able to return to a full complement of volunteers to maintain the Hoover Mason Trestle and the other native garden areas, all of which are a valuable asset to the City of Bethlehem. Twenty-five interns from PPL and Air Products spent a morning in May learning how to identify and remove the weeds from the ten garden beds along the Hoover-Mason Trestle at Steel Stacks. They also planted new native perennials in the beds to bring more blooming plants into the walkway garden beds. We look forward to continuing this relationship next year.