



**City of Bloomington
Environmental Commission**

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, January 16, 2014 7:00 pm
City Hall – McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

Attending:

Carrie Albright (Chair), Carissa Moncavage (Vice Chair), Louise Sharrow, Norm Crampton, Andrew Carty, Deborah Myerson, Sean Gorman, Mike Litwin, Diane Jung, Kristie Lindberg, Jayne Piepenburg (SPEA Fellow)

Absent:

Chaim Julian (Treasurer), Dedaimia Whitney, Linda Thompson (Staff)

1. Introductions (5 min) (Time Mark: 7:02 PM)
2. Announcements (5 min)
 - A. Next Environmental Commission meeting: Thursday, February 20th, 7:00 pm, McCloskey Room
 - B. Next Planning Committee meetings: January 29th, 4:00 pm, Planning Dept.
 - C. Next Tree Commission meeting: February 19th, 9:30 am, Rose Hill building
 - D. Next BCOS meeting: February 11th, 6:00 pm, McCloskey Room
 - E. Next Co. Environ. Quality & Sus. Com. meeting: February 12th, 5:30 pm, Rm. 100 Showers North
 - F. Next ERAC meeting: February 12th, 4:30 pm, Parks Dept.
 - G. Next MPO Citizens Advisory Committee: January 22nd, 6:30 pm, McCloskey Room
3. Approval of November minutes (5 min) (Time Mark: 7:05 PM)
 - A. Litwin moves to approve. Lindberg, Jung and Gorman abstain. The motion passes 7:0.
4. Public comment (25 min) (Time Mark: 7:06 PM)
 - A. Commission on Sustainability representative to describe new STAR report (10 min)
 1. Jacqui Bauer and BCOS are working on the STAR Communities report. This particular sustainability evaluation is intended to be more comprehensive and do a better job representing the true strengths of a city than other sustainability metrics. The STAR Community report is very similar to LEED. The idea behind the evaluation is that you accrue points based on performance on various outcomes.
 - a. Bauer indicates that there are 10 categories, and within each category there are subtopics which hit all three pillars of sustainability.
 - b. The system is really new and the first city was certified only last fall (Tacoma, WA).
 - c. BCOS sees that some of the subtopics fit well into EC expertise. We are not trying to accomplish all the things we list, we are just trying to say yes or no. Right now BCOS is making an initial pass at the evaluation to see whether it is worth pursuing in more detail in the future.
 - d. Bauer has completed the transportation section. At this point BCOS has 1-2 people working on a handful of topics.
 2. Crampton asks who sponsors this evaluation and what the outcome is.



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- a. Bauer indicates that STAR partnered with ICLEI and a handful of other organizations who are involved in sustainability advocacy. The STAR Communities metric arises from some frustration different groups have had with arbitrary ratings of communities without a systematic or standardized approach. You can actually be certified STAR similar to LEED, but it costs money. BCOS paid an initial fee (\$500/year) to have access to materials to perform a self-evaluation and see where we are and how we are doing relative to other cities. Usually Bloomington is considered a “green” or “sustainable” city based on anecdotal evidence, but until we can look at ourselves against other cities it’s hard to make the case that we’re doing well.
 3. Albright asks whether Bloomington will pursue STAR certification.
 - a. Bauer says that Bloomington is not necessarily looking to get STAR certified as it is very expensive, and there is a much greater incentive to pursue this option only if you’re already doing extremely well.
 4. Myerson asks whether the STAR metrics are suitable for all cities.
 - a. Bauer says that she doesn’t know yet if there are some tiered sections for cities of different sizes, but so far there is not a lot of room to fudge. There may be some tiered analysis in some of the categories. Because the STAR Communities rating system is new she anticipates the details of this evaluation will be tweaked down the road. Generally sustainability ranking is for bigger cities.
 5. Myerson asks how the STAR Community rating compares to other ratings pursued by BCOS.
 - a. Bauer indicates that sustainability ranking by BCOS has so far used an internally developed method of gathering data about sustainability and metrics have generally been determined by data availability. The EC is the first group that BCOS has approached to participate in the ranking, but they will also approach the ED Commission, the Bike and Pedestrian Safety Commission.
 - b. BCOS has been using an online version of the document and that document shows who has claimed what section. The idea is to add more people to that list, and she would be interested to know whether there is a subset of the EC that would be interested in helping out with the project. Those interested can speak with Bauer more about the project in a separate meeting.
 6. Gorman asks what the timeline of the project will be.
 - a. Bauer says that BCOS purchased a year-long membership to STAR and she would love to make a pass at everything within the year, by this November.
 7. Albright says that the EC will follow up with Bauer and BCOS with their interest in working on the STAR Communities report.
- B. Representative from Habitat for Humanity to describe new Habitat development (15 min)
1. Steve Smith, consultant for Habitat for Humanity, addressed the EC regarding a proposed Habitat subdivision along the B-Line trail.
 - a. The subdivision will be along 1600 feet of frontage. Habitat bought the land from developers and from the railroad. The subdivision is planned to contain up to 35 units, mostly single family detached homes as well as 14-16 paired units.



