



**City of Bloomington
Environmental Commission**

The mission of the Environmental Commission is to advise the City of Bloomington on how its actions and policies may preserve and enhance the quality of Bloomington's environment, including the life-supporting processes that natural ecological systems provide to humans and other organisms.

MINUTES

16 April 2015, 7-9 p.m.

City Hall—McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

Introductions

Present: Dedaimia Whitney, Alicia Reinersman, Mike Litwin, Dave Debikey, David Parkhurst, Kriste Lindberg, Chaim Julian, Linda Thompson

Absent: Sean Gorman

Guests: Andrea Jobe, Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS); Chad Roeder, Downtown Bloomington Recycling Center; Ellen Jacquart, Monroe County Identify and Reduce Invasive Species Group; Andy Marrs, concerned citizen; Daniel Bingham, concerned citizen

Approval of minutes

- Unanimous passage of March minutes

Public comment

Ellen Jacquart

The Monroe County's Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS) group formed approximately 5 years ago to raise awareness about invasive species in Monroe County. According to MC-IRIS, invasive species are non-native species that harm economic, environmental, or human health. Through education and action, MC-IRIS reduces the effects of these invasive plants.

MC-IRIS identified the 12 most problematic invasive plant species in Monroe County and found that most of these plants are for sale at local retailers. MC-IRIS works with these local retailers, persuading them to stop selling plants that increase infestation levels. This goal led to the formation of the Go Green, Grow Native! program. Go Green, Grow Native! has already prompted several local retailers to commit to either stop selling or reduce invasive species sales by promoting native alternatives. Mays Greenhouse, for instance, still sells invasive plants. However, in collaboration with an IU class, Mays Greenhouse created caution labels for all their available invasives and provided native plant alternatives suggestions. If Mays Greenhouse and other retailers provide enough native alternatives, they should not lose profits.

MC-IRIS also provides educational services like invasive plant surveys, identifying property owners' native, exotic, or invasive plant species. MC-IRIS also provides educational materials like laminated specimens of invasive species and control calendars (i.e., how and when to control invasives). Furthermore, at Latimer Woods and Dunn's Woods, MC-IRIS offers control demonstrations for residents. Through grant funds from TogetherGreen, a National Audubon Society initiative, MC-IRIS did purple wintercreeper control at Dunn's Woods. With these funds, MC-IRIS used herbicide treatments to control the winter creeper throughout the woods. Following these treatments, they planted hundreds of native seedlings, restoring the understory. TogetherGreen was impressed with MC-IRIS's progress and provided follow-up money to perform treatments in the surrounding neighborhoods, which have purple wintercreeper in the landscaping. The additional money funded a competition to remove the winter creeper around the neighborhoods last year. Through this competition, residents learned about control methods and received free native plants.

Some Bloomington residents expressed concern about MC-IRIS's herbicide usage. MC-IRIS uses two conventional herbicides in treatment: triclopyr, a broadleaf-specific herbicide, and glyphosate (i.e., Roundup®), a broad-spectrum herbicide. As a result of this concern, MC-IRIS now provides landowners with information about these chemicals and other

treatment options. MC-IRIS would like to collaborate with the EC's Lawns for Life (L4L) to further inform people about non-chemical treatment methods.

MC-IRIS will have a table at Sustaining Nature and Your Land (SNAYL) Day on June 6th at Harmony School. At this event, MC-IRIS representatives will teach people how to perform invasive plant species control.

Old business

a. PCB update

John Smith, a concerned citizen, requested polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) information from the City. John Langley, the Deputy Director of the City of Bloomington's Utilities Department, is retrieving those documents. Prior to being released to the public, these documents must be approved by the City's Legal Department. 1,600 pages of PCB information have already been placed in the library, and John L. expects to find more information.

This May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will release a new 5-year PCB report. When this report becomes available, Dedaimia wants each commissioner to read the report. Since David P. has a toxicology background, he will lead the commissioners in understanding report's findings.

