



**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.

AGENDA

19 September 2019, 6:00 PM
City Hall—Hooker Conference Room 245, North Morton Street

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation
2. Introductions
 - Present: Andrew Guenther, Erica Walker, Andrea Webster, Mike Litwin, Chris Ericson, Ryan Clemens, Lindsey Hummel, Matt Caldie, David Parkhurst, Don Eggert, Kate Corcoran (SPEA fellow)
 - Suzannah Evans Comfort, new EC commissioner. Suzannah received her PhD from University of North Carolina with a research focus on environmental communication. She is now an assistant professor in the Media School at Indiana University. This is her first meeting as a commissioner.
 - Absent: Linda Thompson (liaison), Angel Nathan (new commissioner)
3. Approval of minutes
 - Chris moved to approve August minutes. Unanimous voice vote in favor of approving August minutes. Minutes approved.
4. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person
 - IU Journalism students present to observe meeting
 - Mary Hallinan, with Monroe County Identifying and Reducing Invasive Species and Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management, present to observe meeting
5. Reports from TC, MoCo EC, BCOS, ERAC, & MPO-CAC
 - TC: Lindsey: Urban Forester candidates were reviewed but no one has filled the position. TC believes position should be compensated with a higher salary - the current range is \$37,000-52,000 per year. Davey did their presentation on the results of their Bloomington tree survey, and the presentation is on CATS for anyone who wants to watch it.
 - MOCO EC: Andrew: No report.
 - BCOS: Don: Last BCOS meeting was mostly housekeeping. Discussion of defining metrics to measure progress with regards to energy usage, efficient buildings, etc.
 - ERAC: David: ERAC meets bi-monthly so there is nothing new to report.
 - MPO-CAC: Andrew: Attended last MPO meeting on the hospital traffic issues, where discussion focused on how ambulances and emergency services would be affected at peak times and when the train comes through. Ryan: Same discussion was had at citizen's advisory committee meeting last night.

6. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups B Cycle

A Cycle

~~A. ECPC/Planning Commission~~

~~B. Waste/Hazards~~

~~C. Water~~

B Cycle

A. Outreach: will address with regards to HT in old business.

B. ECPC/Planning Commission: The UDO is moving from the Plan Commission to City Council. Plan Commission asked Planning & Transportation staff to write the language for EC amendments to get put into the UDO, which they are still working on. The amendments will be presented before the City Council. We will have more on the schedule in October, as well as hopefully a list of finalized amendments.

Don: Has there been pushback from developers about our amendments?

Andrew: Have not heard much from developers. Thinks this is partly because PUDs exist and allow for dismissal of environmental rules. No pushback from plan commissioners or actual community members. Largest controversies have been over duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and density in general.

C. Biodiversity: nothing to report.

7. Old business

A. Topics and volunteers for HT articles

- Linda & Andrew would like an article in the HT for Sept/Oct about the UDO and environmental aspects of the UDO. It would be very timely. Linda suggested that Andrew write the first article. EC articles will be submitted as guest columns, written by a different EC member each month. We do not want articles to be accusatorial or controversial, but rather explanatory, informative, or illuminating as well as sometimes discussing and presenting a stance on issues and policy.
- In the past, EC submitted a letter to the editor of the HT about carbon fee and dividend. We have not gotten guest column approval yet. There is a submission form online, and some HT staff are aware we are considering this. Andrew thinks HT would welcome this material, especially if it is timely and relevant to Monroe County and the surrounding area. David has offered to edit articles we submit, as he has lots of experience editing. Andrea: If we submit a list of dates and names for the next few months, will the HT accept that in advance and make space for us? How do you propose the process work? Andrew: Yes this would be a good idea. Ideally, prior to our monthly meeting (at least a day or two in advance), the EC commissioner writing the monthly article would send their draft article out to all commissioners and receive feedback via email, then as a commission at the meeting we would look over and give final approval to the article. The article would then be submitted to the HT in the following days.
- Guest article is no more than 600 words.
- Savannah: Why do we want to publish in HT? And why are controversial issues off the table?

Andrew: As an advisory body, we do not have voting leverage to approve or disapprove things. Our power is in communicating and raising awareness on environmental issues, and a monthly article would help us reach a wider audience when we want to speak on specific issues. The HT reaches many people involved in the community, who may be sympathetic to our causes. This is our targeted way to focus on issues that are important to the EC. Controversial issues: we do not want to single out and target local politicians or do individual attacks. We want to comment on the environmental policy process, not engage in personal attacks. There are always people who disagree with us, and so maybe controversial is not the right word here, but we don't want to wade into local politics. For Andrew in particular, as he is running for city council, he does not want

these articles to appear as if he is using them for his political gain. Also again, everyone must approve it before we submit it.

