



**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 AGENDA**

21 January 2021, 6:00 PM

## **1. Call to order and quorum confirmation**

January 2020 EC meeting was called to order by Andrew Guenther

Call to order:

Matt Caldie  
Suzannah Evans Comfort  
Meredith Dickerson  
Don Eggert  
Andrew Guenther  
Mike Litwin  
David Parkhurst  
Shelby Jade Hoshaw

A quorum was confirmed

## **2. Introductions**

Names and titles of EC members were stated

## **3. Approval of minutes**

Minutes were passed out today. Dave moved that we accept the minutes. Matt seconded.

Matt Caldie: Approved  
Suzannah Evans Comfort: Approved  
Meredith Dickerson: Technical difficulties  
Don Eggert: Approved  
Andrew Guenther: Abstain  
Mike Litwin: Approved  
David Parkhurst: Approved  
Shelby Jade Hoshaw: Abstain

#### 4. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person

No Public comment

#### 6. Reports from TC, MoCo EC, BCOS, ERAC, MPO-CAC, & FOLM

**Tree Commission:** The urban forester report was given (sent out to the EC by email). Mia Williams (IU representative) talked about how IU is trying to move away from individual people sponsoring trees and instead, having people sponsor whole areas or groves (this was discussed in more detail in the December meeting). The University is still working on that. The Warehouse by Switchard Park was discussed because they are out of compliance with the lack of trees planted.

**Monroe County Environmental Commission:** No EC member attended. From the agenda we can see they just did an organizational meeting. They elected officers and discussed long term goals. Once the minutes are sent out to Andrew, he will let the EC know about their long-term goals.

**Bloomington Commission on Sustainability:** Most of their meeting was administrative. They voted on submitting a letter to the city in support of the Climate Action Plan. This passed. Don asked to get a copy of what corrections they're submitting to the city so the EC has an idea if they are commenting on similar issues. No response has come yet. They then went over election planning. Andrew wants to see the Sustainability Commission's comments on the Climate Action Plan and can foresee the EC recommending the city council to approve the plan if certain amendments that the EC recommends are accepted.

**ERAC:** Dave's term has expired, but he has applied to be renewed and he thinks that they will recommend that he gets renewed.

**Friends of Lake Monroe:** Meeting was moved to next week because of Martin Luther King Day.

#### 7. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups: B Cycle

##### A Cycle

- A. ECPC/Plan Commission
- B. Waste/Hazards
- C. Water

##### B Cycle

- ~~A. Outreach~~
- B. ECPC/Plan Commission**
- ~~C. Biodiversity~~

**ECPC/Plan Commission:** The Standard is located where the current Brownstone Terrace Apartments are. This plan was mentioned before, and no new major developments have occurred. The plan is to take down the entire Brownstone Terrace Apartments and rebuild the Standard. Before they were requesting a zoning change. They got the zoning change approved. It is now zoned for student housing. It is the same plan, but now they are asking for a site plan approval. They are committed to affordable housing and getting a National Green Building Certification. In our original memo we asked if they could get the emerald certification instead of the silver, but nothing has changed. They were asked about commercial space and they will put in commercial space if they can get rid of some of their buffer yard. The ECPC will discuss. They will decide if they want more required greenspace to go away or not. They are working out a deal with Bloomington transit. The site is 7 and a quarter acre, between Walnut and Dunn. They will have 440 units and 1061 beds. 3 buildings will be connected through an above ground catwalk. They are planning to build a parking garage where they hope to have electric vehicle charging stations (not known how many). Also, they will have solar panels to light the garage. Landscape plan needs revision. How will they prove to the city if they actually got their silver certification and what if they don't get certified? Linda hopes to find out these questions. Previously it was a zoning request and now it is a site plan request. They have committed to not having their own private shuttle. They put in the Petitioner's statement that they will be able to preserve the tree canopy on the south side north of the train tracks. There is a fence there now that they intend to keep, along with the vegetation. There is also a required buffer yard near that area. The present occupancy is 121 units with 232 beds. They are working with Bloomington transit for additional transportation routes. They plan on building new sidewalks and one of them will be 10 feet wide. Linda will ask

what the impervious surface coverage will be. In the petitioner statement they said they wanted to follow all the UDO rules, unless they go with the commercial space. In this case they would request a variance. The site already has very little green space. They hope to have a large parking garage for residents and a small area for visiting parking. They will have managers on site at all times. Most likely they will have convenient foods and drinks. The construction/demolition debris will be difficult to recycle.

An update on the McDoell business center petition by switchyard park was given. Andrew spoke on behalf of the EC at the Plan Commission meeting against approval. This was because they wanted 80%-100% impervious surface. We recommended 60% and the Plan Commission talked them down to 80% for all. This was still too much in the eyes of the EC. It passed the Plan Commission eventually because there were some misconceptions about the project that the EC still has concerns about. Andrew plans to talk to the city council on behalf of the EC on the McDoell project again. This is because it goes against the UDO that the EC worked on approving regarding greenspace and climate-change mitigation. Andrew will let us know when that comes up on the city council agenda. This will be a multi-step process.

