



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

17 December 2015

City Hall McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

1. Introductions

Present: Linda Thompson, Alicia Reinersman, Dave Debikey, Mike Litwin, David Parkhurst, Andy Marris, Nick Kappas, Dedaimia Whitney

Absent: Chaim Julian, Diane Jung, Kriste Lindberg, Chad Roeder

Guest: Ryan Conway, concerned citizen

2. Approval of minutes

- Unanimously approved by voice vote

3. Public comment

- No members of the public spoke.

4. Committee reports & discussions

A. Planning Committee & Sr. Environmental Planner (Linda)

- No petitions came to the Plan Commission in December, so Linda had no report.

B. Natural Landscaping Committee (Andy)

- Andy wants to hand out milkweed plugs to the public as a Natural Landscaping Committee project.

C. Tree Commission (Dedaimia)

- Two high school sophomores recorded Carrie Bridges, Lee Huss, and Laura Cornell inspecting the oak tree in Seminary Square, explaining why it needed to be removed. Laura also offered tips about how to care for trees to prevent future removals.
- 2015 was a record year in tree plantings and removals. The record in removals was due to dying, emerald ash borer-infested ash trees. Lee anticipates more ash removals in 2016.
- Lee received authorization to purchase a refurbished brush chipper for \$12,000.
- Holiday lights downtown are wrapped very tightly around trees, which threatens their survival.
- A woman got her shoulder broken by a 16-inch tree limb that fell during pruning. The crew pruning the trees did not mark the area properly. As a result, a training session will be held to prevent similar accidents in the future.

D. ERAC (David Parkhurst)

- The Parks and Recreation department hired a new landscaper, Joanna Sparks, who has permaculture training.
- Beavers were trapped at the Miller-Showers Park and placed in Leonard Springs Park. About 20 beaver-damaged trees were replaced in the Miller-Showers Park.

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- The Switchyard Park has coal ash fill that is 4-6 feet deep. Substantial remediation efforts will be necessary prior to recreational use of this site. Tax increment financing (TIF) will be used to fund remediation efforts. Buildings constructed on this site will be built to LEED Silver standards. Building designing will start in 2016, and construction will begin in 2017.
- The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) considers the Weimar Dam a “significant hazard.” Repairing the dam may not be feasible. As a result, the dam will likely be removed, and the surrounding area will become a wetland.

E. Recycling (Dave Debikey)

- The recycling committee received the final report from the SPEA capstone. The report included numerous recommendations, including: improving the e-governance platform, incrementally mandating recycling at apartments and businesses, providing support for a more competitive market, expanding the Green Business Network, and developing a public-private partnership for education. The committee will read through the report to pick out recommendations to send to the city formally. The committee will also give a copy of this report to the mayor with an attached cover letter suggesting potential recycling actions.

F. MCSWMD (Chad)

- The MCSWMD Board discussed streamlining and rebranding the website.
- The next meeting will include the new Green Business Network coordinator.

G. BCOS (Jana)

- Jana was not present to report.

H. BEAP report (Alicia)

- The BEAP subcommittee met twice in November. In the upcoming meeting in January, subcommittee member will discuss the full draft.
- Alicia plans to give the draft to relevant stakeholder by the end of January.

I. Pesticide use policy (Andy)

- The policy is already finalized and approved.

5. Old business

A. Tech Park, a jubilation (all)

- The Tech Park case was continued, so it was not heard in the December Plan Commission meeting. This case is being continued, so the developers can get input from the new mayor.

6. New business

A. Vote on officers for 2016 (all)

- The proposed leadership for 2016 follows:
Dedaimia - Chair
Mike - Vice Chair
David Parkhurst - Secretary/Treasurer
- Unanimous approval of 2016 leadership

7. Commissioner announcements

- Dedaimia: PCB information should be made more available to the public. Bloomingfoods could contain an information kiosk, including a brief history of the problem and remediation efforts through the years.

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- Nick: He read the Black and Veatch water report for 2015, which recommended water infrastructure expansions. Suggested expansions included constructing a 40-inch main at the water treatment plant that could be used until about 2040.
 - The EC should look into and rebut Erin Brockovich's accusations about Monroe County water quality.

8. Adjournment

Meeting times

- A. Environmental Commission: 14 January, TBD
- B. Planning Committee:
- C. Tree Commission:
- D. BCOS meeting:
- E. EQUAS Com.:
- F. ERAC:
- G. MCSWMD Board: