

Environmental Commission Meeting

Meeting Minutes for March 26, 2026 Environmental Commission Regular Session Meeting at 6:00 P.M.

This meeting was held in the Hooker Conference Room (Suite #245, City Hall, 401 N. Morton St).

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:02pm.

Commission members present in person: Heidi Brown, Matt Caldie, Adam Fudickar, Adam Martinez, Mitchell Owens, Karl Gaisser, Justin Meschter

Commission members present over Zoom: None

Commission members absent: Carrie Abright, Shannon Gayk

City staff and elected officials present: Taylor Brown, Jackie Scanlan, Rachael Johnson

Were members of the public present: Yes

Roll Call

In-Person: Heidi Brown, Matt Caldie, Adam Fudickar, Adam Martinez, Mitchell Owens, Karl Gaisser, Justin Meschter

Approval of Agenda and Approval of Memoranda/Minutes

- Fudickar made a motion for approval of the agenda. Owens seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0
- Gaisser made a motion for approval of the February 19, 2026 meeting minutes. Fudickar seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0.

New Business

- Welcome New Members
 - Karl Gaisser and Justin Meschter have been appointed to the commission and are attending their first meeting.
 - Each member gave a brief introduction.
- Department Update & Accessibility Discussion
 - Discussion led by Rachael Johnson and Jackie Scanlan
 - Rachael will be on leave over the summer, a different member of planning will be present for those meetings.
 - Rachael reminded the commission to fill out the conflict of interest form.
 - Jackie Scanlan briefed the group on updates to accessibility. A "skeleton" of the agenda will be provided to the secretary for taking of meeting minutes.

- A new federal rule introduced increased accessibility requirements for municipalities like Bloomington. All digital materials provided to the public must meet these requirements. April 24th is the deadline.
 - All documents, including presentations done by commissioners, must meet these guidelines.
 - Adam F. asked about how to know if materials are accessible.
 - Jackie said there will likely be training to educate commissions.
 - Everything on the city website that does not meet the standards must be removed or archived. Rachael is working on updating some of the commission's materials.
 - Matt asked for clarification on the meaning of "archived." Non-accessible documents that are not updated will be hosted on a separate archived website. The city is planning on creating templates for various kinds of documents such as brochures and contracts.
 - Adam F. asked for further clarification on knowing if a document is accessible. Rachael said there will be a document sent to commissioners detailing guidelines.
- Question & Response from City Bloomington Legal Department
 - Discussion led by Taylor Brown
 - Matt asked for clarifications on how the ECPC can approve memos given the time-sensitive nature. Matt asked if the full commission could approve of an ECPC memo preemptively. Taylor did not find anything that says otherwise. The commission is likely able to give the ECPC the power to write memos on behalf of the whole commission.
 - Matt asked if dissolving working groups would allow commissioners to communicate via email since they would not be reaching quorum. Taylor gave a brief overview of the purpose of the rules, mainly to avoid "serial meetings" - an attempt to avoid public meetings by interacting with other commissioners individually. He stated that different attorneys will give different answers. Overall, it is likely permissible.
 - Matt asked if forwarding an environmentally related article to other commissioners is permissible. Taylor stated that it depends on the content of the article and whether it will be discussed as a commission.
 - Karl asked about the liability to the city if an advisory board such as the environmental commission violated open door laws. Taylor referenced a recently resolved lawsuit filed in 2022 involving a board of public works meeting. The repercussions could theoretically be quite significant, but it depends on the specifics of the incident.

