

**Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council  
General Meeting  
February 7, 2019**

**Attendees: Council Members:** Lynn Rothman, Mike Topping, Kathy Fox, Elisabeth Cichonski, Beth Behrend, Brian Hillard

**Community Members:** Martha Christine (Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife) (BBFW), Ed Gallagher (Gadfly Blog, former Lehigh Professor), Brian Nicas (Curtiss-Wright, Environmental Health and Safety Manager, Gwladys Boukpepsi (Bethlehem Sustainable Communities), Rick Sherry (Watershed steward), Ben Guthrie (Civil Engineer)

**Call To Order at 7:02 PM.**

**Approval of January minutes:** Motion made by Mike, seconded by Beth. Motion passed unanimously.

**Place citizens' comments on agenda:** Last month Brian Nicas brought up glitter/balloons at Monocacy Park that pose a hazard to ducks and geese that are eating these plastics. Lynn got in touch with Jane Persa (Administrator of Recreation) who was appreciative that we brought this issue to her attention. Lynn will keep us informed of any updates from Jane on this issue.

**Chair's comments & amendments to agenda:** Mike and Lynn met with Mike Halbfoerester (Director of Recycling) who educated them about contamination issues with recycling. Michael Alkhal (Director of Public Works) was in attendance and said he expects the data for city-wide GHG emissions by the end of the week.

In January, Lynn sent a letter to Darlene Heller requesting that the Department of Planning and Zoning give us the opportunity to comment on large projects. Lynn will follow up after this meeting and send a copy of our April 2017 letter, regarding plans for Martin Tower specifically.

The City's website is being updated, so posts will be limited.

**Board comments and announcements:** Mike T. recommended Northampton County Junior Conservation School, a weeklong summer program for students who are interested in the environment.

Green Drinks/Bethlehem Watershed Meeting: Martha found this very informative and said there was great community engagement and discussion about the wind turbines and pipelines.

Ed suggested using the Gadfly blog to help promote and share information discussed at our meetings, including summaries of meetings and events.

**Committee reports:**

**Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW):** Martha brought up items that BBFW discussed at their last meeting that they hope will be included in the Climate Action Plan. These are as follows: Promote what steps we have taken in our city by sponsoring tours of native gardens,

NWF certified habitats, LEED certified buildings, solar installations, etc.; Form partnerships with city departments, environmental groups and volunteer organizations to maintain city "green" projects; Promote green roofs, rain gardens, community gardens, greening of walking/biking trails & corridors; Conduct tree inventory, Increase city-wide tree canopy, initiate "tree hotline" to report damaged or cut down trees; Require permeable surfaces; Install signage at all city-owned native plant gardens; Produce and promote a map of NWF habitats, significant trees, community gardens. Lynn will keep in touch with Mike Halboerster so we can make suggestions once the Climate Action Planning process begins.

Mike T. suggested marking up a drawing with all sustainable infrastructures and rain gardens in Bethlehem to distribute to the public.

**External committee reports:**

- a. City Council: None.
- b. Planning: None.
- c. Zoning: None

**Correspondence:** None.

**Unfinished business**

**Waste Reduction Task Force:** Tonight's meeting will be the final review of the Task Force's proposed single use bag ordinance. All agreed that bags will be a separate line item on the receipt for tax purposes. Motion to accept the Task Force's proposal and recommend a single-use plastic bag ordinance to city council made by Mike, seconded by Kathy. Motion passed unanimously.

Martha asked what's next on the list for Beth and her committee. Motion to change the "Waste Reduction Task Force" to an ongoing "Waste Reduction Committee" motioned by Lynn, seconded by Brian. Motion passed unanimously.

**Community Energy Efficiency Initiative Task Force:**

Lynn motioned to make the CEEI Task Force into an "Energy Committee", Kathy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Brian recapped what CEEI is about: educate and connect the community on energy efficiency. Targeting low-income families. We are figuring out who we can reach out to and connect with to make the greatest impact.

Jackie and Brian met with Victoria Montero from the Hispanic Center. Emily Folenta from the ACLV who is working on Weatherization is working with us, she is going to look for programs that focus on improvements in this area. Martha suggested we create a "Best Practices" publication for Bethlehem Schools and case studies.

Brian connected with Northside 2027 which we can piggyback on and add to this initiative.

**Monocacy Creek Watershed Coalition:** At Lehigh Valley for All, Kathy was able to get a few people interested in starting EACs in their area. At this point, the best prospect for a new EAC is Bethlehem Township.

**New business:****Recommendation for Solar Ordinance:**

Kathy would like to start a task force under the Energy Committee to research and draft a recommendation to mandate solar panels on warehouses and large commercial buildings when possible. Lynn Rothman and Brian Nicas volunteered to be on the solar committee/task force. Mike suggested targeting industrial zoning districts.

EAC Conference is coming up at Skytop Lodge on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

There is also an Eco Challenge through Northwest Energy Institute- Based on the book Draw Down by Paul Hawken to lead a greener, more sustainable life. Brian suggested we form teams within the EAC and challenge organizations like Bethlehem Food Co-op or LV Sustainability Network.

Lehigh Valley Mayor's Sustainability Forum (USGBC) will be held at Lehigh University from 8AM to 10 AM at lococca Hall on March 12, 2019.

**Agenda for next meeting:**

Martha mentioned that February 28<sup>th</sup> there is a LV Sustainability Network "Water We Share Forum" at the Fowler Center.

Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) has a new bill in Congress called the "Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act", Bill number HR763, which puts a fee on fossil fuels and returns a dividend to families. Martha suggested we go online to CCL to take action.

Martha will do a presentation at next month's meeting on BFFW.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.**