

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
June 7, 2018**

Attendees: Council members: Lynn Rothman (by phone), Elisabeth Cichonski, Kathy Fox, Jack Gambino, Brian Hilliard and Mike Topping. Also in attendance: Ed Gallagher, Councilman William Reynolds (by phone), Dan Sobrinski, Rick Sherry, Jessica Morris and Katrina Prutzman.

Approval of May Minutes: Moved by Brian; seconded by Kathy; approved as revised.

Chair's Comments: None

Board Comments: See Kathy under New Business below.

Committee Reports:

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW): Held native plant sale at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethlehem and most if not all plants were sold.

Lehigh Valley Birdtown Coalition (LVBTC): Held a meeting on May 5th at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Steve Saffier, from Audubon PA, stated that people can receive \$5 from Audubon if they register their properties as Wildlife Habitats and \$10 if they are located in a Birdtown such as Bethlehem. Representatives from the LV Audubon Society, Allentown EAC, Bethlehem EAC (Lynn Rothman) Lehigh Gap Nature Center and Green Building United were in attendance and gave updates on their organizations. The next meeting will be January 9th at the Allentown Brew Works as part the "Green Drinks" program under the Lehigh Valley Sustainability Network.

Transportation: The Citizens Traffic Advisory Committee (CTAC) meets on the first Tuesday of the month in the 5th floor conference room, room 504.

External Committee Reports:

City Council: None

Planning & Zoning: Mike reported that the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) did not approve the proposed billboard on the Hill to Hill bridge.

Correspondence: None

Unfinished Business:

City of Bethlehem Climate Action Plan (CAP): Councilman Reynolds said he will meet with Mike Alkhal (Director of Public Works), Matt Dorner (Deputy Director/Chief Engineer, Public Works), and Robert Vidoni (Assistant City Clerk) next Wednesday. At this meeting they will decide if they will be able to put together the basic information needed for the community greenhouse gas inventory with the help of Pennoni Associates. The City of Easton and the Nurture Nature Center have worked with Pennoni and still have a relationship with them. Brian noted that ICLEI can help for about \$1,200 if necessary. Dan Sobrinski noted that he has been working with Easton and Nurture Nature for the last year on their CAP.

Promotional Materials: Elisabeth did some research on how to build our network and recommended that we become involved with various social media,

other EACs in the area, as well as the general public, and share information. Another idea is to design a logo just for the EAC, which could be used on an EAC flyer which would help tell everyone what we are about. Elisabeth will contact Keri Maxfield at Nurture Nature to see if she can help in this effort.

Lehigh Valley EACs: Brian has contacted many of the EACs in the Valley and has begun to put together a list of EACs, their meeting schedules and contact information.

Climate Action Plan Survey Results: Elisabeth reported that mostly Bethlehem citizens answered the survey and were concerned about climate control, especially the effects of local industry on air quality. Survey respondents suggested the following: educate the public about climate change; hold a greenest municipality in the valley contest to obtain baseline information on local commercial activity; develop a green bank; require more green development practices - including green building requirements; partner with private & public sources to finance green initiatives; require businesses to reduce their carbon footprint; promote a transition to green energy; increase green fees for developers and promote the use of environmentally friendly products. Furthermore, buying local & organic foods, recycling, insulating buildings, using programmable timers, rain barrels, car pooling, public transportation and using renewable energy were all supported. Ideas for grants to accomplish some of this were the Rockefeller Foundation, Sierra Club and the development of a local "Green Bank" from a public/private partnership. Also, the state has a grant program that can provide funds.

EAC Webpage: There was a general discussion about whether the EAC should have its own webpage, which would list the EAC membership, meeting schedule, meeting minutes and by laws. Special projects, such as the Climate Action Plan, could also be listed as it develops.

Kathy Reported: As part of the Monocacy Creek Rehab project, Wildlands Conservancy is contacting land owners along the creek to see what improvements they will support. She also reported that the Bethlehem Authority has agreed to allow the PennEast pipeline to cross their property for \$1.7 million over a 25 year period (see MC article 2/9/18). As a private citizen, she asked Steve Repasch, Executive Director, if they could provide some funding from this money for our CAP. He will discuss this with his board.

He is coming to our July meeting to give us an update on both the wind turbine and pipeline projects.

Kathy offered to draft a letter to City Council, subject to EAC approval, recommending that the City ask for some funding help from the Authority in developing our CAP and that the City increase their purchase of electricity from 50 percent renewable energy sources to 100 percent renewable energy sources.

Sustainable Pa. Conference: Brian attended this conference on June 5th and recommended that the City become a Sustainable City, which then gives us a preferred status when asking for grants from DCNR or other state funding sources. Volkswagen is scheduled to pay the state \$180,000,000 in fees for misleading the public on emissions. This money could be used by municipal agencies such as parking authorities and building & public works inspectors to convert their fleets to electric.

Meeting adjourned approximately 9:00 PM