- Adam M. asked if commissioners could discuss EC related business outside a public meeting provided they have not met quorum. Generally yes, but if individuals meet repeatedly or consistently it could be an issue.
 - Taylor said working groups and subcommittees may be “going away” next year, subject to mayoral and council approval.
 - Brief discussion on Legal notes regarding Environmental Commission Handbook
 - Matt explained his proposed edits to the section of the handbook that discuss officer nominations. The primary change is to remove the nominating committee and nominate officers on the floor at the June meeting.
 - Legal and Matt suggested removing the de minimis and 50% requirement for quorum. The goal is to avoid a situation where the total number of commissioners is less the de minimis. Matt asked about changing the language from total seats to appointed seats. Taylor said this could lead to issues where one or two individuals could essentially behave as the entire commission. The language proposed by legal seems to imply that the quorum is a function of appointed members, not total number of seats.
 - Matt proposed a similar change for working groups; the de minimis would be eliminated and a majority of its members would constitute quorum. This would introduce the possibility of single-member subcommittees.
 - Quorum is indeed determined by the total number of seats, not just filled seats.
 - There is a change proposed that would disallow commissions from taking a position on issues without approval from the office of the mayor. Matt expressed concern about the effect this would have on ECPC memos. Adam F. asked if this would restrict the commission from commenting on issues before the council. Taylor further clarified that the commission would be able to comment on issues internal to the city. This change is intended to address the commission commenting on issues outside the city, such as in the state or federal governments.
 - Invasive Species Presentation
 - Presentation led by Adam Fudickar
 - Tree Commission Appointment
 - Discussion led by Rachael Johnson
 - Resignation of James Ford
 - Applications for Nicole Locke and Karl Gaisser
 - Nicole is interested in serving on the Tree Commission on behalf of the EC. She has degrees in Forestry and Horticulture and recently moved to Bloomington. Matt asked if she was interested in

applying to the environmental commission. Nicole stated that she was not familiar with the EC but was open. Mitchell clarified that the EC's Tree Commission representative would need to either attend EC meetings or submit reports.

- Karl also expressed interest in serving on the Tree Commission. The group expressed interest in postponing the vote to allow time for Nicole to consider joining the EC.
- Owens made a motion to delay the vote on Tree Commission appointment until the April 16, 2026 meeting. Martinez seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0.

Old Business

- Handbook Discussion
 - Discussion led by Rachael Johnson
 - Overview of amendments proposed by Legal Department, Rachael Johnson, and Matt Caldie
 - Gaiser made a motion for approval of the handbook as amended. Owens seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0.
- Bloomington Commission on Sustainability and Resilience - Capstone Update
 - Announcement led by Matt Caldie
 - This is a presentation on a project that was discussed in a previous EC meeting. If enough members are present to reach quorum a public meeting must be posted.
- Working Group Updates
 - Brief overview of each working group
 - Biodiversity Working Group
 - Discussion led by Matt Caldie, no updates
 - Eco-Heroes Working Group
 - Discussion led by Matt Caldie and Rachael Johnson
 - The list of eligible donors has been sent to Matt.
 - The Earth Day event organizers are planning contingencies for inclement weather.
 - Martinez made a motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. Gaiser seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0.
 - Martinez made a motion to approve the Eco-Heroes printed materials. Owens seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0.
 - Environmental Commission Plan Committee (ECPC)
 - Discussion led by Rachael Johnson
 - Cancel scheduled meetings in April
 - Light Pollution Working Group
 - Discussion led by Adam Martinez
 - The group plans to reach out to the parks department about improving lighting.
 - The group expressed interest in reserving a display case on the first floor of city hall.

- Outreach and Education Working Group
 - Discussion led by Adam Fudickar
 - No update
- Special Projects Working Group
 - Discussion led by Matt Caldie
- Water Quality Working Group
 - Discussion led by Mitchell Owens
 - No update

Reports

- Reports
 - Fudickar made a motion to delay the reports to the April 16, 2026 meeting. Owens seconded. Motion passes by roll call - 7:0.

Commissioner Announcements

- Mitchell tabled over the weekend
- Matt encouraged to tell people on eco-heroes
 - Matt told Council about Eco-Heroes

Upcoming Events

- Rachael Johnson highlighted upcoming events that the Environmental Commission is planning to be involved in

Adjournment

Caldie motioned for the meeting to be adjourned at approximately 8:11pm. Fudickar seconded.