



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 NOTICE and REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

August 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:

2. Introductions and Roll Call

In person

Absent

Zoom

Carrie Albright  
Megan Bankowski  
Nadia Cain  
Matt Caldie  
Shannon Gayk  
Mike Litwin  
Adam Martinez  
Megan Murphy  
Mitchell Owens  
David Parkhurst  
Gabby Robles  
Karena Tankersley  
Rachael Sargent, City Liaison  
TBD, Graduate Fellow

- |  |            |           |                |
|--|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 3. Approval of July 2024 minutes:*   | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Abstain</u> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrie Albright</li> <li>Megan Bankowski</li> <li>Nadia Cain</li> <li>Matt Caldie</li> <li>Shannon Gayk</li> <li>Mike Litwin</li> <li>Adam Martinez</li> <li>Megan Murphy</li> <li>Mitchell Owens</li> <li>David Parkhurst</li> <li>Gabby Robles</li> <li>Karenna Tankersley</li> </ul> |            |           |                |

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

5. Old business:
- A. WFHB PSA (Carrie Albright)
  - B. Bug Fest 2024 (Megan Murphy)
  - C. Working group updates

6. New business
- A. YIMBYana Local Housing Policy Reform - Letter of Support\* (Adam Martinez)
  - B. Terrestrial Invasive Plant Rule Amendment - Letter of Support\* (Rachael Sargent)

7. 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)

8. Commissioner announcements:

9. Adjournment:

\* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: September 19, 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.



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# ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION JULY 2024 MEETING MINUTES

July 18, 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:

2. Introductions and Roll Call

	<u>In person</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Megan Bankowski		X	
Nadia Cain	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Shannon Gayk		X	
Mike Litwin	X		
Adam Martinez	X		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Gabby Robles		X	
Karena Tankersley			X
Rachael Sargent, City Liaison	X		
TBD, Graduate Fellow			

3. Approval of May 2024 & June 2024 minutes:*	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Megan Bankowski			X
Nadia Cain	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Shannon Gayk			X
Mike Litwin	X		
Adam Martinez	X		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens			X
David Parkhurst	X		
Gabby Robles			X
Karenna Tankersley			X

Megan M motioned to vote for approving May 2024 minutes, and David seconded. All present voted yes. Matt motioned to vote for approving June 2024 minutes, and David seconded. All present voted yes.

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

No public comments were made.

5. Old business:

- A. Cook 48 Resolution of Support\*
- B. Heat Watch Campaign updates
- C. Working group updates

A. Cook 48 Resolution of Support

- Christopher Emgee explained to Matt that they are pursuing a bus model. Because this would be the first route that extends outside of City limits, they want to demonstrate public support, which this would offer. Matt suggested that we could accept the resolution as is, or propose amendments.
- Matt stated that he personally supports the letter as is. Megan agreed.
- Carrie brought up the discussion from June, in which Commissioners suggested that we request that Bloomington Transit follow-up with us or otherwise keep us informed on the state of the project.
- David asked about the size of the campus and predicted ridership, which was clarified using online maps.
- Carrie and Adam expressed support for the idea of follow-up.
- Matt suggested that we could indicate our interest in follow-up without formally requiring it. Megan voiced strong support for this.

David motioned that we vote on the resolution, as is. Matt seconded. The motion was approved, with yes votes from: Carrie, Nadia, Matt, Mike, Adam, David, Megan, and Mitchell. Karenna abstained.

B. Heat Watch Campaign updates

- Nadia and Matt were successful in brainstorming locations for the air quality monitoring devices.

C. Working group updates

- Mitchell - No WQ working group meeting this month.

- Karena - No BDWG meeting this month.

## 6. New business

### A. Weed Wrangle planning

Megan M. volunteered to be the contact person for organizing a weed wrangle with MCIRIS.

## 7. 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)

### David

- Tree Commission: A new person was appointed but has not shown up to the first two meetings.
- ERAC and FoLM: No reports.

### Others

- BCOS: No one is currently attending these meetings.
- MCIRIS: No one is currently attending.
  - o MCIRIS meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed of month at 1 pm.

## 8. Commissioner announcements:

Mitchell found a unique large fly.

