



10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018
eacbethlehempa@gmail.com

December 13, 2016

Dear Members of City Council,

On behalf of the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) and as citizens of Bethlehem who are concerned about potential negative impacts that the rezoning of the Martin Tower site might pose to the ecology and human health of the area, we are writing to express our concerns with the proposed change.

The proposed development will have both short term and long-term environmental impacts. As the site is located adjacent to the Monocacy Creek, any demolition, development and heavy use will compromise the watershed. The water quality of the Monocacy Creek continues to be excellent. A section (upstream of the Martin Tower site) is listed under the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Trophy Trout regulations (2016 Pennsylvania Fishing Laws & Regulations). Preserving the ecology of the Monocacy Creek, the Saucon Creek and their tributaries is an important City goal. (Comprehensive Plan 3-9) Therefore, we recommend paying special attention to the effects any change in zoning might have on the watershed.

In addition, we advise preserving a minimum 150 foot buffer of wooded area adjacent to the Burnside Plantation and the Monocacy Creek. These mature trees reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide and, like riparian buffers, remove pollutants from urban storm-water runoff, reduce erosion and sediment entering streams, stabilize stream-banks and provide wildlife habitat and recreational value. It is also important to preserve this area as open space. This is in keeping with the Environmental Conservation vision in the City's 2008 Comprehensive plan, adopted in March 2009.

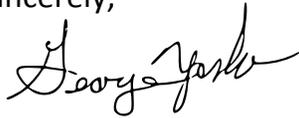
Furthermore, some permissible uses of the site under the proposed rezoning ordinance, such as a large gas station or pharmaceutical depot, may have more

serious consequences for ecology and human health, such as runoff containing toxic chemicals, and merit close examination before allowing such development.

Furthermore, this is an opportunity to turn the redevelopment of this parcel into a showpiece of sustainable design as encouraged by the City's own Comprehensive Plan (Section 6: Environmental Conservation). As a prime location for a landmark redevelopment, this site could showcase cutting edge green design, respect open space and utilize smart growth principles. Such a design could encompass transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, with mixed-use development. Many long-range sustainability and environmental goals articulated in the City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan could be explored (Comprehensive Plan 6-1). At a minimum, sustainable and smart growth features should be included in this plan.

In keeping with our mission to provide guidance on a range of environmental issues, the Bethlehem EAC looks forward to participating in this and other projects that come before City Council. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Yasko".

George Yasko, Chair

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC

EAC Members:

Fran Cundall

Jack Gambino

Kalyna Procyk

Cathy Reucher

Lynn Rothman

Mike Topping