- October: Erica volunteers to write October article, topic to be determined, suggestions welcome.
- November: Andrea volunteers to write November, with the topic of how climate change is affecting and will affect Bloomington/Monroe County.
- Andrew: At the next meeting, I will ask for a December volunteer. I will send out my September article within the week. Everyone will have opportunity to digest it and lodge inquiries and concerns. I will then amend my article and send out a final draft for all to approve. I would like to brainstorm now what to discuss in the first article.
- Erica: I would like to include density, it's something the EC was silent on in our initial comments when maybe we should have commented on before.
- What should the main points be for the September article:
 - High density growth - we support city growing with high density in mind.
 - Riparian buffers and water management - stormwater, flooding, and impervious surfaces.
 - PUD and developers skirting the law.
- Ryan: What about writing weekly articles now to address all of our UDO issues separately?
- Andrew: There is always the risk that the HT will not publish that many guest columns - we have the best shot at one per month, and there is always the option to also submit letters to the editor. Bylaws allow for a commissioner to submit something and then clarify that their words do not represent the views of the environmental commission.
- Density issue: The proposal is that developers can build duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes on corner lots in single family home neighborhoods. PC decided these buildings would be conditional in residential zones. Advocates for density said that this would be the most efficient way to live. Concern was expressed that this will impact property value, or that students will move in and cause disturbance. This issue is met with great opposition in Bloomington.
- Chris: Although we didn't comment on the density issue, I do believe we commented on setback changes in the UDO that are related to this.
- Kate: We did make one comment on the UDO Consolidated draft about this. We said:
"It stands out that there are no residential zoning districts that are P rather than P* for attached housing, or triplex or fourplex housing. Why is this? The UDO mentions growing the "missing middle" housing, so I expected more definitive Permitted status. Would also like the distinction between attached and detached to be made clear."
After this, in the UDO Adoption draft, the status for duplex, triplex, and fourplex housing moved in the other direction, moving from P* to C. I just wanted to clarify that while density was not a focal point of our comments, we did make a comment on the issue.
- Andrew: Since it is such a controversial issue, I will draft the paragraph about density and send it around to commissioners, and we will see if members approve it.
- David: In the future let's also write about what the EC does with regards to the memos that Linda writes, and what comments of ours go through and which comments are not included or ignored when the plans actually go through.
- We will approve the process in a public meeting, in a public setting. The actual letter will be approved via email via unanimous consent. Mike motioned, David seconded, unanimous voice vote of approval for the HT guest article writing process for the EC and plans to move forward with the September meeting.

B. UDO Adoption Draft: Andrew covered this in the ECPC section of this meeting. Would like for us to continue commenting at PC meetings in the future.

8. New business

9. Commissioner announcements

- Erica: bought a house! It is not a duplex. It is on 4th street, and she inherited a beautiful garden and solar panels on the roof.
- Kate: August minutes were the first minutes that I ever wrote that were approved exactly as I wrote them, without any amendments necessary by commissioners!
- Ryan: two things: First, Linda and Ryan represented the EC at the Goshen Climate Meeting. Andrea had some great presentations as well. Topics included tree canopy cover, green infrastructure, and sustainability codes. Was a great experience. Second, tomorrow night at 7 at the Buskirk Chumley, there will be a free film showing of The Biggest Little Farm, about small California farmers trying to make their farms sustainable. It is an hour and a half and there will be local farmers to discuss afterwards.
- David: And his wife attended Urban Forest Symposium last week. There was especially interesting talk about invasives. Invasives support fewer herbivores (mostly insects) than natives. The SPEA Environmental Science Seminar earlier today was amazing. The presenter Dr. Jacqueline MacDonald Gibson did her research in North Carolina about how many cities have a core city and then the area around it, and cities often do not provide any services to the surrounding area around the city. This part was often not getting city water supply or sewage. Those people are then on well water and septic systems very close together, and those things are leaking into each other and causing sickness and health issues.
- Mike: The Plan Commission reversed itself and approved new hotel development on Walnut where the Motel 6 is.
- Don: Won't be here next month.
- Andrea: Hoosier Environmental Council is doing an event at the statehouse on November 16th. The event is geared towards residents of Indiana in Westfield, a northern suburb of Indianapolis.

10. Adjournment at 7:55pm.

Next EC meeting, 17 October 6:00 p.m., Hooker Room, City Hall