

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
For Candidates for City Council Vacancy
Seat of Eric R. Evans – Resignation Effective February 4, 2018
Vacancy to be Filled from March 6, 2018 to January 6, 2020

Lynn Rothman

1. What uniquely qualifies you to serve on Bethlehem City Council?

My educational background in government, geology, hydrology and public decision making models, work experience with the federal government, and volunteer experience in the nonprofit sector have given me a wide range of skills that qualifies me to serve.

Time at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers gave me experience with environmental protection, land use planning and development. Having worked for the federal government, I appeared before citizens at town meetings, listening to their passion regarding property rights, how they viewed the impacts of proposed highways, issuance (or non-issuance as the case may be) of building permits in wetlands and mandatory wetland mitigation on their properties.

Also relevant is my experience as president of a large synagogue, where I was ultimately responsible for the Temple's finances, including facilities operations, salaries, health benefits and pensions for our staff. I currently serve as Chair of the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council. During my tenure we updated our bylaws and are now supporting the City in bringing the proposed Climate Action Plan to fruition.

The EAC has given me the opportunity to work with members of City Council, city staff and the public, as well as represent the EAC at meetings pertaining to environmental issues. For example, I have attended meetings of the Bethlehem Citizens Traffic Advisory Council (CTAC), worked with Assistant City Clerk Robert Vidoni and Councilman Reynolds on the Climate Action Plan, am a member of the Climate Action Plan Working Group, and attended the Lehigh Valley Greenways Partnership meeting and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) Pizza + Planning meetings.

I also completed the course in Community Planning offered by the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute through the LVPC and attended other community gatherings such as RenewLV Summits, Sierra Club events and LV Watershed conferences. This community involvement strengthens my candidacy.

I was a member of the inaugural class of Mayor Callahan's Citizens Academy in 2009 and have been present at many city council meetings since then. Lastly, which is not unique, is my love for Bethlehem City, where we have had the good fortune to live and raise our children. I now have the time and energy to devote to giving back to our community.

2. If this were a campaign for City Council, list the top three (3) priorities of your campaign platform.

In no particular order:

- Modernization, protection and care of our infrastructure and public amenities (parks and recreational facilities, waterfront, roadways, sewage and water treatment operations).

- Financial health and economic growth for the City of Bethlehem including incentives to attract start-up and existing businesses and technology firms.
 - Continue to work to make Bethlehem a Sustainable City. (*Sustainable cities* work towards an environmentally, socially, and economically healthy and resilient habitat for existing populations, without compromising the ability of future generations to experience the same.)
- 3. As several development projects are considered in the City, do you feel that Bethlehem can honor its architectural history while simultaneously promoting economic growth and business?**

We have already been successful with developments that honor our architectural history while promoting growth with projects such as SteelStacks and the National Museum of Industrial History. The public, organizations with expertise and interest in individual projects (such as local business and neighborhood associations, South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District, Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council) should share information with and give guidance to members of the Zoning Board, Planning Commission and City Council, who are entrusted to weigh all variables and approve or deny projects on a case-by-case basis.

- 4. Do you feel that transportation is an important issue for the City of Bethlehem, and if so, how do you envision the City better meeting its transportation needs in the future?**

Transportation is a key component for a high quality of life, attracting new residents and economic prosperity in a city. I support the goals of BethConnects Trails Study, which include developing safe alternative transportation routes within the City, making Bethlehem a trails hub and connecting the North and South downtowns with a pedestrian/bicycle bridge. I applaud the strides Bethlehem has already made, including the Greenway, the bike share program, and the Vision Zero initiative.

The *Comprehensive Plan – Lehigh Valley 2030, Moving LANta Forward* outlines a vision for transit in the Lehigh Valley. In support, the City of Bethlehem needs to continue planning hubs for service and creating pedestrian networks to coincide with these hubs.

- 5. Several Members of City Council have stated it is their preference to select someone who will not seek election next year. If selected for this Council position, would you run for a seat on City Council in the Primary election this spring? Yes _____; No _____. You may provide additional comments, if any.**

I am applying for this 22-month appointment because I believe I can make a positive contribution to the City. The position provides a challenging opportunity and would be a rewarding experience. I will have to experience being a member of City Council in order to decide whether to seek election and serve for a longer period of time.

6. What is one issue you believe Bethlehem is currently not properly addressing and if on City Council how would you help in this area?

I am impressed with Council's support of the Climate Action Plan and their promotion of economic growth, which is part of reason I desire to be a member of City Council.

I believe that Council must continue to focus on efforts to make Bethlehem a Sustainable City. For example, strengthen tree ordinances, focus on green infrastructure ("an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle.") and revisit solar ordinances. Solar ordinances were updated about 5 yrs. ago with input from the EAC, but as technology changes, new opportunities arise. Environmental impacts should be a consideration in all decisions and new legislation.

Another area that deserves continuous attention is cooperation and collaboration among the cities and townships that comprise the Lehigh Valley to ensure a successful future for the entire region. Combining resources among townships and municipalities can be a way to reduce costs, provided the quality of service is not impacted. I would be open to exploring opportunities for regional cooperation when it serves to benefit both our City and the region. This follows the current trend in the way we promote the Lehigh Valley as a place for business, with each entity having its own character.

