

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
April 4, 2024**

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

Guests/Community Members: Peg Church, William Egbert, Steve Olshevski, Doug Roysdon, Anthony Bronico (Virtual), Kathy Fox (Virtual), Caroline McGrath (Virtual), Christine Kwon (Virtual), Meredith Spear (Virtual), Taryn Johnson (Virtual), Megan Lysowski (Virtual), Greg Zahm (Virtual).

Call to Order – 7:00 PM

1. Welcome

2. Approval of minutes (March): Motion by Ben Felzer, seconded by Lynn Rothman. Approved unanimously.

3. Sarah Rothman, PhD candidate in the Department of Environmental Science and Technology at the University of Maryland: Mosquitoes and their plant resources along urban socioeconomic gradients

4. Chair's comments and amendments to agenda

- a. **Youth Climate Summit (April 19/20)** - If anyone at the meeting knows youth that might be interested, more information and the link to register can be found here: <https://nurturenaturecenter.org/youth-climate-summit-of-the-lehigh-valley/>
- b. **Volunteer opportunities at the Youth Climate Summit in April:** Looking for adults to help with setup, lunch, taking notes, spreading the word before the event, and more.
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4EA9AC2DA6FDC07-47951385-youth#/>.
- c. **Amendments to Agenda** - Two items have been added to the agenda under New Business.

5. Board comments and announcements

- a. **Climate Action: Create Your Future (Ben Felzer)** - Event was held at Lehigh University on April 3. Focus of the event was direct action individuals can take to mitigate climate change. Ben Felzer and Katie Trembler represented the EAC at the event. Mayor Reynolds also spoke.
- b. **Social Media (Katie Trembler)** - Katie is looking for educational content that we can share on our EAC social media pages.

6. Committee reports

- a. **Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (Jane Cook)** – BFFW We had a cleanup event at the Greenway Meadow on the Southside on March 20, removing debris from last year's growth and preparing for the new growing season. The Redbud

tree planted last Fall is thriving and will be in full bloom this month. The bench to commemorate Ilse Stoll and her work in raising the importance of using native perennial plantings in residential, commercial, and public spaces throughout the Lehigh Valley was installed this month at the Greenway Meadow. This Meadow had become a self-sustaining example of how native perennials can beautify a space while serving as a crucially vital habitat for pollinators and other beneficial critters, requiring care only two times a year, and being almost totally weed-free. The work on the Hoover-Mason Trestle Garden bed maintenance began last week with clearing the debris from over the fall and winter. The schedule for volunteers to help with the regular weeding and pruning will be set and posted on the EAC site during early April.

- b. Green Committee (Ben Felzer)** – The committee met on March 14. The committee decided not to pursue a grant from the PA Native Plant Society this year. The committee will meet virtually on April 11.
- a. Heritage Tree Committee (Steve Olshevski)** - Steve has volunteered to chair the Heritage Tree Committee. Mandy Tolino and Bethlehem City Forester Oliva Teel are also serving on the committee.
- c. Waste Reduction Committee (Katie Trembler)** – The committee met on Wednesday, March 27 at 7:00. The committee decided to conduct research on a City styrofoam ban and a “skip the stuff” bill that would limit the disposable items that restaurants can include if not specifically requested by the customer. The committee will meet again on April 25 at 7:00 PM.
- d. Transportation Committee (Ben Guthrie)** - No report.

7. External committee reports

- a. Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (Lynn Rothman on behalf of Jane Cook)** – A Monocacy Creek clean-up event is planned at Burnside Plantation on Saturday, April 13, from 9:00-11:30 A.M. We will provide trash bags and gloves. We will be working upstream and downstream of Burnside, and there is lots of debris and trash that has accumulated over the past winter, since our last cleanup day in the Fall of 2023. Using live stakes harvested from native shrubs and trees planted in prior years along the Monocacy, we now have “second generation” plantings in riparian buffer areas to help stabilize stream banks and prevent erosion. This saves us from having to buy live stakes and have them shipped by truck from northwest PA. The cost savings is great, but the main benefit is that we can harvest and use our own live stakes that are much more likely to survive and thrive compared to the ones that are vulnerable during the shipping process. Monocacy Park Day will be on Saturday, May 11, from 10 AM to 1 PM at Illick’s Mill. We will have kids’ activities, fly-fishing demos, a native plant sale, refreshments, a rain barrel workshop organized through Penn State extension, and other activities centered on the creek. See our Facebook page for additional info.
- b. Saucon Creek Watershed Association (Mike Topping)** – No report.
- c. City Council (Councilwoman Colleen Laird)** - No report.

8. Old Business

- a. Climate Action Plan (Lynn Rothman)**

- i. **Environmental Justice Implementation Committee** - Since we started CAP, there has been the desire for a full time sustainability officer in the city. The consulting firm WSP is working with the City to develop the job description for a sustainability officer. The committee is also looking into grants and community partnerships to support weatherization and tree plantings in disadvantaged communities.
- ii. **Adopting and implementing climate change curriculum in Bethlehem Area School District (Greg Zahm)** - The LHS Environmental Club and other groups are urging the Bethlehem Areas School District board to adopt and implement a comprehensive curriculum on climate change and sustainability. Individuals who are interested in getting involved should contact Greg: gzahm@ptd.net; 484-767-3931

9. New business - None

10. Citizen's comments - None

11. Next Meeting

- a. **Meeting Date** – May 2, 2024

12. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Guthrie, Secretary