

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
May 5, 2016**

Attendees: Present were Council members Lynn Rothman (Chair), Kalyna Procyk, Cathy Reuscher and Mike Topping.

Approval of April Minutes: After a short discussion with minor corrections, Kalyna moved and Cathy seconded approval; approved.

Citizens' Comments: None

Chair's Comments: Parks Director, Ralph Carp, has resigned and Jane Persa is the acting director. As discussed at previous meetings, Lynn sent the attached letter to City Council with recommendations concerning the proposed parking garage for the South Side Benner project.

Board Comments: Since the presence of lead in municipal water systems is now a major concern in many cities, Kalyna asked whether City water was tested on a regular basis for the possible presence of lead. Mike stated that the City tests for lead as an ongoing program and that individuals who suspect that lead is in their water can ask the City to test their water. Kalyna questioned how many people, especially in poorer or older neighborhoods, know about this and are able to take advantage of this information. She was concerned that older homes might still have lead pipes carrying drinking water. Mike noted that filters are available to treat lead in water but they may be too expensive for some people to afford. After further discussion, Lynn offered to contact Mike Alkhal, Director of Public Works, and Sherri Penchishen, Director of the Health Bureau, to determine how the City tests for lead in City water and how comprehensive the testing is concerning every household or school in the City.

Sub Committee Reports:

Energy: No report.

Green Committee: On April 30, 100 trees were planted in City parks by volunteers from a number of organizations to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Bethlehem's unification. This was made possible by a \$20,000 grant from TD Bank and was led by City Forester, Cindy Smith, Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife members, the Mount Airy Neighborhood Association and the Bethlehem 275th/100th Anniversary Committee.

Transportation: Lynn attended the CTAC meeting yesterday and reported that the workshop held at the PennDOT conference mentioned last month was well received. They received a grant for shared bike lanes and refurbishment of existing bike lanes.

External Committee Reports:

Lehigh Valley Bird Town Coalition: No Report

Zoning: No report.

City Planning: No report.

City Council: Lynn reported that many citizens spoke at length in opposition to the proposed parking garage for the South Side. Each member of City Council then gave their reasons for voting either for or against the project. Although environmental issues such as air pollution and health risks were mentioned, the primary objections appeared to be based on financial and traffic congestion considerations. The EAC and others were thanked for their input but, in the end, the Council members voted 5-2 in favor of financing the garage.

Correspondence: Mike reported that the Morning Call had a nice article concerning the tree plantings mentioned in the Green Committee report and reminded everyone that the Northampton County Conservation District runs an Envirothon for area high school environmental clubs each spring and that this might be something with which we would want to become involved. He also reported that anyone who sees someone pumping water out of a creek or river should immediately call the PA Fish & Boat office at 717-626-0228 or 717-587-0421 and/or PA DEP at 717-587-0421. You should try to identify the tanker truck and where it may be going with the water. In that way, the investigating officer can determine if the use is appropriate or not. In some cases the local conservation district may have to make the determination. Northampton County's # is 610-829-6276.

Unfinished Business: After a short discussion, the EAC members present voted to recommend approval of the proposed changes to Article 146 as indicated in the attached letter. After further discussion, the attached By-Laws were also approved. Both motions were moved by Kalyna; seconded by Cathy; and approved unanimously.

New Business:

Vice Chair: Since only four members were present, it was decided to table voting for a Vice Chair until the next meeting.

City Council Coverage: Fran is scheduled to cover the May 17 meeting and Lynn will cover the June 7 meeting.

Agenda for next meeting: As indicated under the Board's comments concerning lead in our water, this will be a major item for discussion.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:25 PM.