

Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
March 2, 2023

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

Guests/Community Members: William Egbert (Sierra Club, CCL), Francesco Nota (Lehigh University Student - Virtual), Sherri Penchishen (Bureau of Health - Virtual)

Call to Order – 7:06 PM

1. Welcome

2. Approval of minutes (February): Motion by Ben F., seconded by Vibhor. Approved unanimously.

3. Chair’s comments and amendments to agenda

- a. Sherri L. Penchishen, MPH, RD, LDN, Bureau of Health, Director ,Chronic Disease Programs will be joining us tonight to provide an update on Bethlehem City’s Climate Action Plan Local Food & Waste Subcommittee.
- b. The 2024 Lehigh Valley Sustainability Summit, hosted by the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, will be held on Friday, April 28, 2023.
- c. The Lehigh Valley Master Gardeners (Penn State Extension) will be hosting a Spring Garden Series in April.

4. Board comments and announcements

- a. Ben F. - The Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference will be held on March 14, 2023 at Lehigh University. There are four tracks: Indigenous Perspectives, Volunteer Track, Technical Track, and Stormwater/MS4.

5. Climate Action Plan - Local Food and Waste Committee (Sherri Penchishen)

- a. **Community Gardens** - Three locations are planned: the Yellis Tract, Clearview Park, and Rockdale Park. Locations were chosen because they are outside the floodplain. The City is working with Engineers Without Borders, Lehigh University Student Chapter to capture rainwater on site. The City will provide “water buffalos” and refill as necessary. There may be tool storage sheds on-site as well. Community members will be able to lease a plot for the season.
- b. **Promote Recycling at Large Festivals and Events** - There is a draft Zero Waste Plan. There have been recent meetings with large event organizers. The City will lead a public engagement plan.
- c. **Food Recovery Program** - Would it be possible to recover unused food at the end of an event/festival and donate to a soup kitchen? This program could expand in the future.

6. Committee reports

- a. **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (Jane Cook)** – BBFW will be setting our Hoover Mason Trestle maintenance schedule in the next couple of weeks, and will send it to the EAC for posting on social media when complete.

- b. **Waste Reduction Committee (Katie Trembler)** – City Council is reviewing the committee’s research regarding a potential plastic bag ban.
- c. **Transportation Committee (Ben Guthrie)** – A virtual meeting was held on February 7, 2023 to discuss curbside charging of electric vehicles and Bethlehem as a biking city. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 8:00 pm. It will be a virtual meeting. Committee member Steve Olshevski wrote a summary of the City’s ongoing efforts related to EV charging.
- d. **Green Committee (Ben Felzer)** – Topics of discussion at the most recent meeting included Arbor Day activities. There is an event planned on April 28, 2023 at the stables of the Bethlehem Mounted Police. The committee is considering a simultaneous event on the South Side. The committee has also explored several parks looking for potential sites for wildflower plantings. There are unrelated improvements planned on Friendship Park, and there may be an opportunity to include plantings. The committee is discussing potential funding sources, including a grant opportunity through the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society.

7. External committee reports

- a. **Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (Jane Cook)** – The Creek Cleanup event, which the EAC is cosponsoring, will be held on Saturday, April 8, from noon to 2:30, based at Burnside.
In Mid-March we will be looking at the section of the Monocacy Creek between Illick’s Mill and Schoenersville Road for potential remediation of that stretch that has been seriously compromised by sedimentation the past couple of decades. MCWA is also beginning the re-creation of a newsletter that would be digital and also mailed out to area residents and to our large list of volunteers.
- b. **Saucon Creek Watershed Association** – No report.
- c. **City Council** – No report.
- d. **Citizens Traffic Advisory Meeting (Sherri PENCHISHEN)** – CTAC just updated the City’s Vision Zero plan in conjunction with the City’s grant application for West Broad Street. A Vision Zero dashboard will soon be added to the City’s website. CTAC is working with the CAP Transportation Committee, and may host combined meetings because the two groups have overlapping goals. There are also plans to do a walk audit in partnership with LVPC.

8. Old business

- a. **Bird Town PA (Vibhor Kumar)** – Vicki Bastides offered to host an annual Bird Town event at Camel’s Hump on May 27, 2023, to fulfill one of the requirements - she was the initiator of Bethlehem Bird Town years ago.
- b. **Landfill Update (Ben Felzer)** - There is a hearing on March 9 and March 10 to determine which entities will have party status regarding the zoning decision. The EAC sent a letter to City officials to make sure they are aware of this opportunity.

9. New business

- a. **State EAC Network Conference (Ben Felzer)** – Ben F. and Lynn attended. Ben will provide a summary at the April EAC meeting.

10. Citizen’s comments: None

11. Next Meeting

- a. Meeting Date – April 13, 2023
- b. Location: Fowler Center, Room 103

12. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Guthrie, Secretary