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- b. Diamond is going to become an at-grade crossing. The houses are typical Habitat houses and the development will be pursued following a new-urbanist street scape with 10 foot setbacks, parallel parking and trees, with a presence on both the B-line and on the street. There will be perpendicular parking off the ally for the units and common greenspace in the center.
 - c. Right now the site is almost completely wooded, including a lot of black cherry and sassafras. Habitat is identifying all the trees 6 inches and larger in the area currently to determine what should be saved. They plan the greenspace to be a passive recreation area, but will leave some trees.
 2. There will be a pretty nice wooded buffer along the B-line as well as preservation area where there is a storm water retention area. Habitat is also looking at LEED certification for the neighborhood. They're currently at 38 points and they need 40 to be eligible for certification. It will be up to Habitat ultimately whether they continue to pursue the formal certification (which costs about \$40,000), and they will need a benefactor to pay in that case. Their intent is to pursue as many of the avenues as they can towards sustainability, whether or not they pursue the LEED certification.
 3. Myerson asks about the affordability of the proposed properties.
 - a. The complicated nature of the site (grade, street expansions, and so on) affects affordability, but they do get some support from the national Habitat organization to help compensate for these factors. They don't know exactly what the income levels will be of those moving in, but it won't be a change from that of other Habitat houses in the area.
 4. Crampton asks how many people might be living in the community ultimately, and whether there are public safety concerns.
 - a. About 70-100 or 105 people are anticipated to live in the development ultimately. The road has been expanded to accommodate fire trucks, and Habitat worked closely with the fire department to ensure public safety was not an issue.
 5. All of the proposed homes will have front porches and have access to the trail. If they choose to pursue the LEED Neighborhood certification, they would have to have one completely LEED home. Now all Habitat homes are Energy Star.
 6. Habitat will engage the neighborhood in total to identify how the common spaces will be used. Any potential residents have to put in 240 hours on another home in the development before they can take out a mortgage for the home. The Habitat community has found that by working on a neighborhood together the neighborhood develops a support system and that residents have a lot of pride in ownership. Habitat also goes through an extensive home maintenance and financial programs with owners before they take ownership.
 7. Carty asks whether there has been soil testing done on the site.
 - a. The design is limited which minimizes the amount of cut. Habitat is expecting rock to be down about 5-10 feet, minimizing cost and utility depth. A study must be performed which has a number of characteristics that have to be evaluated, for example they have to test the sound decibels. They must also pursue an archeology study and a historic evaluation. There was no negative impact on historic area



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identified. There was some concern about bat habitat; there were no bats seen on-site, but there are bats within 2 miles which might impact the time of year that Habitat is able to develop. They have already gone through a Phase 1 contaminants evaluation. They're going to the Planning Commission February 10th.

5. Committee reports & discussions (40 min) (Time Mark: 8:11 PM)
 - A. Planning Committee & Sr. Environmental Planner (15 min: Chaim, Mike, Dedaimia, Linda)
 1. Moores Pike
 - a. This proposal has been discussed several times previously by the EC but will go up in front of the Plan Commission next meeting. The proposal is for a plot on East Moores Pike where previously the developers were fined for girdling large trees.
 - b. The ECPC did an examination of the site and found it contains invasive species and scrub as well as several decent trees. The question remains as to whether the site should be left or cleared and reforested with native species. The ECPC recommendation is that the developers clear low quality areas of the site while saving some of the best trees.
 - B. L4L Natural Landscaping Committee (5 min: Diane, Kriste)
 1. The Farmers Market will start back up in April and run through November. We do not have a presence at the Winter Market at Harmony School. Jung attends the Winter Market every Saturday for shopping and find it to be not well attended and she does not feel it is a good location for our information table but if someone else wishes to take this on Jung would be happy to lend some support.
 2. Jung will again serve as the primary presence at the Farmers Market on Saturday, 8:30-12n. Anyone is more than welcome to join her or take a Saturday on your own. Just let her know! She will attend a meeting on March 24 to secure our booth space.
 3. There is enough signage already for the beginning of the Farmers Market and other spring venues.
 4. Jung would like BEC to have a presence at the Master Gardener Show, Saturday, April 5, 9-4pm, 2014 at the Indiana National Guard Armory. She hopes other commissioners will join her and will bring a sign up form to the next BEC meeting.
 5. The EC will need to stock up on printed materials soon. A meeting is in the works to review the materials and to determine how many copies of which are needed and whether we need to create any other materials.
 6. IU professor Jim Krause has promised Jung students to create a Lawns for Life video during the spring 2014 semester.
 7. Jung still have an interview to give via WFHB – she would like the timing to coincide with spring.
 8. Jung contributed to the Bloomington Community Orchard MLK day project by providing a sample mason bee houses (compliments of Thompson) as well as several pre-cut wood pieces for the construction of the bee houses – enough to make about 10 houses that will be placed at the orchard.



