

**IBethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
April 6, 2017**

Attendees: Present were Council members Lynn Rothman, Brian Hillard, Kalyna Procyk and Mike Topping. Also in attendance were George Yasko and Martin Romeril.

Approval of March Minutes: After a number of corrections suggested by Lynn, Kalyna moved and Brian seconded approval as corrected; approved.

Chair's Comments: Councilman Michael Colon had expressed his approval and support of the EAC and its mission. He was planning to attend tonight's meeting, but a conflict arose. Reimbursement money for the EAC conference in Lancaster has been approved. Lynn and Mike will meet tomorrow with park officials and County Conservation and Wildlands Conservancy staff to discuss the proposed buffers along the Saucon Creek. The Sierra Club has written a letter to the Mayor in support of the City's initiative to upgrade and expand the Monocacy Park Trail System. Lynn indicated that once John Brunner returns from vacation at our next meeting, the EAC will probably also want to support this initiative.

Board Comments and Announcements: None

George Yasko, Monocacy Creek Watershed Association (MCWA): George described their efforts to re-establish their 501C3 non-profit status since some of their paper work has been lost or not properly filed in recent years. The MCWA was started in the 1970s. Some of their funding has come from grants as well as membership contributions. In the past they have contributed to various organizations for plantings and other work to improve the areas along the creek. Now they are working with the City and the Wildlands Conservancy to improve Monocacy Park in the City and the Johnston Estate park in Bethlehem Township. With their 501C3 status they are back to writing grants and have an active 12 member board some of whom are also members of the Monocacy Creek Trout Unlimited chapter. Like most, if not all other watershed organizations in the Lehigh Valley Watershed Coalition, they have no paid staff but work with the Wildlands, the City, and Northampton County, which do have staffs. The MCWA meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at Illick's Mill.

Committee Reports:

Energy: Brian reported that the Township Zoning Board is still reviewing the wind turbine proposal for the Bethlehem Authority property and wondered if some kind of discussion was possible between those who are in favor of the project and the local residents, who mostly appear against it. Although the EAC is for the project, it was felt that it was too late to become more actively involved.

Transportation: The feasibility study for the proposed pedestrian bridge across the Lehigh River has been put on hold. (Both St. Luke's and Lehigh University were not prepared to provide the funding at this time). Meanwhile the proposal is being actively promoted and perhaps this funding will be available next year.

Green: There will be a native plant sale at the UUCLV church side yard at 424 Center Street on May 6 & 7 and 13 & 14.

External Committee Reports:

City Council: Nothing new. Martin suggested that instead of an ordinance regulating just bamboo that the City should consider an ordinance regulating "Noxious Plants" especially invasive plants. Kalyna explained that the City has a noxious weed ordinance, but that it is almost impossible to enforce because of the lack of a proper definition for such plants.

City Planning: None

Zoning: None

LVBTC: None

Correspondence: Don Miles, Chair of the Lehigh Valley Sierra Club, wrote a letter to the Mayor in support of the City's initiative to upgrade and expand the Monocacy Park Trail System. The EAC sent a letter to City Council and the Mayor in support of the establishment of a Climate Change Working Group.

Unfinished Business:

Climate Action Plan: Next Wednesday Lynn will attend a meeting of the City's Climate Action Plan Working Group. Lynn will find out if other EAC members are welcome to attend.

Recycling: Kalya wrote a letter to the Mayor and City Council in support of placing recycling containers in the City downtown areas. She listed the many advantages for doing this and recommended that funds be allocated to cover "the cost of recycling containers and that alternative styles, quantity or placement be investigated." After a few minor changes, Lynn will sign the letter and send to the Mayor and City Council.

Old Business: Martin reminded everyone of his concern for the existing trees at the Martin Tower site. (See minutes for 12/2/15 and the letter from the EAC to City Council dated 12/13/15) He felt that many large trees have been removed and he wondered how the City would insure that a proper number of trees would be retained from the existing landscaping on the site. He asked that a tree census be presented to the City prior to any further removal of trees and/or issuance of building permits for the property. Mike suggested that the EAC request a copy of the existing landscaping plan(s) for the property, which identified all proposed trees for the Martin Tower Development as well as a general description of the existing wooded areas on the site. They could then compare the existing required landscaping to any proposed plans for the site.

Martin was also concerned with the apparent lack of enforcement of the storm water discharge requirements from this property into the Monocacy by DEP and the City. George noted that these requirements are presently under review and are proposed to be updated throughout the state.

Meeting adjourned at Approximately 8:30 PM.