



**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.

MINUTES

15 February 2018
City Hall—McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

1. Introductions (7:00-7:05 p.m.)

Present: Nick Kappas, Matt Caldie, Ramsay Harik, David Parkhurst, Mike Litwin, Erin Hatch, Andy Marris, Linda Thompson
Absent: Chris Neggers
Guests: 6 guests

2. Approval of minutes (7:05-7:10 p.m.)

Motion to approve minutes was made. Minutes are approved unanimously.

3. Public comment (7:10-7:30 p.m.)

Stephanie Richards, Gnarly Tree Sustainability Institute, representing the consultant developing the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) for the Economic and Sustainable Development Dept.

- . Hosting two open houses this month for the SAP
- a. Around 40-50 people attended the Tuesday night open house
- b. There will be another drop-in open house next Wednesday Feb. 21 from 4 to 6 PM in the Council Chambers
- c. Attendees will divide up into four groups: (1) environmental quality and natural systems, (2) transportation, (3) climate, energy, and the built environment, and (4) food and agriculture
- d. There will also be an advisory group of people from commissions and city departments
- e. Working groups around these topical areas will be developed, pulling together subject matter experts to review background provided by Gnarly Tree and talk about goals and actions going forward
- f. SPEA students will conduct background research, referencing the BEAP and other reports like it
- g. This will include benchmarking with comparable cities, like college cities, and case studies of sustainability issues
- h. Working group discussions will be research driven, looking for EC members to attend open house in Council Chambers next Wednesday
- i. Nick asks what kind of time commitment?
- j. Total of five meetings likely, including an introductory course taught by Ken Richards from SPEA
- k. Will discuss public policies that can affect change and get everyone on common ground

Other guests:

- John Delusca, adjunct faculty from SPEA working in urban farming at the city since 2007

- Allen Beard doing research through school of sustainability at IU
- Students from news reporting class on the local government beat

4. Presentation (7:30-8:00)

A. Gwendolen White, Co-Chair, Commission on Sustainability: BCOS 2018 Initiatives

- 10 positions on the commission, one of which is vacant until Erin joins – many new members have joined recently
- Strategic goals: 2017-2018
- Content of goals may change and evolve over time
 - Sustainability indicators
 - Gwen has a lot of experience in reporting, financial (as an accountant) and non-financial
 - Has developed three reporting frameworks for the city
 - International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
 - They have an online portal where you can report your own data and compare with other cities across the world
 - Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
 - BCOS has produced and uploaded a sustainability report from 2012 accessible on the website
 - Stephanie asked about the STAR reporting system
 - Gwen said that using STAR is a little less helpful than GRI and ISO
 - Carbon Disclosure Product (CDP)
 - Questionnaires are distributed to representatives of all sectors of the economy, then the organizations get scored up to a max of 100 by CDP and the results are posted to their website
 - Data for this questionnaire is likely most of the way done for Bloomington, because of the updated GHG report the city published
 - Climate Action Plan
 - Idea is to reduce Bloomington's carbon emissions to zero
 - One of the BCOS commissioners works with Youth Power Bloomington, an affiliate to Youth Power Indiana from Earth Charter Indiana
 - Trying to get together a contingent of students to draw attention to the initiative
 - Outreach program will be a part of it
 - Eventually, the hope is to influence policy
 - Sustainability Recognitions
 - BCOS is instituting an annual sustainability award, the first of which will be presented in March at City Hall
 - Recipients will be from business and nonprofit
 - Asking us to think of people who would be good candidates so they can have a pool of people and businesses to look at when they award it
 - Developing a sustainability certificate for businesses - what makes a good sustainable business?
 - If the criteria are met, they'll get a certificate to post
 - Sustainable City Planning
 - Advise city departments
 - Planning & Transportation for the UDO revision
 - ESD for the Sustainability Action Plan
 - Create a "101 Planning Guide" in 2019
 - Chris Reinhart from BCOS is an architect by trade and knows a lot about green building