Linda, David, Kriste, Dedaimia, and John S. received tours of the Lemon Lane Landfill and Illinois Central Springs water treatment plant. Illinois Central Springs treats PCB-contaminated water that runs off and around the landfill and into Clear Creek. This treatment plant is owned and operated by a firm working for CBS, PSARA Consulting. The PCB groundwater standard in Indiana is 0.3 ppb, and the EPA's drinking water standard is 0.5 ppb. The Illinois Central Springs water treatment plant follows these guidelines. PCB levels in the treated water are below detectable levels (i.e., below 0.1 ppb). Approximately once a year, these levels rise above a detectable level of 0.1 ppb but never exceed 0.3 ppb.

b. Climate Action Plan (Alicia)

Alicia provided each of the commissioners with CAP outlines and asked for feedback. She plans on holding a subcommittee meeting to review the current draft of the plan. However, when Andrew Carty resigned from the EC, Alicia lost a valuable subcommittee member and would like someone to fill that role. Andy Marrs agreed to contribute to the plan.

c. 2015 curbside recycling project (Dedaimia)

Dedaimia assembled a team for this curbside recycling project. At this stage, the team believes this project will take longer than a year to complete.

Chad Roeder, the manager of Downtown Bloomington Recycling Center, spoke to the EC about the Monroe County Solid Waste Management District's (MCSWMD) goal to build a material recovery facility (MRF). Since Monroe County's recycled materials currently travel a great distance, a MRF would reduce the carbon footprint resulting from transportation. This MRF, however, would not initially serve the City of Bloomington; it would only serve the Solid Waste District. MCSWMD's goals, however, run parallel to what the EC envisions with the curbside recycling program.

MCSWMD tried to get a large MRF built in the past but never received the necessary support. As a result, MCSWMD decided to pursue building a smaller MRF. This MRF would include a pole barn with bailers, allowing materials to be dumped, bailed, and finally resold in the market. \$255,000 was appropriated in the 2015 budget for this project. This project still needs to be approved by the County commissioners.

d. Committee assignments (Dedaimia)

Proposal approved by voice vote to add the Secretary/Treasurer to the Steering Committee: unanimous approval.

In the previous EC meeting, Dedaimia provided a list of organizations to which commissioners would liaise. This committee work is optional and guided by interest. If a commissioner chooses to liaise with one of these organizations, they commit themselves to the work. Each commissioner should view Dedaimia's list and inform her about interests in being assigned or unassigned to any of these groups.

Dedaimia would like a list of previous Eco Heroes themes.

e. Update on plastic bag letter (Chaim)

- Chaim drafted a letter for the commissioners to sign. This letter will be sent to Linda and passed up the chain.
- Dave D. attended the last Bring Your Bag Bloomington (BYBB) meeting and informed the members about the EC's intention to send a letter of support to City Council.
- In the last EC meeting, some commissioners had questions about plastic bag measurements. Dave D. learned that mils is a measurement specific to plastic thickness.

- BYBB added a plastic retail bag (i.e., 2.25 mils or thicker) charge to the ordinance. In previous conversations, BYBB considered these bags to be reusable. Since retail bags are not reused often, BYBB added the charge to the ordinance.
- The ordinance does not include a paper bag ban. Retailers, however, will be required to charge for paper bags.
- Dave D. asked about bags being distributed without a charge during limited promotion events, and that idea has been removed from the ordinance draft. The bags can now be distributed at any time.
- David D. asked questions about retailers keeping the money from plastic bag charges and enforcement. BYBB said enforcement would rely on consumer reporting.
- BYBB formed a subcommittee focused primarily on education and outreach. BYBB plans to teach people how to change their plastic bag habits.

f. Meeting times (Dedaimia)

- Most of the commissioners indicated that they would prefer to keep the same meeting time and weekday since they have already adjusted their lives around these meetings.

New business

a. Proposal to test PCB in city residents (David Parkhurst)

David P. sent an article from a May 1985 issue of the *Indiana Daily Student* (IDS) to the EC. This article indicated that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) tested approximately 140 Bloomington residents' PCB levels and found that some people had elevated levels while others did not. This IDS article also suggested that the CDC wanted to measure every Bloomington resident's PCB blood levels. David P. wants the EC to invite the CDC to Bloomington to perform blood tests on volunteers. David P. will draft a letter to the CDC, inviting and reminding them to test PCB blood levels. The EC would need support from the City Council, the Mayor, the County Health Board, and IU's health department. If no funds are available for this testing, the EC could seek a grant.

These blood tests could have a few benefits. First, tests could show that Bloomington's PCB blood level distribution matched the rest of US and reduce some residents' concerns. Second, if people do have high PCB blood levels, they could take steps to lower those levels. Finally, breastfeeding women could receive assurance that their breast milk is safe for their babies. PCB concentrations are higher in breast milk than in blood, threatening babies' health.

b. Relationship with BCOS (Dedaimia)

The Steering Committee had an open meeting in the Bloomington Cooking School in February. In this meeting, all the commissioners were asked to indicate an environmental initiative they wanted to see completed in Bloomington before they died. In this meeting, the EC decided to clarify its relationship with BCOS.

