APPROVED NOVEMBER 18, 2025

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

Minutes

Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

McCloskey Conference Room — City Hall

1. **Call to Order:** Justin Vasel called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

2. **Roll Call**
   Members present: Justin Vasel, Zero Rose [virtual], Tara Dunderdale [virtual], Dave Rollo [virtual], Jami Scholl, Matt Austin, Diana Ogrodowski, Annalise Janke, Jon Eldon, Evan Nix, Quentin Gilly [virtual]
   Members absent: Chenghuai Xu, Evan Nix
   City staff present: Shawn Miya, Jolie Perry

3. **Approval of Agenda**
   ACTION: The agenda was approved by voice vote.

4. **Approval of Minutes: April 8, May 13, June 10 2025**
   The Chair noted that none of the minutes were ready for approval. The next meeting is anticipated to have four sets of minutes ready for approval.

5. **Public Comment**
   None.

6. **Report from Commissioners**
   a. **Chair Report** (Justin Vasel)
      The Chair provided an organizational update, noting that two vacancies remain (Monroe County Commissioners and a Mayoral M-1 appointment). The Commission bid farewell to Hunter Hawley (M-1) and welcomed two new members, Annalise Janke (M-5) and Diana Ogrodowski (M-6), bringing the total number of filled seats to 12.

      New Commissioner Introductions:
      Annalise Janke stated her background is in project management at the Center for Rural Engagement at IU, focusing on taking community projects to reality, and noted her future goal is to attend law school to work on compliance law related to sustainability.

      Diana Ogrodowski shared her background in the non-profit sector, specifically housing, homeless services, and case management for low-income families. She hopes to bring a perspective of economic sustainability and accessibility for vulnerable community members to the Commission.

      Upcoming Events: The IU Economic Development Summit (Aug 12) and the Earth Charter Indiana Climate Leadership Summit 10 (Sept 5, Indianapolis) were announced. Commissioner Matt Austin endorsed the Climate Leadership Summit.

Funding & Awards: The current working group grant funding available is $10,000, with $0 spent to date. The deadline for final approval of working group grant proposals is the November meeting.

News & Updates (Hopewell Strategy Shift): The City rejected all previous developer proposals for Hopewell South Blocks 9 & 10 (June 2025) and shifted strategy toward a "by locals for locals" approach with Flintlock LAB, focusing on pre-approved designs and community-centered development. The Chair noted this presents an opportunity to address housing affordability but involves a risk that the urgency for "shovels in the ground" might compromise deeper sustainability goals. Commissioners discussed existing issues with high vacancy rates in new market-rate developments and the need for BCOS oversight on permanent affordability and measurable sustainability outcomes. The Chair committed to finding a speaker to discuss the Hopewell project in more detail at the next meeting.

New Legal Obligations: Effective July 1, 2025, new Indiana law requires Commissioners' terms and appointing authorities on all notices, and all Commission meetings, including working groups and work sessions, must be recorded and posted on the City's website. Additionally, formal statements of opinion (e.g., resolutions) must include a disclaimer stating that the Commission does not speak on behalf of the City.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): The Chair introduced SOPs as non-binding guidance/best practices to streamline internal processes. BCOS-SOP-5: "How to Submit An Agenda Item" was presented as the first SOP, intended to guide Commissioners through defining action, preparing materials, estimating time, and submitting requests no later than 7 days before the meeting.

Resolution Adoption Process: The Chair reviewed the BCOS two-reading process for policy resolutions: the First Reading is for introduction and discussion only, followed by a voice vote to advance. The Second Reading includes full discussion, amendments, and a final adoption via roll-call vote.

b. **Waste Management Working Group** (Matt Austin)
Commissioner Austin reported on the Bokashi food waste fermentation project.
   i. An interest meeting was held at a Unitarian Universalist church, confirming that faith groups are valuable partners.
   ii. Bokashi is an anaerobic, cold fermentation process that retains 90–95% of minerals and nutrients, unlike traditional composting, and can handle meats, dairy, and oils.
   iii. The group has partnerships with the Bloomington Community Orchard and the Taste of Bloomington. Fermented food waste from the Taste of Bloomington will be utilized at the Will Demer Community Garden.
   iv. Pilot programs are underway at four local schools (Harmony, Templeton, Marlin, and discussions with The Project School).
   v. Austin encouraged Commissioners to attend the Plan Commission meeting (July 14 and August 11, 5:30 p.m.) to support proposed UDO changes for Urban Agriculture Commercial, which would allow teaching gardening on private farms.
   vi. Austin reported on a meeting regarding MakeSoil.org, a promising application and platform that pairs residents who want to compost their food waste with

those who already compost, recommending that community members sign up for the free service to show demand for potential City or Waste Reduction District funding.