- Interested in helping citizens, developers, and others to understand the development process
- On hold for now until Clarion makes recommendations for the UDO
- Food Policy
 - Three members are going to be working in consultation with David from the EC and John Delusca (SPEA adjunct faculty) and others to advocate for greater urban agriculture flexibility
 - Food policy definition, stakeholder engagement, etc.
 - The idea is to engage with actual urban farmers on the ground instead of taking the usual top-down approach
- Collaboration
 - Commissions, nonprofits, and businesses
 - Devising a list of commissions and potential connection and collaboration opportunities with them
- Questions
 - Mike: Do you have a working definition of sustainability?
 - They rely on the 1987 definition of meeting our needs but also while not compromising the needs of future generations
 - Economic, environmental, and social realms
 - John: Does BCOS or the EC have a definition they've embraced for resiliency?
 - Even harder than sustainability
 - The commissioners have talked about the word and they all have different takes on it
 - For some: are we protecting ourselves from disaster, while others have talked about being able to sustain the environment
 - Stephanie says that resiliency to her means the ability to "bounce back" from events
 - Nick: Where are you seeing the EC's and BCOS's interactions happening?
 - One, in the indicators
 - Related to the BEAP report, which had a lot of information, and Gwen thinks we could be helpful in gathering information for the CDP and ISO reporting, regarding governance, operations, and others
 - Linda: In the short term, collaboration on the UDO could be important
 - There are definitely places where we can overlap, and parts where BCOS can really help
 - For example, why have certain incentives instead of simply writing them into the code as requirements
 - BCOS is having a work session Feb. 27 at 6:00 PM in the Hooker room to talk about how they're going to contribute to the UDO if anyone from the EC is interested
 - Ramsay: What is your relationship with the mayor like? What kind of influence do you have on his and the Council's priorities?
 - They were told by the mayor that they can do what they want to do
 - If they come up with ideas for policy, they can ask Dave Rollo (who's on the commission) to pursue them
 - Ramsay: Do you see any redundancy with our commission and is that a problem?
 - Gwen doesn't see any redundancy, and sees us focusing more on the environmental pillar of sustainability, where they do the others

5. Old business (8:00:8:20 p.m.)

A. Habitat Connectivity press release

- Riley made the changes that the OOTM requested, and Linda is going to send it on to them and hopefully they'll release it soon
- B. Vacancies on the EC update
- We'll have six vacancies after Chris leaves in March
 - Linda says we've had 11 applications in 2018 so far, now we just have to get the council and mayor to work on it
 - Erin said that she heard from somebody who has scheduled an interview for either next week or the week after
 - Nick's wife wants to help to create a flyer to get people to apply
 - Would it go in the HT?
 - If we do want to put it in the HT, it's very expensive, so we'll have to talk about it at the time
 - One way to get around it is to post it in the "out and about" section for free
 - Environmental Resilience Institute, Integrated Program in the Environment, SPEA, etc were suggested by Stephanie
- C. Mayor's Monarch Pledge update
- Erin said that there were a few things to be checked in the plan to see if there is anything the City has completed since the previous draft was circulated
 - Ryan will be sending the letter he wrote to the mayor to Riley who will bring it to the next meeting for discussion
 - The biodiversity group discussed possibly asking the Mayor to make the proclamation at Bugfest
6. New business (8:20-8:55 p.m.)
- A. Handbook review, discussion, and adoption
- The handbook is intended to formalize administrative rules and responsibilities
 - Linda has requested archives from off-site storage to put into the history section
 - David says that there are also some files in the Bloomington room at MCPL
 - Riley and Erin will send it out again after the history section is completed
- B. April 21, 2018 Eco Heroes discussion and committee
- Linda, Erin and Riley had a meeting this afternoon to discuss themes around the general theme of pollinators
 - Protecting and Preserving our Pollinator Pals - 3 votes (winner)
 - Preserving doesn't necessarily add to it, so it should be Protecting our Pollinator Pals
 - Pollinators and the Food Web - 0 votes
 - Beneficial Butterflies, Bugs, Birds and Bats - 2 votes
 - Official theme: Protecting our Pollinator Pals
- C. UDO update working groups: processes & schedule
- Clarion held two public call-out meetings, and Nick and Matt attended one
 - Josh Desmond is the main contact for UDO changes, working directly with Clarion
 - Since James Roach resigned, there will be a major hurdle
 - Josh was asking us for our input on what we want changed in the UDO
 - Mike sent out some recommendations earlier today, and he found a memo from seven years ago when they were making amendments and some of them could be relevant
 - Josh wants the comments by Friday, but realizes that's difficult for the commissions because of their meeting schedules
 - Nick talked to Josh about "green UDOs" and mentioned that many green standards are being written into UDOs as requirements instead of incentives
 - To be most efficient, we could create UDO working groups to meet separately to work on ideas

