



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.

# ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION FEBRUARY 2024 MEETING MINUTES

February 15, 2024, 6:00 PM  
Hooker Meeting Room # 245  
Hybrid meeting

Join Zoom Meeting here:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/6359441221?pwd=bXRYTnNJV2xMbTRLLeE00QW9XWnRjQT09>

Meeting ID: 635 944 1221

Passcode: COBPT

or on Community Access Television Service (CATS): <https://catstv.net/government.php>.

Auxiliary aids are available upon request with adequate notice.

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation: **6:09 pm**

2. Introductions and Roll Call:

	<u>In person</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Megan Bankowski		X	
Matt Caldie	X		
Shannon Gayk	X		
<del>Neil Goswami</del>			
Mike Litwin	X		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Karena Tankersley	X		
Alauna Keeley	X		
Linda Thompson	X		

3. New officer nominations:\*

**Matt motioned to postpone, David seconded - All present voted yes.**

4. Approval of January, 2024 minutes:*	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Megan Bankowski			
Matt Caldie	X		
Shannon Gayk	X		
<del>Neil Goswai</del>			
Mike Litwin	X		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Karena Tankersley	X		

David moved to approve, Matt seconded - All present voted yes.

5. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total

Dave Rollo, member of city council, expressed appreciation of EC vote to remain autonomous (not merging with other commissions).

Gabby Robles, SPEA student, introduced herself.

Jacqueline Scanlan, staff of city planning department, introduced herself and mentioned she has been making a point to visit each of the city commissions.

6. Old business:

A. Summit update with special guest Dave Rollo

Linda summarized the history of the ECPC (EC Planning Committee) reviewing development petitions. They have reviewed Summit petition, and she has sent out a draft memo.

Dave Rollo mentioned this will be in front of city council after March. Once introduced, there will be 90 days to act. The Council will need to determine if it aligns with the public good. He is concerned about adequacy of measurement, adequacy of riparian buffers, if sinkholes are individual or compound, and the amount of impervious surface in the development. He also mentioned several non-environmental concerns about the development.

Jacqueline shared that she thought all tree and riparian buffer issues are compliant with regulations in the current version of the UDO. Jacqueline also shared some reassurance and pushed back about the non-environmental concerns that were expressed, including road infrastructure, cost distribution, type of housing, and who will be rented to in the new development.

Shannon shared concerns about car dependence in the development impacting pollution, and asked about public transportation.

Jacqueline shared that they believe there will be a bus route in this area eventually. She also summarized the development plan process and characteristics of the land and development plan.

Angela Parker, attorney for the Summit project, emphasized that they are complying with the UDO and going beyond in some instances, such as land set aside for affordable housing. She mentioned that at this point in the planning process there is limited detail available.

Ridge Group and Sullivan Development are the two developers on the project.

A representative of Sullivan Development, Travis Vencel, touched on environmental concerns and explained that easements are put around sinkholes, or sinkholes and trees (combined easement = combined preservation). The plan includes 45% of acres being preserved, with 35% as buildable area. He estimated there will be 100 final plats of actual building based on the market. He also touched on some of the non-environmental concerns.

Jacqueline's final comment is to reassure commissioners that the developers are trying to balance the need for housing with environmental concerns.

Mike recommends a Karst survey to determine if karst features on the property are connected to an important karst system. Mike also mentioned he wanted to see all preservation areas labeled common areas, so that residents don't mow, etc.

Vencel touched on habitat connectivity and emphasized that they proposed conservation areas that will connect with other green areas adjacent to the property.

Linda asked why conservation land was set aside in parks zoning districts (concerned that they would not actually be preserved).

Vencel responded that combined easements will lock them out of development, and that there are strict requirements for parks and open area designations. Easements are not settled yet - but UDO provides guidelines.

Shannon asks about vision for environmental health and city resilience in this new development.

