

Bethlehem Environmental Action Committee
General Meeting
January 3, 2019

Attendees: EAC Members: Lynn Rothman, Mike Topping, Brian Hillard, Kathy Fox, Elisabeth Cichonski, Beth Behrend. Non-members: Brian Nicas (Curtiss-Wright, Environmental Health and Safety Manager), Ben Guthrie (Civil Engineer), Ginny Sciorra (Palmer Township), Martha Christine (Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife) (BBFW), Ed Gallagher, Amanda Allekotte.

Meeting called to order: 7:03 PM.

Election of Vice Chair: Responsibilities include running meetings in the absence of the Chair. Kathy nominated Mike Topping for Vice Chair. Motion made by Lynn to elect Mike as Vice Chair, seconded by Beth. Motion approved unanimously.

Appointment of Secretary: Elisabeth volunteered to be Secretary. Appointed by Lynn.

Approval of December Minutes: Motion to accept the December minutes made by Brian, seconded by Mike. Motion passed unanimously.

Place Citizens Comments on Agenda: Brian Nicas stated that the pavilions at Monocacy Park are available for barbecues and parties, and as a result there is often glitter, balloon pieces and confetti everywhere. Ducks are ingesting the plastic and there is no easy way to clean it up. He suggested a ban on plastic confetti and glitter. Lynn will contact the Parks Department for information.

Other members of the group recommended writing a letter to manufacturers of glitter and plastic confetti to suggest making biodegradable alternatives.

Chair's Comments & Amendment to the Agenda: The EAC meeting in July cannot be held on July 4th. It will be held on July 11th on the first floor of Illick's Mill.

Board Comments & Announcements: Green Drinks are held at the Bethlehem Brew Works on the second Wednesday of each month. In January, it will be about water quality; February's event will discuss topics from the Lehigh Valley Birdtown Coalition.

Committee Reports: The BBFW Facebook link is no longer available on the city website. Lynn will ask the website administrator to have it added to the EAC site. Elisabeth will add this year's EAC calendar on our Facebook page.

External Committee Reports:

A. City Council: None.

B. Planning: The largest (25 acres) warehouse is being built in the Lehigh Valley.

C. Zoning: None.

Correspondence: Lynn connected with Mike Halbfoerster, Director of Recycling, and plans to meet with him next week. Mike Topping will join her. Mike Halbfoerster agreed to attend an upcoming EAC meeting.

Kathy was contacted by LEPOCO (on 313 W. 4th street) to speak this week at a potluck dinner featuring the film “Tomorrow: Take Concrete Steps to a Sustainable Future”.

On Wednesday, Kathy will speak at Lehigh Valley For All to promote the creation of EACs in other localities and encourage the public to actively participate in their local EACs. She will also talk about consumer activism and encourage consumers to buy green electricity from their service provider.

Martha (BBFW) said the Rose Garden received \$50,000 in the City budget so BBFW can now apply for matching grants through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Martha (BBFW) requested a ten-minute block next month or the following to explain some background about BBFW to new EAC members.

Unfinished Business:

Climate Action Planning: Brian requested that the EAC ask the City for data from UGI and Transportation data on City-wide energy use. Lynn will contact Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works.

Waste Reduction Task Force: Amanda and Beth went out to survey businesses and sent out three mass email surveys. Ten survey results have been received so far. Of the ten surveys received, eight were for the ban, one was against, and one was neutral. Employees at larger chain supermarkets (Weis and Giant) were not permitted to take the surveys. Half of those surveyed were in favor of paying 10 cents each initially for paper bags, and eventually increasing the price to 25 cents. Beth and Amanda plan to draft a cover letter and do more research on other cities to find out more information on how taxes from purchases of bags are spent or reinvested, then we will look at a more polished version to send to City Council in February.

Community Energy Efficiency Initiative: No meetings were held since last month. Brian met with representatives from the Bethlehem Area School District (BASD). He reported that they are already working to conserve energy by turning off the AC over the summer when school is not in session, except for buildings with humidity issues. During the school year, the buildings are in operation 12 hours a day. The Energy Use Intensity (EUI) for BASD schools is below national average, and BASD is part of a demand response program through PJM Interconnection LLC (a regional electric transmission organization). BASD gets some of its power through solar arrays through power purchase agreements (PPAs).

Monocacy Creek Watershed Coalition: February 1st, 2019 @ 10 AM- 12 PM. There will be a preliminary meeting with Saucon Creek Watershed Assoc. and other similar groups where the

authorities that deal with EPA will discuss MS4 compliance in hopes of getting support from other groups.

Letter to Department of Planning and Zoning: Lynn drafted a letter to the Bethlehem Department of Planning & Zoning requesting that all large subdivision and land development plans be sent to the EAC for comment before site development and construction. The letter was passed around for review.

New Business: A citizen asked Kathy about the excess methane that is produced and burned off at the Bethlehem Wastewater Treatment Plant. No one present was well versed in the plant's operation.

In December 2018, the Penn Forest Zoning Hearing Board rejected the Atlantic Wind application for 28 wind turbines on the Bethlehem Authority's property. The solicitor of Penn Forest has 45 days to submit a written opinion laying out the specific criteria that the Atlantic Wind application failed. Atlantic Wind will then have 30 days in which to file an appeal to the Carbon County Court.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elisabeth Cichonski, Secretary