

Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council

General Meeting

May 2, 2019

Council Members: Mike Topping, Elisabeth Cichonski, Kathy Fox, Brian Hillard, Beth Behrend.

Attendees: Roseanne Amano (BBFW), Martin Romeril (citizen), Ed Gallagher (Gadfly, Lehigh Prof.), Ben Gunthrie, Jim (citizen), Jane Cook, Brian Nicas, Kathleen Kernon (Lehigh University [LU]), Vince Bohe (LU), Ben Littleton (citizen).

Call to Order at 7:02 PM

Approval of minutes (April): Motioned by Kathy, seconded by Beth. Approved unanimously.

Place citizens' comments on agenda: Martin Romeril approached the EAC with concerns about dust from the planned explosive demolition of Martin Tower and presented a case study of an implosion which indicated the potential for dust particles to impact air quality within a 1 km radius. Martin and other attendees asked: Will the medical building, sports fields, and Nitschmann Middle School be impacted? Does the School District have a plan to seal up vents and ductwork to prevent dust from getting in there? Will notice be given if people should leave their homes? What is Moravian College's perspective on the demolition and what precautions, if any, should be taken? The EAC will inquire about the demolition. Brian N. also suggested reaching out to the developer for their dust control plan during demolition.

Chair's comments & amendments to agenda:

Since our last meeting on April 4th, the following letters were sent:

April 10: Letter to Robert Melosky, Chair of Planning Commission, regarding preliminary plans for Martin Tower. Copied to Darlene Heller, Director of Planning & Zoning, Mayor Donchez and City Council.

April 15: A cost analysis of electric vehicles versus gasoline vehicles for municipal operations to Michael Alkhal, Director, Department of Public Works, and Kevin Livingston, Executive Director, Bethlehem Parking Authority, for consideration. Copied to Mayor Donchez and City Council

April 16: Letter on behalf of BBFW to Mr. Eric Evans, City Business Administrator, regarding the sale of City owned properties. Copied to Mayor Donchez and City Council.

April 25: Letter to City Council, copied to Mayor Donchez, proposing an ordinance that would require new or retrofitted buildings over a certain size to obtain a Solar Energy System Assessment and, dependent upon the assessment, install solar panels. Kathy Fox will present our recommendation publicly at a June City Council meeting.

Board comments and announcements: Brian N. suggested the EAC check out SOLSMART (www.solsmart.org) to assess solar energy potential in our community.

Presentation by Lehigh University graduate students from the Socio-Cultural Foundations of Environmental Policy Design class: "Sustainability impact assessment on the future closure of Packer Avenue on Lehigh's campus": Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) has a broader scope than traditional environmental impact assessment (social, cultural, gender impacts). Generally, occurs earlier in the process (design) as opposed to once design is decided/constructed. Other factors include sense of place, safety and emergency access, environmental sustainability, pedestrian mobility, local businesses and the arts, traffic patterns and GHG emissions, pedestrian exposure to emissions. A SIA was performed by Lehigh students Vincent Bohe and Kathleen Kernon as part of their coursework for the proposed greenspace that Lehigh would like to create through their purchase and closure of Packer Avenue to through traffic. The design would also contribute to sustainable stormwater management through installation of raingardens and bioswales.

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Committee reports

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW): Roseanne said BBFW participated in Arbor Day at the Rose Garden and has decided on dates for maintenance. Volunteers should contact Roseanne if they are interested in helping with Rose Garden maintenance or the Trestle. Attendees thanked BBFW for their participating in the city-wide clean-up.

Energy

Community Energy Efficiency Initiative: CEEI met recently to agree on a framework for a program to help Bethlehem residents to improve efficiency in their homes through weatherization, fixture or equipment upgrades. Brian H. scheduled a meeting with Victoria Montero from the Hispanic Center to discuss presentations and workshops to help inform residents of ways to improve their home and programs that can help fund the upgrades or supply materials.

Brian and Elisabeth spoke with Alison Steel from Conservation Consultants Incorporate (CCI) who created a similar program, Grassroots Green Homes, focused on improving residential energy efficiency in the City of Pittsburgh.

Waste Reduction Committee: Beth received her first batch of design submissions from students for the drawing competition. The designs will be posted on Instagram (@EACreusablebags). When you buy a bag, the money will go to whichever schools that you want. \$8.00 to buy a bag, \$4.00 to make the bag. The proceeds will be donated to the school.

External committee reports

City Council: None?

Planning: Martin Tower Brian H. spoke on the Martin Tower development issue and reported that the Planning Commission seemed to agree with the EAC's recommendations. The preliminary plan for the Martin Tower lot was approved (3-2) with a few conditions, including reduced parking and increased greenspace in the center of the lot.

Zoning: None.

Correspondence: None.

Unfinished business

Climate Action: Mike Alkhal has been working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant for the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

New business: Jane Cook (BBFW) asked that all attending the Monocacy Park Day park at the ice rink since space is limited in the Monocacy Park lot. Monocacy Park Day will have many family events and free food!

Brian fell into a call about the Climate Action Network and suggested creating a Lehigh Climate Action Network and climate action toolkit to help other cities in the Lehigh Valley with Climate Action Planning.

EAC Network Conference is Saturday, May 18th at Skytop Lodge.

Brian Nicas reported a breakthrough with the spotted lanternfly made by Cornell University. The study found that a particular fungus kills spotted lanternflies. He added that for residents that do not have access to this fungus, Dawn dish soap at a 5% solution will kill them.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elisabeth Cichonski, Secretary