Environmental Commission Meeting

Memorandum for Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM

This meeting was held in the Bloomington Common Council Chambers (Suite 115, City Hall, 401 N. Morton St).

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:01 PM.

Commission members present in person: Carrie Albright, Matt Caldie, Karl Gaisser, Adam Martinez, Justin Meschter

Commission members present over Zoom: None

Commission members absent: Heidi Brown, Mitchell Owens

City staff and elected officials present: Dave Rollo, Shawn Miya

Were members of the public present: No

Roll Call

In-Person: Albright, Caldie, Gaisser, Martinez, Meschter

Approval of Agenda

- Ammerman made a motion for the approval of the agenda. Caldie seconded. Motion passes by voice vote
    - September 15, 2026 Agenda Link[1] (link and footnote need updated)

Opening Remarks from Resolution Authors

- **BCOSR Lead Author, Zach Ammerman**
    - Zach discussed the resolution, its goals, and why it matters. He emphasized that the primary goal is not to achieve Dark Sky status, but to reduce light pollution in Bloomington.
- **EC Lead Author, Matt Caldie**
    - Matt further emphasized the impact of light pollution on humans and the environment.

Public Comment

BCOSR Resolution 2026-06 / EC Resolution 2026-01

- Jorck made a motion for the adoption of the resolution, Ammerman seconded
    - Maria expressed concern about unintended consequences of Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) changes and expressed a preference to

[1] September 15, 2026 Environmental Commission Agenda Link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v8xNb5sq90g9ZkIvipRaXkuIsGBchY5WZks8Gm3kbjk/edit?usp=sharing

focus on more actionable aspects of the resolution, such as the light inventory.
    - Tara disagreed, expressing that boards and commissions exist to be subject matter experts and to make recommendations as such.
    - Zach thanked Aarstad for their detailed, thoughtful comments on the resolution. He said the goal is to create a roadmap for achieving our goal.
    - Karl expressed that council, being busy, may appreciate the detailed proposal. He recommended provided more information, not less.
    - Alex agreed with the idea of studying the impacts further, but he cautioned against delaying the rest of the resolution in the meantime. He suggested that local governments are more "nimble", they can make changes much quicker than larger bodies.
    - Matt mentioned that the framework was laid out by experts at Dark Sky International. He preferred not to remove the recommended UDO changes.
    - Ross brought up that other commissions have not shyed away from proposing UDO changes.
    - Tara highlighted a letter written by a member of the public that showed a map of light pollution. It shows that the intensity of light pollution in Bloomington are similar to that of Indianapolis, despite Bloomington's much smaller size.
    - Dave talked with a representative from Duke Energy and asked about street lights. He stated that he has yet to talk with members of district 4 about the issue and would be abstaining.

- Caldie moved to discuss Amendment 1. Jorck seconded
    - Zach proposed the amendment. He reiterated that the goal is not to achieve Dark Sky status, but rather to reduce light pollution. He fears that some of the more-strict Dark Sky proposals may delay or prevent the adoption of the resolution by Common Council.
    - Matt expressed support for the amendment. He believes it will make it easier to achieve the commissions' fundamental goals.
    - Karl suggested sending both versions to council.
    - Christopher is concerned that the amendment may compromise the proposal without meaningfully addressing the concerns that have been raised.
    - Zach emphasized that despite the removal of the amortization requirement, there is an existing requirement that private parties bring their property to code during substantial renovations.

    - Maria reiterated that she is concerned about lack of knowledge on the impact of the resolution.
    - Carrie also expressed concerns about city budget and resources. She believes the amendment will be helpful to avoid straining city staff.
    - Tara mentioned again that the recommendations were drafted by experts and it is the council's responsibility to determine issues regarding budget, staffing, etc.
    - Maria stated that some of the recommendations not only meet the Dark Sky requirements, but exceed them.
    - Zach said that areas where the proposal exceeds Dark Sky requirements, will supply extra benefit for limited or no cost.
    - Matt reiterated his support for the amendment. He believes it will make the proposal more palatable while still meaningfully addressing light pollution.
    - Alex expressed support for the practicality of the amendment. He also stated that the drive to achieve Dark Sky status might act as an incentive to the city. He also agreed with Karl's suggested to pass both versions to council.
    - Tara mentioned potential support from Indiana University departments in achieving Dark Sky status.
    - Diana agreed that, as advisory bodies, the commissions should suggest strong changes.
    - Alex brought up that Dark Sky International is changing their certification methodology. If a place is making progress they will be cooperative, but if progress is not made the city will be subject to new performance-based requirements. They are also exploring less-strict versions of certification.
    - Zach said he would vote no, but appreciated hearing everyone's thoughts.
    - Justin brought up an indexing issue with the amendment.
- **Vote on the Amendment**
    - Yes: Caldie
    - No: Albright, Gaisser, Martinez
    - Abstain: Meschter
- Jorck moved to recess for 3 minutes. Caldie seconded. Passes by voice vote
- **Original Resolution**
    - Alex brought up options to give the original and the amended versions of the proposal to council.

    - Zach was skeptical that we could add the amendment that was voted down.
    - Karl believes it is not an issue.
- Gaisser moved to amend the resolution by attaching the previous amendment as exhibit A. Jorck seconded.
- Gaisser retracted the previous motion.
- Gaisser moved to amend the resolution by attaching the previous amendment as exhibit A as an alternative for consideration, including a timeline of urgency for Dark Sky certification.
- Gaisser retracted the previous motion.
- Karl moved to amend the resolution by attaching the previous amendment as exhibit A. Jorck seconded.
    - Zach is against adding the amendment since it was just voted down.
    - Christopher asked about other options to express the intent.
    - Maria asked if the ex officio council member could make the intent known to council.
    - Dave said yes, but recommended the chairs do so instead.
    - Alex stated that public backlash could make the "watered down" version needed.
    - Zach expressed concern that the issue was settled on the previous vote on the amendment.
    - Alex stated that the commissions' approval makes the additional valuable compared to council making the changes themselves.
    - Tara reiterated that the meeting is public record and council has access to all the documents provided in the meeting.
    - Karl worried about the fact that the amendment was voted down will indicate that the commissions do not approve of the amended version.
- **Vote on the amendment**
    - Yes: Gaisser
    - No: Albright, Caldie, Martinez
    - Abstain: Meschter
- **Original Resolution**
    - Justin Meschter brought up a concern with the light inventory work being placed on Utilities rather than another department.
    - Dave mentioned that commissioners could bring up the issue in a council deliberation session.
- **Vote on the Resolution**
    - Yes: Albright, Caldie, Gaisser, Martinez
    - No:

    - Abstain: Meschter

Closing Remarks

- Karl thanked commissioners and staff for their time and effort.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.