- We should revisit our CMP revisions and look at what we've said and what else we can come up with in our working groups before the next meeting
- Though because we're so small, we could have work sessions together on some weekends
- Nick has requested a motion to make a Doodle poll to send out to consider times for work sessions, which was seconded and approved

D. State Bills

- HB 1289 – Local regulation of natural resource development
 - Rep. Jeff Ellington's bill that would prohibit cities, towns, counties, etc. from regulating "natural resource development," defined as timber harvesting or mineral extraction, on private property within their jurisdiction
 - Basically, municipalities would no longer have any leverage to protect streams, lakes, or neighboring property owners from the harmful impacts of poor logging practices
 - IN DNR does not currently regulate forestry practices on private land, instead they promote the voluntary use of BMPs
 - They do regulate some mineral extraction like oil and gas extracting and coal mining, but when it comes to limestone, sand or gravel harvesting, there's no regulation at all
 - Passed the House on Feb. 5 and is now assigned to Senate Natural Resources Committee
- HB 1096 – Construction requirements of MS4 operators – will be heard in the Senate Monday
 - Prevents municipalities from having more stringent requirements for construction run-off than the state's
 - The state currently requires construction run-off control plans for sites greater than one acre, while local governments are allowed to require control plans for sites less than one acre
 - This bill would change the law to prevent local governments from requiring control plans for less-than-one-acre sites and having more stringent requirements than the state across the board, which will no doubt lead to higher sediment pollution
 - Passed the House and is assigned to the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee
- HB 1292 – Department of natural resources
 - Omnibus DNR bill that has certain requirements regarding combination lights on motorboats, exempting public employees from shooting rifles from or across public highways, and repeals the prohibition of the sale of multiflora rose and purple loosestrifes, fishing within 200 yards of dams that wholly or partly cross a river (used to be 300), and some hunting/fishing license matters
 - Amendment was offered by Matt Pierce that would protect 10% of state forest lands as old growth forests but failed 35-50 (there's another bill called SB 275 that would do the same thing, but isn't going anywhere)

E. Sustainability Action Plan

- Advisory committee met on Tuesday Feb. 13.
- Four working groups will advise the new sustainability plan, which provides a good opportunity to extend EC's advocacy past the BEAP and other plans
- Other EC representation would be great. The working groups are:
 - Environmental quality and natural systems
 - Transportation
 - Climate Energy and Built Environment
 - Food and Agriculture
- Looking for planning and strategic action
- Mayor wants to stay ahead of the game according to Alex Crowley and wants us to be aspirational but not impractical

F. Erin Hatch will officially be on the BCOS after the next Council meeting

G. Liaison to Tree Commission and Other Boards and Commissions

- Lee Huss is anxious to know who from here will be the liaison to the Tree Commission
- At the next meeting on Feb. 21, there will be a representative talking about a tree canopy analysis and they were interested in having us be there
- Linda is planning on going to the Feb. 21 meeting, and maybe we can talk about the liaison matter when we get more commissioners

H. EC Summer Intern

- Will need to begin advertising the position for the summer
- Linda will write a generic posting

7. Commissioner announcements (8:55-9:00 p.m.)

- Because the meeting was running late, Commissioners did not make announcements

8. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM

Meeting times

- A. Environmental Commission: 15 February, 7:00 p.m., McCloskey Room, City Hall
- B. EC Planning Committee: 21 February, 7 March, 4:00 p.m., Lemon Room, City Hall
- C. Tree Commission: 21 February, 21 March, 9:30 a.m., Rose Hill office
- D. BCOS meeting: 13 March, 6:00 p.m., McCloskey Room
- E. MCEC Com.: 14 March, 5:30 p.m., Nat U Hill Room, Courthouse
- F. ERAC: 11 April, 4:30 p.m., TBD
- G. MPO CAC: 28 February, 6:30 p.m., McCloskey
- H. MCSWMD Board: 8 March, 4:00 p.m., Nat Hill III Room, Courthouse