Vencel stated that they envision minimizing urban sprawl, including transportation, and including high density housing. He touched on energy efficiency standards, working w/ Duke Energy, and that they do not plan on having any gas.

Dave asked how they are incorporating solar, and Vencel responded that this issue is not regulated.

## B. Riparian buffer discussion

Some points about the riparian buffer discussion were clarified, including the type of development allowed in zone 1. Jacqueline confirmed that street crossings, utilities, bike/ pedestrian crossings, and trails are the only disturbances allowed in Zone 1.

The EC generally agreed on recommending buffer rules require measurement to start at the top of the bank, as steep slopes will mean no protection if continued to allow measurement from middle of stream. Linda and Mike gave examples of streams that would be affected, including a creek in the Summit development and Jackson creek. Linda wanted to expand the recommendation to unnamed creeks, and Mike mentioned every stream should be looked at individually. The tour of the Summit development did not go through the stream area.

Jacqueline argued the change to measuring from the middle of the stream supports time efficiency in the planning department, but conceded that something could go wrong for some streams.

Mike proposed the existing list of affected streams be codified immediately, then work on finding additional streams. Linda voiced concern that it might be a waste to do this in two steps.

Jacqueline pointed out there are time constraints to getting proposals in front of city council. The EC generally came to agree to propose protecting known streams immediately this spring.

## 7. New business: none

8. Reports from: Tree Commission (TC), Environmental Resource Advisory Council (ERAC), Friends of Lake Monroe (FOLM), Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS), Monroe County-Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS), Metropolitan Planning Organization, Citizens Advisory Council (MCMPOCAC), & Monroe County Environmental Commission (MCEC).

### Dave

- Tree Commission: nothing to report on this month.
- ERAC
  - o Deer cull results: They hired a company called White Buffalo. 33 deer were culled this year: 15 were male, 18 were female. Shannon pointed out they spent \$30,000 for 30 deer. They also had 24 hunters, averaging 1.3 deer/person.
  - o Kevin Tungesvic, EcoLogic: Jack-in-the-pulpit and Solomon's Seal plant heights not increasing as much from 2021-2022.
  - o Education events: nature days and boat house open soon. Eclipse events were discussed. There will be an Earth Day event at Switchyard. Climate Action workshops happen at Switchyard every Wednesday.

Karenna - volunteered to attend and report back on future BCOS meetings.

### Linda

- MCIRIS
  - o Plant sale is coming up in September.
  - o They have proposed a new initiative. If you get rid of Callery Pear, Japanese Barberry, or Burning Bush, you can get a free tree or shrub to replace it.

## 9. Commissioner announcements:

Linda - Monroe County Garden Fair, April 13<sup>th</sup>, all day in Switchyard Pavillion.

Alauna - EcoHeros close to having a final draft of design. She has come up with teaching materials and will start to talk with educators soon.

Dave - wanted to send interested EC members resources on how not to feed sparrows at bird feeders.

Dave Rollo - wanted to mention that developments use invasive species. Jacqueline wanted examples.

Karena - officially retracted wetlands letter and asked about interest in reviving the Biodiversity Working Group.

10. Adjournment: 8:02 pm

\* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: March 21, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Hooker Room, Zoom, and CATS

-The City is committed to providing equal access to information. However, despite our efforts, at times, portions of our board and commission packets are not accessible for some individuals. If you encounter difficulties accessing material in this packet, please contact Melissa Hirtzel at [hirtzelm@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:hirtzelm@bloomington.in.gov) and provide your name, contact information, and a link to or description of the document or web page you are having problems with.

-As a quorum of the Commission or its committees may be present, this gathering constitutes a meeting under the Indiana Open Door Law (I.C. § 5-14-1.5). For that reason, this statement provides notice that this meeting will occur and is open for the public to attend, observe, and record what transpires.

-The Bloomington Environmental Commission (EC) wishes to acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities native to this region, and recognize that the City of Bloomington, Indiana was built on indigenous homelands and resources.