



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.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

18 November 2021, 6:00 PM

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

Call to order at 6:05 PM.

Sam Armstrong Attended
Mathias Benko Attended
David Parkhurst Attended
Dedaimia Whitney Attended
Matt Caldie Attended
Cory Ray Attended
Don Eggert Attended

2. Approval of minutes: *

August and September minutes have been moved and seconded.

Matt Approved
Sam Approved
Mathias Approved
David Approved
Dedaimia Approved
Cory Approved
Don Approved

3. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total

None

4. Reports from: Tree Commission (TC), Monroe County Environmental Commission (MCEC), Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS), Environmental Resource Advisory Council (ERAC), Metropolitan Planning Organizing-Citizens Advisory Council (MPOCAC), Friends of Lake Monroe (FOLM), & Monroe County-Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS).

TC: The Urban Forester reported that the city planted 20 trees at Matlock Heights and another 67 trees around the city in the last month. The main criminal plant that MC-IRIS will try to extinguish next year, will be callery pear. MC-IRIS would like to know what the tree commission can do to help get rid of them. Can the city require individual property owners to remove callery pears from their own lawns? There are currently 1274 callery pears on tree lawns in the city. It costs about \$1000 to remove and replace 1 callery pear. The city forester doesn't think they should remove trees at the moment unless they are causing problems. The city is removing about 30 callery pears a year because of their bad condition. It was also suggested that if you cut down callery pears, land owners should be required to plant new trees. The tree commission doesn't agree with MC-IRIS's blanket approach with invasives. To remove all the callery pears on city property would be over a million-dollar project. Erin was instructed to put together a plan for removal. Invasives also can have some environmental goods. It is tricky identifying what is most important. Sequestration or native habitat.

BCOS: Mr. Zody did a review of the HAND and reported that to the commission. He went over what HAND was all about. 30-40% of carbon emissions are related to buildings. BCOS spent a lot of time discussing a consultant presentation that they are working on with Housing First. The presentation will help address homelessness. This presentation will most likely be given in early 2022.

ERAC: They last met October 18th. They read a complaint that the Parks Department had received about using IPE wood in Switchyard Park. They were saying that it wasn't a native plant and shouldn't have been used. They next discussed the Latimer Woods management plan. Lesser Celandine is an invasive there that is not well controlled. They mentioned the Brown Woods management plan as well. There are about 5000 trees planted a year around town. Eco Logic is working with city parks on removing woody non-natives. There is a new trail north of Tapp road that will connect to Clear Creek Trail. There were also discussions of other trails. 6th graders visit Leonard's Springs every year and 4th Graders will start to visit Griffy lake this year. The Griffy loop trail is moving forward. The bid that came through was a million dollars higher than what is available. So, they are going to get started, but there is a long way to go. They have also gotten permission to run the trail across the dam and build out a dock with 3 piers that fisherman will use. The CHAP Program and a controlled burn was also most likely discussed.

FOLM: They met on Nov 15th. The 2 years of research into the conditions of Lake Monroe is winding down. This was the second-to-last meeting. They applied for a 319-research grant to implement various recommendations to address the problems that were found from the previous grant. The new grant is supported by IDEM and has been sent to the EPA for review. We will wait and see if it is approved. Fingers crossed.

MC-IRIS: A lot of the discussion was around the callery pear situation. They were hoping to subsidize removing Callery pears from peoples yards with the moneys that were raised during the native plants sales. The Saturday weed wrangles are currently on hold until the spring. There are informal wrangles with city parks during the winter. Discussions about when they plan on doing this through the winter are currently being discussed. Members mentioned some of the benefits of Callery pears and other invasives during the meeting. Again, it is a balancing act on figuring out what is most important.

5. Discussion from active working groups:

A. Environmental Commission Plan Committee (ECPC): (Linda Thompson)

i. December Plan Commission cases

There is one case this month called University Properties 9. This case covers several parcels including 307, 319, 401, 405, 407, 409, 421, and is by East 19th St. It is right across from the IU stadium. There are 8 buildings currently, including single and multifamily houses. The plan is to demolish all of those and build a 6-story mix-use structure. There are 1.4 acres. It will have a 2-level parking garage, with 140 vehicle parking spaces and 77 bicycle spaces. The impervious surface coverage is proposed to meet code. The petitioner plans on incorporating light cover hardscaping, solar panels, and a cool roof. Questions that the EC might ask are the following: What type of hardscaping? How much solar power? And what kind of cool roofing?