7. What do you think about the idea of a pedestrian bridge over the Lehigh River, and what are your thoughts for potential funding sources?

I strongly support a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Lehigh River. I led the "Design Concepts and Environmental Impact Team" during the grass roots effort to develop the Pedestrian Bridge Package, helped with the vision statement and participated in my team's public meeting. The bridge will enable Bethlehem to become a true walking city, ensure greater safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, and have positive economic impacts. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including grants, private institutions in the Lehigh Valley and state or federal funds.

8. What can be done to encourage more constituent participation in local Government, particularly in the budget process?

Suggestions for encouraging more constituent participation include:

- Hold meetings in varied, handicap accessible, locations, especially when issues effect a certain neighborhood;
- Extend personal invitations to groups that have an interest in, or will be affected by, a certain issue;
- Include information on meetings with the water bill or recycle mailer;
- Give notice in newspapers and on radio;
- Ask local groups to post on their facebook pages, highlight on the City website;
- The forthcoming Open Data initiative should encourage participation.

9. What should be done with our golf course?

The golf course is a tremendous asset, which belongs to the citizens of Bethlehem. It is an important recreational amenity, provides open space and is a

resource that the City treasures. At the October Parks and Public Recreation meeting several options were outlined for the future of the golf course and members of the public expressed their views.

I would not agree to sell this asset, but understand the financial reality - it has been losing money for the past nine years and is in need of major capital improvements. From my preliminary knowledge of the issues, I believe that the best option would be to lease the golf course to those with expertise and the ability to fund the necessary improvements, as was done with the Clubhouse.

10. What are your thoughts for the long term best solution for the pools in the City?

Upon review of the Comprehensive Parks and Pool Study, I agree it is prudent to close some pools permanently and convert others to splash parks. I agree that a master plan should be written and followed for Monocacy Park and Memorial Pool. As to which pools to close or convert, I would need to see usage data (including age ranges), detailed specifics on the state of each facility, tour each site and hear from both residents and members of the Parks Department. Should some pools be closed and not converted, there will be debate as to their future.

Unlike pools, I don't know that splash parks will serve adults and teens. I also believe that the ability to swim is an important life skill. Perhaps if lessons were offered at more facilities, attendance would increase and the pools would be serving another purpose, in addition to recreation and community bonding.

Recreational facilities and parks enhance the quality of life and make Bethlehem a desirable place to live. Therefore, it is a priority to invest in these areas, keeping pools and facilities in excellent condition, meeting all codes and ensuring safety and accessibility for all residents.

11. Within the next several years, the Parking Authority will need to replace the Walnut Street garage. How do you think the Authority and the City should plan for the financial and business impact of the construction of a new garage?

The Parking Authority has engaged consultants to study alternatives for the Walnut Street garage. The results of these studies will influence the financial and business impacts of either the reconstruction or renovation of the garage. I would use the study as a guide to plan for its impacts. We have an excellent bond rating, which is the likely source of funding.

12. One of City Council's most important functions is to pass the yearly budget for Bethlehem. What ideas would you bring to City Council that involve the area of finances?

Since the 2006 signing of the Three City Proclamation, Bethlehem has achieved significant savings as a result of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. I would support continuing those efforts. Ralph Carp did great work in this area and outlined ways in which the City can do more, for example, reduce utility consumption (a 10% reduction translates to > \$75,000/yr.), continue to replace older mechanical systems in City buildings, install a centralized control system for lights, electrify City vehicles and install renewable energy. In some instances, funds will need to be provided to support improvements that will result in savings in later years. Taking stock of City owned properties, evaluating their current use, maintenance costs and state of repair, I believe can also result in cost savings.

13. Making decisions on City Council often involves seeking compromises that balance the individual self-interests of multiple groups of people. How do you feel you can contribute to the culture of compromise that is necessary to a functioning legislative branch of government?

I bring to Council my ability to consider all aspects of an issue and work towards consensus, combined with my confidence to stand up for what I believe is right. In graduate school I studied public decision making models, for example, where to best site a fire station taking multiple variables into account, or how much water to release from a dam to balance recreation, water storage and flood control.

In my numerous leadership positions, I have had to balance the often conflicting desires of members of a committee or members of an entire congregation, in order to make decisions and move forward with projects. I enjoy working with people and would look forward to working with the current City Council representatives, members of the administration and meeting and working with a wide range of citizens.

14. 2017 saw City Council create several new initiatives relating to municipal climate action, neighborhood investment, open data and efficient city government. How do you feel you can participate in and add to these initiatives?

I would continue my efforts to support the Climate Action Plan and, most importantly, implementation of its recommendations. This may take the form of specific legislation or applying the recommendations to support (or not support) certain programs and projects that come before City Council.

To further the positive impacts of neighborhood investment, I would meet with businesses, institutions, and citizens for their feedback and recommendations.

The open data initiative is exciting and has the potential to educate the public in all areas of the City, including the use of geographic information systems. I believe that it will serve to make City operations more transparent, engage citizens and elicit their ideas and involvement.

I will avail myself of all resources to learn about these issues so that I may become an active and educated participant.