

April 8, 2019 EAC Meeting

Present – Tinku, Liz, Keith, David, Jennifer and Tim.

Guest – **Courtney Robinson**

1. **Approval of March Minutes** – unanimously approved

2. **Reports on Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Planning Commission (Joe Hoffman)**

There was discussion about filling Joe position as his term expired last year and appears it unlikely that he will be reappointed. Tinku will inform Joe of this.

- In Joe’s absence Councilman Robinson provided the following information. Phase 1 – construction of the skate park will begin soon.
- Dave will take over meeting with the Parks Department.
 - The EAC has at least 2 projects that would involve Parks and Recreation: composting and utilizing pet poop; restricting the use of plastic bags and straws in Allentown parks.
 - Bethlehem is already considering banning plastic bags and straws: [Read more...](#)
 - The City of Allentown does not believe it can prohibit sale of plastic bags and straws. However, the park concession stands can stop selling them.

3. **Report on City Council meetings (Dave)** –

Dave had nothing to report

4. **Re-examine Allentown’s solar ordinance (Dave)**

Councilman Robinson provided a copy of the slightly revised language for a resolution by City Council in support of increased implementation of solar power. The EAC will review the resolution as the language has been changed and will vote at the May meeting.

5. **Comments on Clean Water Act Rule**

Tinku informed the group that the Sierra Club is requesting the EAC to submit comments to the EPA opposing a proposed regulation that would limit what is regulated as affecting “Waters of the United States”. Tinku explained that this issue is not significant in Pennsylvania as Pennsylvania broadly defines “Waters of the Commonwealth” and regulates everything that the EPA would no longer be regulating. Tinku also explained that the issue is certainly not significant to the City of Allentown. Tim Duch suggested that waters flow across states, so it is an important issue even if Pennsylvania is adequately regulating. Following discussion, the group decided that the Allentown EAC would not submit comments but individual members could do so on their own behalf.

6. Climate action plan

- Councilman Robinson is asking the city to put together a comprehensive carbon footprint for the city. It should be very specific. The councilman's goal is to keep regular track of what is going on to identify the progress and develop a plan. The EAC should oversee this process and help the staff. PA has a plan (and Bethlehem is working on one) that we may be able to model. Tinku has participated in the Vision 2030 Strategic Planning process. The councilman will let Hannah (of Vision 2030) know and ask them to continue to reach out to us. The councilman also informed us that the city is about to conduct a historic preservation plan that should be connected to the environmental action plan.

7. Storm water – Keith

- Councilman Robinson explained that storm water system is old and leaking. Repairs will cost about \$ 70 million.
- South mountain property - all the water runs down Emmaus avenue – public pressure around storm water would help the city regulate this.

8. Community recycling and school recycling bins (Keith and Liz)

Schools are the single largest generators of trash in the city. Dutch reported that the city of Allentown has done a great job w/residential recycling. However there were few bins available for the community or visitors so a municipal program would be good for example at the Allentown fairgrounds. The councilman suggested that we should find a way to do this with the businesses paying for it. City council should consult with the EAC at budget time for suggestions.

9. Public education (Liz)

- Lantern fly -Liz will work with kids at schools to stomp out the Lantern fly and will head up the info for booklets for tabling events. Booklets should be translated into Spanish. The booklets are limited by the lack of budget. It could be included in the work by recycling -the city could print these on behalf of the EAC.

10. Iron pigs (Liz)

- July 24th at 7:00PM – EAC will have a table

11. City ordinances

- Councilman Robinson noted that the ordinance establishing the EAC is old and should be reviewed. Tinku agreed improvements can be made. For example, Allentown could follow Bethlehem's example and require that the EAC include one City Councilperson as a member. Tinku will propose changes for discussion at the June EAC meeting.
- Councilman Robinson suggested that the EAC could possibly be supported by City staff and have a budget. He is looking into this.
- Councilmember Robinson suggested that the EAC come to the economic development committee meeting at the end of June that he chairs.

12. Plastic Bags and Straws:

- In addition to action at parks, the EAC could consider working with businesses to get them not give out plastic bags or straws unless requested or to use recyclable bags
- Another option is for Allentown to offer a discount on the business privilege tax if business stop giving out plastic bags or straws
- As the majority of plastic recyclers are in PA, it may be possible to arrange for a recycling solution. Anne Sauerman may be able to help.
- Councilman Robinson suggested we also contact Jeff Glazier

13. 2019 EAC Goals:

- Public Communications (Liz and Tim)
- Banning straws, plastic bags and receipts (Jennifer) - see discussion above
- Commercial and School Recycling (Liz)

- Clean waterways – rewrite ordinance to have fines earmarked to address affected area (Dave)
- Allentown Climate Action Plan and C-PACE (Tinku)
- MS4 and stormwater issues (Keith)
- Recycling of dog waste and food waste (Jennifer)
- Community recycling bins (Tim)

Action items:

- Jennifer will look into establishing a plastic bank
- Dave and Jennifer will look in to how many businesses a discount will affect and how much money this would entail. If we can convert 20 -25% of business it might be possible to create a ban.
Steps – create the list, share with the group, share with parks and rec, EAC vote.

- All EAC members should look to identify the outlets that are blocked and report them to the Allentown 311 quick reporter app.
- Keith will investigate how much the overflow is waste water or methane emissions from untreated overflow from industrial plants. This may be useful as part of carbon foot print

- Dutch, Dave and Liz will go to the school board and check with Representative Schlossberg about ways to improve recycling in schools

- Dave to include a discussion about lanternfly booklets in next meeting of Public Works
- Tinku to review ordinance establishing EAC and propose changes
- Jennifer, Dave and Tim will compile list of requests for Councilman Robinson to review and discuss with the City solicitor