## 8. Old business

### *A. Draft Climate Action Plan discussion*

The draft of the Climate Action Plan was split up between the members of the EC to determine if there were any amendments or changes to the draft that we wanted to present to the city council. Ben will take notes and compile all of these into one document. Any formatting amendments that individual EC members find should be submitted by yourself to Economic and Sustainable Development. Save technical amendments or environmental policy-based comments for EC time.

#### **Executive summary**

On Page 10 they talk about surface water quality and the negative effects of it. Mike suggests that they should add that increased storm water runoff will increase stream flow, possibly destabilizing streams and increased bank erosion.

Also, on page 10, the amount of greenhouse gas reduction is an issue. A lot of numbers were mentioned, and a lot of the math didn't add up. Also, in the greenspace section, when they're talking about trees the math doesn't add up either.

#### **Transportation section:**

*Transportation* and *Land Use* shouldn't be in same section. *Land Use* should be in *Built Environment*.

The action item of biofuels shouldn't be included because it is very controversial in the environmental world. Biofuels are mentioned in 2 of the action items.

A lot of the things in this section shouldn't be in a local government report. Maybe in a state report. Andrew had a lot questions on the action items and how practical they are to enact.

Authors might not be paying attention to EV vehicles

No *Land Use* action items, all transportation related action items in this section

**Section E1** eliminates minimum parking requirements. Which causes developers to defend their own transportation needs. Matt doesn't believe that most developers are asking for less parking than what is currently allowed. Not sure from an implementation standpoint if it will make any difference. Parking maximums will work better. A better tangible impact.

On page 28 in section I it mentions off road and lawn equipment. If something fails, it gets replaced with an electric model. Want to pressure the University and other people that aren't the city. Should be more aggressive

towards leaf blowers (very bad). Matt thinks we should immediately replace the gas model with electric models even though its more expensive.

In the *What you can do* section they mention buying carbon credits. Unusual. Maybe eliminate. More of a feel-good project rather than a beneficial initiative. It should say, if you can avoid long trips then do so.

#### **Energy in the built environment:**

They should discuss investing in improving weatherization more. This section needs to mention long-term impacts. Still a lot of buildings that haven't been upgraded in Bloomington. Should mention how these projects can be major job creators. How can the city actually enact some of these things? How will they advocate for stronger state regulation? Relies too much on others. We will go over the notes Don has in more detail next month.

#### **Local Foods:**

Dave sent editorial comments to Lauren Travis

Very vague strategies and implementations.

We should be increasing local food, by creating programs to encourage people to grow more local food. In the plan things don't necessarily add up. Shelby says for example, how will Bloomington increase growing local foods and serving it in places like the hospital if Indiana imports 90% of its food from other states. There aren't very many people growing local food. A better action item would be creating programs that increase the production of local food.

On page 66 the action item FA302 was incorrect. This prohibition does not exist and seems like they grabbed from another city.

#### **Waste:**

Good initial actions in A.

In section D1, it says Bloomington will establish a 0-waste policy for city operations. However, this would have to have outside users of the city facilities comply with this action item. It would also modify event permit applications to require recycling. Requiring recycling doesn't mean anything happens. This is dreaming too much. People won't actually comply with recycling and composting.

Not enough emphasis on education in this section

State legislature won't allow a plastic bag ban unfortunately.

In Goal wm1 it says to increase landfill waste diversion by 30% by 2030. An initial action A3 says "the government should support edible food donations through coordination of food banks and donations from city and community partner events. Also, we should explore food retailer and restaurants ability to help with this initiative." How does an increase in food bank donations decrease food waste? This doesn't make sense in this section because these places only throw out the food if it expires. Essentially they would only be donating non-expired food which isn't food waste.

The remaining sections will be gone over next month.

## 9. New business

### *A. Appoint Nominating Committee*

The commission holds elections this year in February. Part of the process is to create a committee that solicits nominations for the chair, vice chair, and treasurer. The chair (Andrew Guenther) appointed Mike Litwin, Matt Caldie and Dave Parkhurst to the committee. They are the 3 longest serving commissioners on the Environmental Commission. If you want to run for office, contact someone on the committee.

### *B. Election discussion*

The next meeting will have the elections.

**C. *Eco Heros discussion***

We will not hold the ECO Heroes contest this April because of COVID-19. We will postpone it to a later date in August.

**D. *Discussion: another HT commentary now? Possible topics: greenspace; 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; how to continue reduced CO2 after COVID; Nothing, let's concentrate on CAP & future***

People should be thinking about potential environmentally related topics that we could write about in the HT in the coming month.

## **10. Commissioner announcements**

Janet McCabe of the Environmental Resilience Institute has been nominated to be the deputy director of the EPA.

This is Suzannah's last meeting as a commissioner. She will be missed.

Don doesn't know if his term has been expired.

If you are interested in serving again, you should contact whoever appointed you and let them know you are interested in serving again.

## **11. Adjournment**

At 7:31 the meeting was adjourned.

Next EC meeting: 18 February, 2021, 6:00 p.m., ZOOM