

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
February 2, 2023**

Attendees: EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair - Virtual), Ben Felzer (Vice Chair), Ben Guthrie (Secretary), Katie Trembler, Mandy Tolino, Mike Topping (Virtual), Vibhor Kumar (Virtual)

Guests/Community Members: Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm (Virtual), Doug Roysdon, Steve Olshevski, William Egbert, Julie Wright, Jodie Miserendino, Victoria Bastidas, Asgar Ali, Andrea Wittchen, Peg Church, Elfie Rockwell (Virtual), Linda Freedman (Virtual), Audrey McSain (Virtual), Anna Zawierucha (Virtual), Lisa Lubin (Virtual), Alex Horvath (Virtual)

Call to Order – 7:00 PM

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of minutes (January):** Motion by Mike, seconded by Ben F. Approved unanimously.
- 3. Chair's comments and amendments to agenda**
 - a. February 25 – Statewide EAC Network Conference (Virtual)
 - b. Lehigh Valley EAC Network – Meeting tentatively planned for May 23
Addition to agenda - Councilwoman Wilhelm will provide an update on the City's Public Engagement Implementation Committee
- 4. Board comments and announcements – None**
- 5. Victoria Bastides, Friends of Johnston Inc.:** Stormwater management/beautification project along Route 191
 - a. Camel's Hump Farm Nature Education Center is a 47-acre historic farmstead. Their mission is to preserve, restore, and sustainably reuse the estate to meet the needs of the community.
 - b. Goals for 2023
 - i. Raise barn
 - ii. Route 191 beautification – stabilization, maintenance, replant 300 trees, temporary screening
 - iii. Water quality monitoring program
 - iv. Air quality monitoring program
 - c. Autism Awareness – Discover the Farm Day – April 29, 2023 - invite EAC to table.
- 6. Committee reports**
 - a. **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (Jane Cook)** – No report. Spring work schedule has not been set yet.
 - b. **Waste Reduction Committee (Katie Trembler)** – The committee met on January 10. The committee performed research and provided answers to questions that were raised by City Council regarding a potential plastic bag ban.

The committee will forward this information to City Council members for consideration.

- c. **Transportation Committee (Ben Guthrie)** – A virtual meeting was held on January 3 to discuss curbside charging of electric vehicles. The committee is working on follow-up research. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 8:00. It will be a virtual meeting.
- d. **Green Committee (Ben Felzer)** – The committee will be meeting virtually on Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 PM. The City Forester will be attending the meeting. Topics of discussion will include an updated list of recommendations for tree planting in the city, the City’s weed ordinance and the ability for residents to grow natural meadows. Arbor Day activities will be held April 28, 2023 at the stables of the Bethlehem Mounted Police with help from Betterscapes LLC. EAC can consider simultaneous event on the South Side.

7. External committee reports

- a. **Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (Jane Cook)** – The Monocacy Creek Clean-Up will be on Saturday, April 8, 2023 from 12:00-2:30 at Burnside Plantation.
- b. **Saucon Creek Watershed Association (Mike Topping)** – No report.
- c. **City Council (Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm)** – Council will review the research provided regarding the plastic bag ban.
- d. **Citizens Traffic Advisory Meeting (Lynn Rothman)** – The February meeting was postponed. The meeting will be held on February 21 at 1:00 PM. The meeting will be held at City Hall.

8. Old business

- a. **Climate Action Plan (Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm)** – The Public Engagement subcommittee will be launching a public climate challenge this spring, with a goal of engaging the community. The challenge will be launched through the WeBuildBethlehem platform. The EAC can assist by amplifying these efforts via social media channels.
- b. **Bethlehem – The Biking City (Doug Roysdon)** – Doug asked if the EAC would consider writing a letter in support of further study of bicycling in the City. After brief discussion of potential grant opportunities, it was agreed that this conversation should be tabled while the EAC seeks out more information. Lynn will seek out more information at the upcoming CTAC meeting and the Transportation Committee will discuss.
- c. **Landfill Update (Mandy Tolino)** – Councilwoman Wilhelm was able to provide more context on the history of the land sale associated with the potential landfill expansion. Andrea Wittchen suggests EAC ask questions regarding city testing of leachate, its composition, does it meet DEP or newer standards, and can the current water treatment plant handle it. Also suggests users of D&L trail and recreation on the Lehigh River attend the hearing at 7 pm on Feb. 27 to testify.
- d. **Bird Town PA (Vibhor Kumar)** – Vibhor and Mandy prepared a draft of the first Birdtown Annual Report for the City of Bethlehem for review and feedback. Vicki Bastides offered to host an annual BirdTown event at Camel’s Hump to

fulfill one of the requirements - she was the initiator of Bethlehem BirdTown years ago.

9. New business

- a. **Internship Projects (Ben Felzer)** – Lehigh University interns have been working on several environmental projects this semester. Ben F. is/has supervised Lehigh students who will speak at the May EAC meeting on two projects: 1) Miyawaki planting experiment in Wayne Grube park in Northampton County (with Prof. Bob Booth) 2) air quality in the Lehigh Valley, as Prof. Breena Holland has acquired 40 new purple air monitors from both Lehigh and Northampton Counties to monitor pollutant levels relative to truck traffic, ware houses, and underrepresented communities.

10. Citizen's comments

- a. The city's single stream recycling brochure is unclear about what cans can be recycled. One side says tin and aluminum. The other side lists bi-metal containers.

11. Next Meeting

- a. Meeting Date – March 2, 2023

12. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Guthrie, Secretary