

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
March 2, 2017**

Attendees: Present were Council members Jack Gambino, Lynn Rothman, John Brunner, Brian Hillard, Kalyna Procyk and Mike Topping.

Approval of February Minutes: After a short discussion, Kalyna moved and Jack seconded approval as corrected; approved.

Chair's Comments: Lynn noted that the annual Transportation Summit will be held on June 8th at Arts Quest Musikfest Cafe and there will be an EAC Conference in Lancaster on May 6th. Lynn and Brian plan to go the Lancaster Conference. The members agreed that we should ask the City to reimburse any members who attend such conferences at their own expense. Lynn offered to inquire.

Committee Reports: None

External Committee Reports:

City Council: Brian reported that City Council is looking into regulating the planting of bamboo, an invasive plant, which can be very difficult to control. Some people like it as a buffer planting, but others don't want it to intrude onto their property and certain types are almost impossible to remove once they are present. No action has been decided so far.

City Council approved the proposed Climate Action Plan and noted that since recently appointed Federal Agency officials seem to be in opposition to this idea, it is important for the local government bodies to take the lead in this effort. Now the question is what do we do next?

City Planning: None

Zoning: None

LVBTC: Their next meeting will be on March 29th.

Correspondence: None

Unfinished Business:

Climate Action Plan: Councilman William Reynolds will speak to the Mayor next week to talk about the working groups necessary for its implementation. John noted that reducing energy usage and our carbon footprint has been done and we can do more but his major concern was to change the way people behave and live their daily lives. Grass mowing, leaf blowing, and the more efficient use of all gas-powered equipment, including emissions, can be improved. John and Kalyna recommended an all-encompassing attitude adjustment for everyone in the City and beyond, including businesses, to recognize the importance of energy efficiency, proper landscaping, minimal usage of fossil fuels, recycling, pedestrian & bicycle transportation, recycling, etc. The members agreed that it will require the City to take a leadership position in most of these efforts. Kalyna asked if anyone knew of a City, especially close to our size, that had created a climate action plan. It was agreed that many plans exist, but usually are limited in scope to a particular subject or project.

Recycling: Kalyna will write letter to the Mayor and City Council in support of placing recycling containers in the City downtown areas and ask what specific roadblocks appear to be holding up this effort. We have heard that cost is probably a factor as well as the final design of the containers. Perhaps a grant could be obtained to help pay for the cost.

Water Quality: As a result of the presentation last month by Kristie Fach, Kalyna thought we should recommend some setback and riparian buffer improvements along City streams. The last correspondence from the EAC on this matter was in 2012, when we recommended a 20 foot wide riparian buffer for streams in City Parks. The design would include mowed pathways through the buffer areas to provide access to the stream. The EAC agreed that this idea should be reintroduced to the Mayor and City Council, but also wondered if this could also be recommended for private property owners. John noted that maintenance and enforcement would likely be a problem. Brian noted that it was important that the benefits of any regulations be fully explained and made to look as positive as possible so that people would want to comply instead of being forced to comply.

Meanwhile the Monocacy and Saucon Creek Park buffer areas are proposed for study by the Wildlands Conservancy and County Conservation District as well as their respective watershed partners. The members recommended that George Yasko, Monocacy Creek Watershed Association President, be invited to our next meeting to describe their plans. Recognizing that our water quality initiatives can be considered a part of a climate action plan, Kalyna will list a number of recommendations for the improvement of our water quality.

Wind Turbines on Bethlehem Authority Property: Brian reported that the Zoning Hearing Board hearing on this issue has been moved to the county courthouse because of the heated arguments presented by many of the citizens who live in the area.

New Business:

Earth Day: April 22nd is earth day. The members are unable to provide an EAC presence at the Food Co-op and Appalachian Mountain Trail earth day events this year, but may become involved in the future. They agreed that an outreach pamphlet should be developed for distribution at such events.

Glyphosate: This is found in herbicides, which can be harmful to the environment and the people who frequent areas where this is used. Depending on the amount of usage this could be a problem in the City. John recommended that the Nature Conservancy be contacted concerning its use.

City Council: Lynn will try to ensure that Adam Waldron comes to our next meeting and that City Council appoints another member to the EAC for a total of 7 members.

Meeting adjourned at Approximately 9:00 PM.