

Bethlehem Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)

Meeting agenda – July 28, 2022, 6:30 – 8:00pm

Bethlehem Township Municipal Building

--Inaugural meeting--

- 1) Chair's comments – 20 minutes
  - a. EAC overview
  - b. Initial actions
    - i. By laws
    - ii. Officers
- 2) Council goals – 20 minutes
- 3) First actions/events? – 15 minutes
- 4) Next meeting: 8/18/22
- 5) Public comment – 10 minutes
- 6) Other comments – 10 minutes
- 7) Adjourn

## Minutes

### Introductions

Anthony Giovanni, Jr.,

Brian Hillard

Kelly VanBuren

Barbara Lazar

John Gallagher, Commissioner

Michael Dewey

Rich Kanaskie, Director of Public Works

Not present:

Les Walker

Steve M.

Anthony (township solicitor), opened the meeting discussion to review the roles and responsibilities of an EAC as defined by Pennsylvania's Act 148. Several points were highlighted; these included opening the meeting with public comments at the beginning, limiting them to non-agenda items (allow them to comment on agenda items while on subject); and that an EAC should, but are not required, to establish by-laws. These can be very streamlined and basic, or more extensive. Brian mentioned there are draft versions of by-laws available, and accessible online. He downloaded the City of Bethlehem's by-laws but was unable to print them. He will reach out to the Bethlehem EAC to get a better version.

Following Solicitor Anthony Giovanni, Jr., Brian touched on particular points on 'Essential Tips for Success' mentioned from the EAC Handbook (published by the We Conserve PA org. He also discussed some potential for events, (for example, an educational session from Farmland preservation). The group discussed roles of the EAC and initiatives they could undertake.

Rich commented on different boards (zoning, planning, dept. of recreation, etc.), and briefly their processes, how development proposals come through.

It was noted that Les Walker, who is on the EAC, is also Chair of the Planning Commission.

Discussion on pocket parks evolved into developable land, walking trails, and where the potentials are for increasing open space in the township. Much of the township is already developed with not much open space left.

Brian also discussed council officers, and is looking for a vice and secretary. There are two missing members at this meeting so he will put out in email for any volunteers.

Brian continued the discussion with potential goals the EAC could aim for. Already mentioned in previous conversation included open space and land preservation. Barb added that trees lost from other developments in the township were never replaced. (Washington St by Nancy Run). Rich comment that that is part of the land development ordinance and there is no ordinance in place requiring them to be replaced nor for owners to maintain them. The township cares for many of them, as their trucks hit them otherwise.

Commissioner Gallagher noted that the township had a request from a student on wanting to plant trees, but the Board didn't know where to start and the student was never responded to. Conversation highlighted how the EAC might help prepare to take advantage of those opportunities next time.

Other considerations to tree planting initiatives:

- Is there a list of approved tree species
- Who is going to plant
- Who is going to maintain
- Are they memorial trees?

It was mentioned there should be a policy. We could also consider a tree planting program. We would need to figure out a budget, structure, and how to prioritize locations.

Barb would also like to utilize volunteers, especially students. Noted that there are many volunteers out there, they need opportunities.

Commissioner Gallagher also mentioned Ann Flood event clean up event as an event opportunity.

Mike would like to see some kind of composting program – other townships have more established composting programs. Also asked if driveways in new development need to be impervious; Commissioner G noted that there are limits according to code.

Commissioner G also noted that Housenick park needs more events there to get people more aware of it.

Kelly mentioned the big picture, including the recent LV EAC Network event that featured the LVPC. Noted population growth, and a lot of new faces. A lot of opportunities to educate others on issues. Composting was also an interest, highlighting NCCC which has their own garden, as well as solar array and a rainwater collection system. Would also like to see more into ecosystems and how increased in development pushes away native wildlife, and what we can do to support them and give them new spaces to live.

She also expressed interest in assisting in social media, including helping establish a Facebook page. Brian also suggested NextDoor, which she will also look into.

Brian mentioned his position at Sustainable Energy Fund and functions there, as well as his interest in broader climate action. Favors actions and initiatives that are effective and actionable to accomplish things. Has an array of interests, including EV chargers, naturalized areas & open space, and stormwater issues. Would like the EAC to have a feature in the Township newsletter. Would like to have a rain barrel workshop at some point (tying into stormwater).

Rich – all public meetings advertised in January; set up thank

Brian also had a note to get copy of enabling ordinance.

Adjourned 7:52 pm