

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF BLOOMINGTON**  
**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, November 10, 2015

6:00 pm McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

1. Jeff called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Present:

Gwen White, Bill Brown, Stephanie Richards, Jana McGee, Jeff Jewels, Rebecca Swanson, Molly O'Donnell, Joe Kielar

Regrets:

Teddie Mower, Dave Rollo, Jacqui Bauer

3. No Public Comment, but two members of the Environmental Commission attended to learn about the STAR report.

4. Announcements

- a) Joe Kielar announced that this will be his last BCOS meeting. He has taken a new job, and with a new baby, does not feel he has time right now to contribute. He'll be missed!
- b) Molly O'Donnell had two announcements:
  - ICEY –Interfaith Community of Environmentalist Youth– will be showing the documentary [\*The Merchants of Doubt\*](#) this Saturday, November 14th, at 6:00 PM at the First United Church of Bloomington on East Third Street. This is to raise funds for their *Youth Empowering Sustainability* Statewide Kickoff in Indianapolis on Martin Luther King Day. They will teach weatherization skills to other youth, jump-starting ICEY chapters throughout the state.
  - Citizens Climate Lobby is looking for individuals and organizations, including BCOS, if possible, to endorse Carbon Fee & Dividend. We need to ask Jacqui if this is something the Commission can officially endorse. **The form is to be forwarded to members with these minutes.** In any case we ask members to sign and share this document.
- c) Bill Brown shared the results of the three-week Indiana University Energy Challenge:
  - 57,128 kWh electricity was saved.
  - 150,256 gallons of water were saved.

5. September and October 2015 meeting minutes were approved without any changes.

6. STAR Communities Economy & Jobs report:

Stephanie Richards presented highlights of the 127 page report she has drafted on Bloomington's economy and jobs, based on the STAR Community guidelines as set out by STAR Communities, vetted by about 200 stakeholders in 50 cities. 40 cities have already certified.

- She began with acknowledgements of those who helped gather the information, a brief overview of STAR Communities for our guests from the Environmental Commission.
- "Why create a report?"
  - She quoted Mayor Bloomberg: "If you can't measure it, you can manage it."

- Other reasons include transparency in government, setting goals and managing risks, being able to show progress when applying for grants.
- What “facts” are reported:
  - According to US Census data:
    - The number of business establishments in Monroe County has fallen from 2,990 in 2010 to 2,901 in 2013; in Bloomington from 3,881 to 3,191.
    - The number of manufacturers has fallen from 106 in 2007 to 94 in 2012.
    - City employment rate is up 3.7% from 2011 to 2013, unemployment down 1.2%.
    - 7.2% over 16 were unemployed in 2013, but 20.9% of those aged 16 to 19.
  - The American Community Survey’s stats had 5.8% and 23.6%, respectively.
- There are several issues with how the STAR guidelines require that communities collect data:
  - The fact that there is missing data and a lag in reported data (often just 2012 or 2013).
  - The fact that some data is County wide, not just the City.
  - The fact that Bloomington has such a large proportion of students who either work part time or not at all (with supplemental income from financial aid or family) drove down the median income and showed a high proportion below the poverty level. BCOS members suggested comparing Bloomington with other university towns with a similar proportion of student to permanent residents.
- We might instead look at how the City measures our success:
  - Many local actions and agencies support business retention, especially downtown, and promote workforce training.
  - Promotion of historic preservation, the arts and tax write-offs for downtown businesses.
  - Several indicators point to progress in employment (up 2.1% since 2007), especially in hospitality and food services.
  - A \$12.31 living wage for businesses with ten or more employees that do business with the City.
- This report doesn’t seem to be telling our story:
  - We could focus on ways we compare with other communities. Are their figures also skewed? Do they feel the same way?
  - Are we successful at identifying target industries and creating more employment in them?
 

Stephanie looked at four targeted industries:

    - Life Sciences
    - High Tech
    - Advanced Manufacturing
    - Tourism
  - Are we able to attract businesses and entrepreneurs?
  - Do we retain well-educated workers?
  - How does the STAR report add value:
    - Points out areas of concern including:
      - the decline in manufacturing,
      - issues with waste management,

- repair and maintenance,
- recreation (surprisingly, given all the performances of local theater, music, dance and the arts and local and nearby county and State parks and forests).
- Perhaps BCOS could focus more on one of these areas. (The Environmental Commission has been focusing on waste management; see EC update, below.)

#### 7. Report from the Co-Chairs

Jeff continues to be in conversation with the incoming administration, talking about finding actionable items for BCOS to work on.

#### 8. Report from the Sustainability Coordinator:

Jacqui was sick, but Molly updated on the Monroe County Energy Challenge's NCCC team's accomplishments, which she recalled included 159 homes assessments, over 4600 fliers distributed, and many interactions with students and other renters, including gathering and mapping utility data for RentRocket.

Jacqui was not there to update us on the Partners for Places grant.

#### 9. Committee reports and updates

##### a. Environmental Commission Planning Committee:

Rebecca updated us on the Certified Technology Park. Instead of the images presented to BCOS of individual housing to appeal to employees of technology companies, one proposal now shows two four-story apartment blocks, more appealing to students than young professionals. This raised several questions: how much can we require of a developer (City's bond is for adding infrastructure.)

Rebecca recommended that members pay attention and watch for opportunities for public comment.

##### b. Environmental Commission:

Dave updated us on their work on waste management. Much of our waste is shipped out of town, recycling is expensive so hard to require it of developers.

He mentioned a SPEA Capstone project comparing Bloomington to other communities.

##### c. Bring Your Bag Bloomington update:

Rebecca reported that two Kelley School of Business grad students will take this on as a project, including interviewing local businesses.

City Council will take this up in 2016.

One of Rebecca's students watched a Kroger training video for baggers that included the line "less plastic is fantastic", so businesses may be more positive than people think!

See: <http://bloomington.in.gov/certified-technology-park>

#### 10. No new business, so meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: December 8th, McCloskey Room, City Hall at 6:00 p.m.