

**Attendees:** EAC Members: Lynn Rothman (Chair), Mike Topping (Vice Chair), Elisabeth Cichonski (Secretary), Beth Behrend, Ben Guthrie, Brian Nicas, Ben Felzer, Brian Hillard (SEF), Martha Christine (Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife [BBFW]), Jane Cook (Monocacy Creek Watershed Coalition & BBFW), Katharine Targett Gross (Lehigh University Office of Sustainability), Mike Albanese (Citizen).

**Call to Order @ 7:03 PM**

1. **Approval of minutes (May):** Motion to approve made by Brian N., seconded by Beth. The May minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Place citizens' comments on agenda:** Mike A. spoke with Connor Burbridge who manages Bethlehem's community gardens about composting, and is working to link in the Bethlehem Food Co-Op in hopes of connecting various groups to help get conversation started about the composting program.  
Katharine reported that Lehigh's CAP is on hold temporarily because of budgetary concerns; she will find out more information by June 15.
3. **Chair's comments & amendments to agenda:** Bethlehem Food Co-Op is hosting zoom sessions to explain their mission, goals and activities. They plan to open a grocery store in downtown Bethlehem. If you'd like more information or would like to attend an informational session, contact Kathy Fox.  
Penn State Extension held an online forum which discussed city tree ordinances, David Shaffer, Bethlehem's City Forester, attended.
4. **Board comments and announcements:**
5. **Committee reports:**
  - a. Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW) cleaned up the native gardens along the Hoover Mason Trestle this past month. Ed Gallagher (Gadfly) has alerted BBFW that the gardens did not appear to be in good condition, and BBFW discovered that the water had been shut off. The water has been turned on and gardens cleaned up.  
Jane Cook and Christine Roysdon did some maintenance at the Rose garden today (6/4).  
There has been some discussion between Mary Tolouse and BBFW regarding community gardens. Previously, they worked on the gardens at the end of New Street on the south side, across from Lehigh Pizza (this garden is no longer there). BBFW recommends having City personnel function as the community garden coordinator. BBFW would like to continue to work on community vegetable gardens and asked if the Green Committee would be interested in helping with this.  
Bethlehem Gardening Club is another organization that may be interested in collaborating on community garden projects. Martha recalled that BGC had worked with BBFW on the Miller Gardens when BBFW certified those gardens

as wildlife habitat. BGC has a Facebook page, so that may be the easiest way to connect.

- b. **Waste Reduction Committee:** No report. The Waste Reduction Committee hopes to pick up this month. Elisabeth has been in touch with Allentown about their Plastic Reduction Plan and they have reported that the plastic plan will be voted on at an upcoming city council meeting.
- c. **Green Committee:** The tree inventory was supposed to start in July, but this has not been confirmed.

Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF) nymphs are out in full force. Brian has been trying to spread word to reduce number. Various methods for SLF capture are being employed including tapes and bags.

The Heritage Tree Program is set up but needs more nominations and help spreading the word.

- d. **Solar Committee:** The Solar Committee met on June 2 via Webex. Committee members did some research on benchmarking and how to do a solar assessment to provide information to the City. As next steps, the group decided we will look into existing ordinances in Bethlehem and other cities. Elisabeth will look into local cities ordinances and the possibility of connecting with Easton's EAC was discussed. The Solar Committee discussed the need for a Sustainability Officer be hired by the City. Lynn motioned to draft a letter to the City's CAP consultants stating the need for a Sustainability Officer, seconded by Elisabeth, and opened for discussion. Mike T. felt that this position would only be productive if it was at a managerial level so the role carried significant weight and had a greater voice. He would like to see a Department of Sustainability so the Sustainability Officer could attend staff meetings and provide significant input. Ben G. agreed and suggested we recommend this be a cabinet level position. The Sustainability Officer should be able to speak directly with the Mayor. This department would also be able to work with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, bringing their initiatives to the City. Motion approved unanimously to write a letter to City Council in favor of creating a new position for a Director of Sustainability. Lynn will draft a letter and EAC members that are present at the City's CAP engagement meeting will make this suggestion.

The next steps for the Solar Committee would be to produce recommendations to advance solar energy and sustainability within the city (with feedback from the fire chief, Dept. of Planning & Zoning, etc.) to help us move forward with ordinance recommendations. We would also like to recommend benchmarking as a strategy to assess current energy use and analyze benefits of proposed solar systems. Brian had a meeting with Sustainable Energy Fund (SEF) members, and SEF is looking into producing more webinars on benchmarking for solar. Benchmarking compares baseline building vs. proposed building design to calculate energy usage and serves as a mechanism to measure energy performance of a single building over time, relative to other similar buildings. This can be done easily through EPA's Energy Star's Portfolio Manager.

Mike A. mentioned that when he asked about bicycle systems the City told him that his question could be addressed through Department of Health. He suggested

some of these responsibilities should be separated out so we could ask for a title head separate from the Department of Health that addresses bicyclists.

**6. External committee reports**

- a. **City Council:** No report.
- b. **Planning:** No report.
- c. **Zoning:** No report

**7. Unfinished business:**

- a. **Climate Action Plan:** Virtual Climate Action Plan Engagement Meetings will be held at 12 PM and 5:30 PM on June 17. Ben F. will get in touch with Jeff Irvine to make sure this is posted in the paper. This has been distributed to the Lehigh community via Facebook and through emails and announcements within other groups. The total number of registered participants is not known.
- b. **LV Climate Action Network (LV CAN):** Brian H. has been in contact with the LV Planning Commission to motivate CAPs across the municipalities in the Lehigh Valley. FutureLV was part of this effort. LV-CAN would like to work with the LVPC to facilitate connection between municipalities within the LV and get other municipalities motivated to start their own CAPs and become more sustainably focused.
- c. **EAC projects:** The EAC needs more help with various projects and committees. Mike A. is interested in the Waste Reduction Committee. He suggested implementing more waste containers outside of churches (and other community areas) particularly downtown since there does not seem to be ample waste receptacles.  
During COVID, the Food Co-Op has been posting pictures and making videos of things they are doing or supporting for social media. Kathy suggested that the EAC do the same.  
Lynn has been in touch with Amy True about the flyers. Since there is no real need for physical flyers right now, we may be able to post her design to our Facebook page.  
The Energy Efficiency Initiative is tabled until we can find more support.  
Pollinators—Beth suggested getting in touch with the LV Beekeepers Association to do a presentation/raise awareness. Beth is in touch with Steve, the president of the LV Beekeepers Association and can reach out.  
BBFW- The EAC would like to be doing more with BBFW, since BBFW is an extension of the EAC. There are multiple upcoming cleanups that BBFW welcomes help with.  
Kathy asked about the Martin Tower site to see if we will have input on the final plans.

**Meeting adjourned @ 8:15 PM**

Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council  
General Meeting  
June 4, 2020

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elisabeth Cichonski, Secretary