c. **Ad-Hoc Committee: Sustainability Assessment Report** (Tara Dunderdale)
Vice Chair Dunderdale reported that Commissioner Evan Nix had shared his section of the assessment. The plan is to consolidate the documents and use the upcoming work session (July 29th) for tweaking and refining, aiming for an August or September agenda item.

d. **Council Ex-Officio** (Dave Rollo)
Council Member Rollo reported that the City Council was currently on break. He detailed the upcoming budget hearings, which he stressed will be important due to state legislation (SB1) restricting taxation and influencing the city's revenue stream. Budget hearings are scheduled for August 18, 19, 20, 25, and 27, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

7. Discussions of Topics Not the Subject of Resolutions

a. Local Food Resilience Strategy (Jami Scholl)
Commissioner Jami Scholl presented the core points of her comprehensive Local Food Resilience Strategy.

<u>Background</u>: The strategy is informed by vulnerabilities (e.g., 3 days of grocery inventory, reliance on "just-in-time" supply chains) and volatile national conditions (e.g., federal food program cuts, AI displacement in various industries, and climate disasters).

<u>Goals</u>: Bloomington has failed to meet the previously set goal of 20% self-provisioning. The strategy aims to build resiliency and aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

<u>Strategic Priorities</u>: Included Regional Food System Cooperation (with Monroe County), expanding Urban Agriculture (e.g., designated urban farm at RCA Park, zoning updates), establishing Neighborhood Food Hubs for access and emergency preparedness, and developing a Local Seed Bank Network.

<u>Actionable Steps</u>: Scholl noted immediate opportunities through available grant funding (like USDA Urban Agriculture Grants closing August 15th) and policy changes, such as the proposed Scalable Poultry Flock Size Model.

8. Resolutions for Second Reading and Discussion
None.

9. Resolutions for First Reading and Discussion

a. Resolution 2025-01: To Adopt a Scalable Poultry Flock Size Model (Jami Scholl)
Commissioner Scholl explained that the resolution aims to amend the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and Animal Ordinance to allow poultry flock sizes scaled to lot area. The proposed model is:

* ≤ 5,000 sq ft lots: up to 5 hens (current standard)

* 5,001–10,000 sq ft lots: up to 8 hens
* 10,001–20,000 sq ft lots: up to 12 hens

The resolution also recommends allowing flocks in mobile home parks and agri-villages. The flock sizes are based on the entire lot size. Council Member Rollo, the original sponsor of the 2006 chicken ordinance, endorsed the update.

The Chair reminded the Commission that a vote to advance is not a vote in favor of the resolution and that amendments should be reserved for the Second Reading.

ACTION: Zero Rose moved to advance Resolution 2025-01 for first reading, and Matt Austin seconded. The motion was approved by voice vote.

10. **Report from Staff Liaison** (Shawn Miya)
    Staff Liaison Shawn Miya announced that the City of Bloomington was selected to move forward on a Municipal Investment Fund grant proposal, anticipating an award of $250,000.

    Use of Funds: The funding will be used to hire an engineering design firm and financial consultant to provide free technical assistance (design and financial analysis) to building owners and developers for solar or energy efficiency projects. It will also establish an Energy Navigator program utilizing community volunteers.

    EV Charging Study: A portion of the grant will fund a consulting firm to conduct an EV charging study for the community.

    Equity Focus: 50% of the planned projects identified by the program must be located within Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities (LADCs) census tracts.

    Timeline: The goal is to develop a list of projects to attract up to $2 million in low-cost private capital, but all work must be completed within a short time frame of six months. The announcement is preliminary, as the contract has not yet been signed.

11. **Member Announcements**:
    None

12. **Adjournment:**
    The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

NEXT MEETING:
AUGUST 12, 2025 6PM