There will be one more case, but it will not go to the Plan Commission.

B. Outreach: (Ben Sharaf)

i. Recap of panel discussion

The Panel Discussion was a success, and anyone can view it on the Bloomington's Environmental Commission's Facebook page. The panelists were great to hear from and they did a great job synthesizing their research. In the future, we can't only advertise with Facebook because we didn't get the amount of viewership that we would have liked.

C. Biodiversity:

i. Restart to resume Connectivity Plan (Ben Sharaf)

We hope to start up the Habitat Connectivity plan after break and figure out the next steps in a meeting sometime in December. We hope to contact the neighborhood associations as well. We should do our best to work together with other environmental groups within the city.

6. Old business: None

7. New business:

A. Resolution regarding incineration of dangerous or toxic substances*

David proposes that if we address the city council about the previous Fire Department house burning, we address them in a plain English version. This would be instead of the more legalistic version that Andrew previously sent out. David believes his version is the proper way to address the issue. There was no opposition to using a non-legalistic format. He moved that we chose his version and that was seconded by Dedaimia.

Matt abstains
Sam Abstains
Mathias Yes
David Yes
Dedaimia Yes
Cory Abstain
Don Yes

Sending David's letter is passed with a majority.

Linda recommended that before we send any resolution to the city council, we wait until the consulting firms release their findings of the site. Everyone generally agrees with waiting until the consultants release their report. The EC should work together with other entities to ensure there aren't 10 different resolutions being submitted. This issue might be an opportunity to raise awareness on lead toxicity. We should maybe even direct the resolution to IDEM instead of the city council.

Dedaimia moved that we table sending in a resolution and Sam seconded.

Matt yes
Sam Yes
Mathias Yes
David Yes
Dedaimia Yes
Cory Yes
Don Yes

It was unanimous that we table the resolution until we wait for some more reports and hear from other groups.

B. Ostrom intern project

Since Scott didn't attend the meeting, we decided to postpone the discussion. Ben will follow up with Scott to see if we should put it on the agenda for next month.

C. Future EC memos to Plan Commission

We have an issue now because the EC will no longer have Linda to dedicate the time and effort into making these memos every month. There will be no one taking Linda's place unless the EC assigns someone to do it. The options are having one person do this or multiple people. The issue with this is the assigned person/people will have to go to the plan

commission lunches and they will have to learn the UDO. This is extremely time consuming. The monthly lunches are regularly scheduled. The new schedule will come out in December or January. This new position would have to deal with 2 full time planners and 2 half time planners. This makes a huge difference to the EC to be able to do a big part of its job. It essentially weakens the EC's ability to make a difference. Dedaimia suggested talking to the mayor on behalf of the EC. David seconded a motion to have Dedaimia and Mike Litwin go to the mayor and discuss this issue with them. They will figure out a time to go that works best for them. No formal vote occurred.

D. Future guest columns, letters-to-the-editor, and guest speakers

Matt hopes we will continue to send out guest columns that are timely on various environmental issues that come along in the city. Even certain expertise that people have in the commission could be beneficial to write about. It was suggested this should be placed in the bucket list meeting. The HT also may not be willing to publish our article. When people are new to the commission, writing an article can be a great initial contribution to the EC. It was decided to revisit this during the bucket list meeting.

8. Commissioner announcements:

Dedaimia has been invited to join the board of directors of the Lotus Festival. She is planning on stepping down from the Commission after December.

Sam is doing a GIS project on the runoff and flash flooding in Bloomington. Sam will report to the EC on this next month.

The sunrise committee is trying to get IU to divest from fossil fuels. If anyone knows anyone in the IU community that would want to help out with this, please contact Corey and he can put you in touch with them.

9. Adjournment:

The EC adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Next EC meeting: December 16, 2021, 6:00 p.m.,