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9. Bloomingfoods has contacted Jung about an article (and possibly more) on Lawns for Life. They also wish to place several L4L signs at their stores.
 - C. BEQI/CAP Committee (10 min: Carissa, Carrie, Dedaimia, Jayne, Deborah, Norm, Linda)
 1. Piepenburg would like to request the BEQI/CAP Committee to convene next week to discuss next steps for the project.
 - D. Tree Commission (5 min: Dedaimia)
 - E. MPO CAC (5 min: Chaim)
6. New business (10 min) (Time Mark: 8:17 PM)
- A. Election of officers (10 min: Carrie)
 1. Albright nominates Moncavage for Chair. Jung seconds. The vote passes unanimously.
 2. Albright nominates Julian to continue as treasurer with some kind of quarterly update on the budget. Gorman seconds. The motion passes unanimously.
 3. Moncavage nominates Gorman for Vice Chair. Lindberg seconds. The vote passes unanimously.
7. Old business (45 min) (Time Mark: 8:25 PM)
- A. 2014 project list and committee membership (25 min: Linda, et al)
 1. Albright lists some of the projects on the proposal list including GPP input, Imagine Bloomington, Climate Action Plan, Eco-Hero awards.
 2. The next item is for the Waste Committee and that is to help facilitate recycling at City Events such as Taste of Bloomington.
 3. Other projects include:
 - a. Grants for lawns for life
 - b. I69, where windows for input may arise
 - c. Apartment recycling
 4. From now on the Chair will bring the list of projects to meetings for reference.
 5. Albright says that Eco-heroes planning needs to start right away.
 6. Committee membership updates:
 - a. Whitney will continue as Tree Commission representative pending her confirmation
 - b. Moncavage will continue as BCOS representative; Sharrow will fill in when Moncavage is unavailable.
 - c. Monroe County Sustainability Commission
 - d. Litwin will continue as representative to Imagine Bloomington, the Bloomington Master Plan process, and ERAC
 - e. Litwin, Julian and Whitney will continue to represent the ECPC pending confirmation from absent commissioners
 - f. Sharrow will join the CAP assessment project
 - g. Sharrow, Gorman, Myerson and Lindberg expressed tentative interested in working on the STAR Community report
 - h. Jung, Lindberg and Piepenburg will continue to work on L4L. Gorman volunteers to discuss the potential for outreach at the Winter Farmers Market



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- i. Moncavage volunteered for the Waste Reduction Committee.
 - j. Albright, Lindberg and Jung volunteer to serve on the EcoHeroes Committee
7. Commissioners are asked to write a small bio to be put on the City website.

B. Follow-up to CAC visit (10 min: Carrie, et al)

1. The hope was that the EC might write a letter in support of alternative energy and net-metering.
2. Crampton will invite Ben Bradson, who is very knowledgeable in the area, to talk very briefly on the implications of this policy change.

8. Commissioner announcements (15 min)

A. Bloomington waste project (5 min: Norm)

1. Crampton announces his proposal for another EC project. The Common Council will be looking at the budget and remedying the \$1.3 million deficit accrued from garbage and recycling services. Crampton is gathering information from other similar cities on how they manage the cost of the service. The EC might want to gather this information and make a recommendation to the Council. Sharrow, Moncavage and Piepenburg express interest in this project.
2. Litwin summarizes the latest ERAC meeting. The City has completed the work on the Lake Griffy dam. The Parks Department is also looking to upgrade Winslow Woods with improvement plantings; The Parks Department has also applied for an Indiana Water Resource Grant to do sampling on Lake Griffy. Litwin also recommends the documentary Inequality for All.
3. Jung announces that in anticipation of Spring she would like to take time to go through the EC's printed materials and pare it down a little bit, and possibly see if there's something we would like to add. Jung will arrange a time to do that for those interested.
4. Lindberg announces that MLK is the coming Monday, and that the City of Bloomington and Monroe County got a grant to fund supplies for a new adopt-a-stream program, which will be launching on Monday. This will be launched through a project with Bloomington South, and a clean-up on North End of Cascades Park will take place from 1-3PM on Monday. The MCSWMD will be there to aid with recycling. There are about 15 parks that have streams available for adoption. Adoption will include storm drain marking, water quality testing, and clean up. The program is posted on the City's volunteer network.
5. Piepenburg asks if the Commissioners will send their pictures of Bloomington to use in the CAP.

9. Adjournment

(time mark: 9:09 PM)

Albright moves to adjourn. Gorman seconds. The motion passes unanimously.