

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
September 7, 2023**

Attendees: EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair), Ben Felzer (Vice Chair), Ben Guthrie (Secretary), Vibhor Kumar, Katie Trembler, Mike Topping (Virtual), Mandy Tolino (Virtual)
Guests/Community Members: Jeff Irvine (WSP - Virtual), Olivia Teel (City Forester - Virtual), Molly Bilinski (Virtual), Jon Zeller (Virtual), Greg Zahm (Virtual), Kathy Fox, William Egbert, Steve Olshevski, Doug Roysdon, Giavanna Gast, Peg Church.

Call to Order – 7:01 PM

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of minutes (August):** Motion by Ben F., seconded by Vibhor. Approved unanimously.
- 3. Jeff Irvine, WSP: Climate Action Plan Municipal Electricity Sourcing Committee update**
 - a. City solar ordinance updated
 - b. Integration of on-site solar and renewable energy supply options and incentives into CAP education materials for the public.
 - c. Continued 100% renewable electricity sourcing for municipal operations.
- 4. Giavanna Gast, Lehigh Student: Greenery in Bethlehem: Nature Accessibility Challenges in a Post-Industrial City -** Geospatial analysis of access to parks, green space, mature street trees, and forested areas within Bethlehem.
- 5. Olivia Teel, City Forester -** Began work with the city in June. Currently adding comments to the Urban Forestry Master Plan. She hopes to finalize the draft by the end of the year. Public comment period is scheduled for November.
- 6. Chair's comments and amendments to agenda**
 - a. **Tour of Recycling Center** - EAC members have been invited to tour the recycling center and yard waste center on Monday, September 18 at 9:00 AM. The group will meet at the recycling center at 9:00.
 - b. **EAC Network Fall Gathering** - Will be held at West Chester University on October 21, 2023.
 - c. **New Table and Tablecloth** - Thank you to the city for purchasing a new table and tablecloth for EAC tabling events.
- 7. Board comments and announcements**
 - a. **Press Conference (Ben Felzer)** - A press conference was held today at City Hall to thank our federal representatives for their work on the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. Ben Felzer attended and spoke on behalf of the EAC.

8. Committee reports

- a. **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW) (Jane Cook)** – The greenway meadow was recently cleared out. New stone will be installed in the future and a bench has been ordered. Hoover Mason Trestle is on schedule. Ten volunteers have each adopted one of the beds.
- b. **Green Committee (Ben Felzer)** – Recently completed plantings at Madison Park plants in conjunction with BBFW. Funded through PA Native Plant Society mini-grant. The next (virtual) committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 12. Thanks to Christy Roysdon for obtaining the grant.
- c. **Bird Town PA (Vibhor Kumar)** – There is a mini-grant opportunity for \$500 if any EAC members or committees have project ideas.
- d. **Waste Reduction Committee (Katie Trembler)** – No report

9. External committee reports

- a. **Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (Jane Cook)** – On Wednesday, September 20, a group of volunteers from Moravian University will be at the Gertrude Fox Conservation Area to plant native plants and install deer protection. Monocacy Park Day will be on Sunday, September 23 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
- b. **Saucon Creek Watershed Association (Mike Topping)** – There will be a native plant sale at the Saucon Valley Farmers Market at Dimmick Park in Hellertown on Sunday, September 10 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
- c. **City Council (Lynn Rothman)** - At the most recent City Council meeting, Lynn spoke to thank the City for the table and tablecloth and provide an update on EAC activities.

10. Old business

- a. **Climate Action Plan (Lynn Rothman)** - On November 15th, a public event is planned where each implementation committee will report on what work has been done to date. The City will also be unveiling a climate challenge for the public.
 - i. **Land Use and Green Space Committee (Ben Felzer)** - Discussed the Urban Forestry Master Plan
 - ii. **Local Food and Waste (Katie Trembler)** - No Update.
 - iii. **Transportation and Mobility Committee (Ben Guthrie)** - The city recently installed several bike racks. The city is also pursuing grant funding for pedestrian safety improvements on Broad Street. Based on recent meetings with LANTA, a stop bar was relocated on Polk Street. There is consideration to relocating bike locations for the Bike Bethlehem program.
- b. **Water Fountains (Lynn Rothman)** - Lynn and Ben F. met with the Director of Public Works and other City staff on August 16th to discuss the possibility of adding more public drinking fountains. There are currently 21 locations with fountains but many are in disrepair or non-functioning. There are currently 8 functional fountains. The goal is to restore or replace fountains where there is public demand. Parks with basketball courts may be a priority. Fairview Park is being renovated, so it was selected as a pilot project for the installation of a

modern water fountain with bottle filler. The estimated cost is \$2,500 for purchase and \$2,500 for installation. Downtown areas would also be considered for future installation.

- c. **EAC Budget (Lynn Rothman)** - The EAC requested funding for the website, meeting advertisement, plantings, and promotional materials. The total budget request is for \$720.

11. New business - None

12. Citizen's comments

- a. **Greg Zahm (Liberty High School) - Environmental Education** - Has been teaching environmental science for 15 years. PA Science Standards were recently updated and now mention climate change and sustainability. Seeking to partner with experts and community organizations. Approximately 150 students take environmental science classes at the two high schools each year.

13. Next Meeting

- a. Meeting Date – October 5, 2023

14. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Guthrie, Secretary