Dedaimia spoke to Jacqui Bauer from BCOS about merging the two groups. BCOS's mission statement, however, differs from the EC. Dedaimia set up a meeting with the co-chairs of BCOS to talk about overlapping areas and further collaboration between BCOS and the EC.

Committee reports & commissioner announcements

a. Planning Comm & Sr. Environmental Planner (Linda)

- No new development cases were submitted for this month.
- The Fullerton Pike case passed unanimously.
- The only item on next months agenda regard the County parking garage, which is being redesigned to be a story shorter.

b. L4L Natural Landscaping (Diane)

- Diane is still working on the redesign of the L4L sign, which the County commissioners already approved. The County wants their logo on the L4L sign as well. Diane will need more money for these signs.
- Diane to determine whether BEC/L4L can participate on Saturday, June 6th in SNAYL Day.
- Diane voiced her concern about MC-IRIS advocating Roundup® usage since people leaving their workshops often feel they can use herbicides freely without consequence.
- Diane is working on the Salt Creek watershed project with Martha Miller from Monroe County. The project will help people create rain gardens, use best management practices (BMPs), et cetera.

a. Tree Commission (Dedaimia)

- Dedaimia did not attend the last meeting.

- A stoplight will be installed at entrance of the Twin Lakes ball fields. The road will be redesigned at that intersection. There will be a single entrance to the Sportsplex and recreation center. To make these changes, some trees and shrubs will have to be removed. The trees that are cut down will be replaced.
- Regarding the City's goal to perform its own ash borer treatment, IU has certified technicians that the City can use.
- Pear and white pine trees will be removed along Gates Drive for Duke Energy.

b. MPO CAC (Chaim)

- Chaim did not attend this meeting, and MPO CAC will be removed from the committee assignment list.

c. Eco Heroes (David)

- The Eco Heroes ceremony will be held at 10:00am on Saturday, April 25th in the Common Council Chambers. The ceremony will last less than an hour.
- Dave Rollo, the City Council President, will present the awards this year.
- No food will be served at this event.
- Diane will provide flowers to use as decoration.
- An environmental fair will be held in the atrium outside of the Eco Heroes ceremony. L4L is invited to set up a display at this fair.
- Eco Heroes received fewer sponsors this year. As a result, the budget for this year's ceremony is approximately \$300 less than last year.
- Eco Heroes winners will receive bags full of gifts, including chocolate bars donated by Dedaimia and other gifts donated by Dave D.

d. ERAC (Mike)

- David P. took this assignment once Mike became the Vice Chair of the EC.
- The Weimar Lake Dam near Twin Lakes is leaking. At this time, ERAC is trying to decide whether to remove, fix, or rebuild the dam.

e. BCOS (Andrea)

- Since Andrea is the liaison from BCOS, she will report to the EC about what happened at the BCOS meetings rather than Dedaimia.
- BCOS is continuing with the Star reporting.
- BCOS has a new meeting method whereby speakers attend, present on topics, and answer questions.
- BCOS voted in support of the plastic bag ordinance. Andrea will write a letter to the City Council in support of the ordinance. She would like to use the EC's letter of support as a reference.

Chaim: Democracy for Monroe County endorsed John Hamilton for Mayor, Kevin Easton in the 1st district, Dorothy Granger in the 2nd district, Allison Chopra in the 3rd district, and Nicole Bolden for City Clerk. Democracy for Monroe County did not endorse any candidates in the 4th and 5th districts since none of the recommendations received the required 2/3 majority.

Linda: John Hamilton held a press conference and announced his green initiatives. If elected, he will attempt to put solar panels on City Hall. Furthermore, he will make a rule that the City must post where spray chemicals have been used. He wants to eventually phase-out herbicide usage.

Diane: All the mayoral candidates have L4L signs in their yards.

Adjournment

Meeting times

- Environmental Commission: 21 May, 7:00 McCloskey Room
- Planning Committee: 29 April, & 21 May, 4:00 Lemon Conference room
- Tree Commission: 20 May, 9:30 Rose Hill
- BCOS meeting: 12 May, 6:00 McCloskey
- County. Environ. Quality & Sus. Commission: 13 May, 5:00 Court House, Nat Hill
- ERAC: 10 June, RCA Park
- MPO Citizens Advisory Committee: 29 April, 6:30 McCloskey