David added flies to his compost.

Karena discussed some of her experiences in Portugal.

## 9. Adjournment: 6:55 pm

\* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: August 15, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Hooker Room, Zoom, and CATS

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-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.

Dear Environmental Commission,

I would like to ask you on behalf of YIMBYana to endorse this letter in favor of zoning and building code reforms that would improve the environmental profile of the city. We are a housing advocacy group focused on housing affordability, alongside issues relating to the urban environment, like transit access, walkability, and environmental sustainability. We believe that by allowing more housing density close to daily necessities and recreation, the city can reduce its car dependence and paved surfaces while protecting more natural space around its edges from suburban sprawl.

Our primary policy goals are: eliminating all parking mandates, so more space can be left for people and nature; reducing minimum lot sizes, to allow increased density and less distance traveled between destinations; increasing the number of homes to be built per residential lot by right, so that more people can have the opportunity to live car-free in close-in neighborhoods to IU and downtown; and increasing mixed-use spaces that bring people and opportunities together in one place.

We also advocate for the expansion of micro mobility infrastructure like protected bike lanes and separated paths, as well as the expansion of transit systems, both of which can reduce total vehicle emissions while providing more affordable access to opportunities the city has to offer. We believe these mobility services are made more effective when they are combined with higher housing density, so more people can make use of this environmentally friendly infrastructure.

In signing this letter, the Environmental Commission acknowledges the beneficial effects of density on the environment and encourages the city to take steps towards that end. On behalf of YIMBYana, thank you for your consideration of this letter, and the work you do to improve the environment in Bloomington.

Signed,

Matt Gleason

Adam Martinez

EC President: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

The Honorable Eric Holcomb

Governor of Indiana

Dear Governor Holcomb,

The undersigned organizations are writing to respectfully request that the Department of Natural Resources move forward with the Terrestrial Plant Rule Amendment. This amendment adds twelve highly invasive plant species to the rule that bans their sale, distribution, and transport in Indiana (312 IAC 18-3-25). The full list of invasive species in the amendment is Callery pear, Norway maple, sweet autumn clematis, burning bush, moneywort, Chinese maiden grass, wild parsnip, Fine Line buckthorn, spreading hedge parsley, Japanese hedge parsley, lesser celandine and European highbush cranberry.

**Invasive plant species cost Indiana money.** Indiana landowners and land managers spend more than \$8.6 million dollars annually to combat invasive species on their land. This is assuredly an underestimate, as a full survey of landowners in Indiana has not been done. One federal property in Indiana is spending over \$100,000 to manage just one of the twelve species, Callery pear, every year to keep it from taking over thousands of acres of forest.

#### **Invasive plant species harm the environment.**

- 
- Invasive plants hurt wildlife by crowding out the plants our native animals need for food and cover.
  - Most invasive shrubs and trees are little used by native insects. This reduces habitat for beneficial pollinators and predatory insects, as well as reducing the amount of food available for birds to feed their nestlings.
  - Invasive plants destroy habitat for rare wildflowers and animals, threatening two-thirds of all endangered species.
  - Invasive plants can become weedy in a home garden, crowding out landscaping plants.
  - Invasive plants can also decrease enjoyment of hunting, fishing, mushroom collecting, bird-watching, and many other recreational pursuits by crowding forest floors and choking waterways, making use of these areas difficult.
  - The delay in implementing this rule amendment has meant that thousands more invasive plants have been sold and planted in the state, further compounding the problem we face.

#### **Most invasive plant species are introduced through landscaping and other plantings.**

Over 86% of naturalized woody shrubs species have been deliberately introduced for landscaping, soil erosion control, or forestry purposes. Horticulture is the leading source of invasive plant species, and stopping their continued introduction through this rule amendment is crucial.

The original Terrestrial Plant Rule to ban 44 species was passed in 2020, and the current amendment was drafted in 2021 to add twelve highly invasive species. Unfortunately, the DNR has not been able to move this rule amendment forward due to other priorities. We ask that you prioritize this effort to reduce the economic and environmental impact of invasive plant species in Indiana.

Respectfully yours,  
[List of organizations]

DRAFT