

Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council
General Meeting
July 5, 2018

Attendees: Council members: Lynn Rothman, Elisabeth Cichonski, Kathy Fox, Jack Gambino, Brian Hilliard and Mike Topping. Also in attendance: Steve Repasch, Ed Gallagher, Councilman William Reynolds, Jessica Morris, Dan Miller, Beth Behrend, Amy True, and Martha Christine.

Approval of June Minutes: Moved by Brian; seconded by Jack; approved as revised.

Report from Stephen Repasch: Mr. Repasch, Executive Director of the Bethlehem Authority, which manages the Bethlehem water supply properties in Monroe and Carbon Counties, gave a summary of the latest developments with the wind turbine and pipeline projects proposed for this property. The wind turbine project has been discussed since 2009. The initial proposal included 39 turbines; the second proposal included 28 turbines. The 39 turbine proposal was “deemed approved” since the Township Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) did not act within the time permitted for such actions. Later the applicant, Atlantic Wind, submitted a second proposal for 28 turbines, which are 100+ feet taller than the original 39 turbines, but would take up less space on the property and therefore be less intrusive to the environment. Each turbine will be at least half a mile from the nearest residence in the area. A final decision on this project is pending action on Township appeals to Carbon County Court.

The PennEast Pipeline proposal has been approved by the Authority and will cross approximately 4 miles of their property. The Authority was advised that this was inevitable and therefore negotiated an agreement, which provides for considerable funds for the Authority and protection for the existing facilities and the natural environment covering the watershed. Both of these proposals will require additional security personnel and other improvements to safeguard the proposed facilities. Carbon credits worth approximately \$200,000 will continue to be sold by the Authority until at least June 2021.

Chair’s Comments: Lynn reported that on July 10th the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will hold a meeting discussing the proposed Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Valley and on July 11th will hold a discussion on the Mitigation Measures for a Sustainable, Healthy & Resilient Region led by Geoff Reese, PE of LVPC at the Allentown Brew Works, as part of their “Green Drinks” program.

Board Comments: Brian talked with the Allentown EAC, which is concerned with storm water issues. The Allentown EAC plans to develop a discussion on storm water management for the November “Green Drinks” program. Citizen’s Climate Lobby and the Nature Conservancy are also in the process of putting together a separate program on this topic.

Committee Reports:

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW): Martha Christine gave an update on the Rose Garden grant: We’ve received an additional contribution from the former West Side business group (\$6,500) and a smaller contribution from colleagues at Lehigh (\$400). We are seeking an extension from Lehigh Valley Community Foundation so that we can pool our resources to accomplish a larger and more coherent set of projects than we could have initiated with the remainder of the grant alone. We plan to:

- 1) Repair of the "1916" pillars on either side of what will be the new entrance to the park (at 8th Ave and North St), including stonework, brick repointing and lighting at the tops!
- 2) Design and planting of new native gardens on either side of the refurbished pillars.
- 3) Removal of a portion of the pavement in the back of the audience area, toward the east of the band shell, preparing the ground beneath, planting trees and grass.
- 4) Purchase and placement of a bike rack near the smaller building that has restrooms, not far from the Log Cabin.

BBFW will be at the Rose Garden Farmers Market to lead a children's story hour and nature craft 3 times this summer: July 21, Aug 11 and Sept 1.

Transportation: No Report. Open to the public, the Citizens Traffic Advisory Committee (CTAC) meets on the first Tuesday of the month in the 5th floor conference room of City Hall, room 504.

External Committee Reports:

City Council: Councilman Reynolds reported that the proposed changes to the City Fire Code concerning solar panels have been approved on first reading. These changes are in keeping with the 2012 edition of the International Fire Code and will make it easier to install solar panels and safer for fire department personnel work around them when necessary. Subject to any new revisions to the proposed ordinance, a second reading and final approval is anticipated to take place on July 17th. The installation of solar panels will require a building permit and inspection by the City as appropriate. Lynn will write a letter from the EAC to City Council in support of the proposed changes.

Planning & Zoning: No Report.

Correspondence: None

Unfinished Business:

EAC Promotional Materials: Amy True has drafted a handout, in English and Spanish, which the EAC can give to people who are interested in the activities of the EAC. During discussion, some minor changes were proposed to insure it would cover the EAC as a whole rather than just the Climate Action Plan. It indicates the time and place of EAC meetings and how to contact the EAC at eacbethlehempa@gmail.com.

City of Bethlehem Climate Action Plan (CAP): Councilman Reynolds reported that the City has asked UGI and PPL for city wide data on the aggregate use of their gas and electric services, which will then be used to determine a baseline for energy use city wide. One area where we may be able to gain additional information on energy use is a survey of individual trash haulers. A citywide survey of trash haulers could help determine the amount of gasoline used to collect the trash. In an effort to move the CAP forward, Councilman Reynolds supports, and will work towards, a line item in next year's budget to hire a consultant.

Discussion then centered on the need to appoint a new Recycling Coordinator and the possibility that this person could also act as a Sustainability Coordinator and be the person the CAP consultant would report to in city hall.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 PM