



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

15 April, 2021, 6:00 PM

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation

Called to order on April 15th 2021 at 6:02 PM

Sam Armstrong
Matt Caldie
Don Eggert
Andrew Guenther
Mike Litwin
Dave Parkhurst
Scott Shackelford
Dedaimia Whitney
Daniel Gonzalez

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes moved

Sam Approved
Matt Approved
Don Approved
Andrew Approved
Mike Approved
Dave Approved
Scott Approved
Daniel Approved
Dedaimia Approved

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

No Public comment

4. Presentations:

Matt Flaherty: City Council's relationship with the EC

Matt Flaherty is an at large representative on the Bloomington common council. He is in his 2nd year of a 4-year term. He is a Graduate of the O'Neil school with an MPA-MSES dual degree focusing on energy and climate action. The council has started to use a standing committee structure since last year to handle some of its business. There are 8 committees serving in Bloomington right now including the climate action and resilience committee, which Matt is the chair of. Standing committees allow for a group of people that are interested in and partly educated on specific topics and conduct interviews and liaise with the commissioners. The city council hasn't always done the best job of cultivating a working relationship between advisory commissions and the city council. He hopes we can continue to work on this relationship and believes the standing committees can help with this because it helps designate an appropriate pathway. Andrew and he will hopefully meet soon to discuss what is happening on the commission. Linda has met with him to discuss commission issues in the past. Many council members appreciate the memos and oversight the EC gives on developments in the city, including housing developments and ordinances. The council is currently looking at the city's commissions. *Novack Consulting* has done some organizational assessments of the city in recent years. They have also started to look at how the city deals with boards and commissions. They haven't released a report yet. Hopes that the consulting firm can identify short comings and gaps and hopes we can establish meaningful relationships with the city's legislative bodies and its boards and commission. He is open to ideas and questions. Some commissions interact with the council more then others. The councilmen's main reason of attending is to build a relationship with the EC. Anyone can reach out to him. Mike encourages more council members to attend the EC meetings whenever they get the chance. Andrew has asked the city to amend the founding ordinance to allow an EC member to stand on the council. The committee has also interviewed for the one council vacancy of the EC and has passed on a recommendation to the full council. The EC will soon have a new appointee. Commissioners and commissions can have an active role in drafting legislation.

Hugh Kremer: Gas-powered leaf blowers (15 minutes)

Hugh is a homeowner and has become fed up with the noise and pollution of gas-powered leaf blowers. The PowerPoint can be sent to all EC members. The PowerPoint is essentially a manuscript. There are few noise pollutions laws in Bloomington. Battery powered mowers are less noisy and more reasonable to use then gas powered. This has to be done as a noise ordinance because as an environmental ordinance it may be pre-empted by state law. Dave proposed that we recommend Hughes ideas to the city. Clippings of grass blowing onto the streets is extremely dangerous to motorcyclists. It is against Bloomington ordinances to do this now. They are largely unenforced. Neighborhood resource officers are being reorganized to look at civil issues more. This may help the issue. The climate action plan also mentions a strategy that looks at a phase out and incentive program against gas powered lawn equipment and in favor of battery powered motors. Page 28 of the final plan. Electric blowers are cheaper than gas powered blowers. Incentivized programs from the city could push big lawn companies to change to electric blowers. Grass clippings regularly fill up street drains. However, enforcement is very difficult with limited staff. Andrew doesn't feel as if this violation as a noise ordinance falls under the purview of the EC. Andrew could indorse a 2-stroke engine pollution ordinance because it does fall under the EC's scope. The EC will have to vote to see if fellow members agree with Andrew. The noise ordinance is a police issue. The board of public works handles the appeals for noise violations. Dave believes noise should fall under the EC's purview. Don believes the engines do fall under the EC's purview. Thanks Hugh!

5. Reports from TC, MoCo EC, BCOS, ERAC, MPO-CAC, FOLM, & MC-IRIS

BCOS: Lauren went over the draft of the Climate Action Plan. Councilman Flaherty gave comments on the plan. There was a good discussion on the citizen climate lobby and wanting them to write an endorsement to the state senators. They ended up not supporting it.

ERAC: Dave scanned his notes and sent them out via email.

MPO-CAC: Agenda included 2022-2026 transportation improvement program call for projects. The staff discussed how they were calling for projects to be submitted. Also discussed the American rescue plan. Bloomington and Monroe county will receive 50 million dollars. Discussed possible spending of the money. Discussed final draft of the Unified Work Plan. They also posted a survey related to public transit. Andrew encourages EC members to fill it out.

MC-IRIS: They have several projects going on. They are doing some planting and invasive removals. Hope to plant 850 shrubs and trees. They have an earth day event at southeast park.

6. 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

Individual meetings will be made that discuss next steps of each working group. At each meeting a chair will be elected. The outreach working group needs to figure out how to distribute the oak trees that Linda has.

ECPC: There will be two cases going to the plan commission. K-mart and Aspen heights. Linda will send the EC more information on this via email. The McDoel property that the EC opposed, passed the city council with the reasonable condition of them having 70% impervious surface instead of 80%. This is due to the ECs voice in the matter. Andrew attended all the meetings to represent the EC.

7. Old business

A. Connectivity Plan next steps

B. BEQI next steps

C. Birthday party next steps

Individual meetings will be made that discuss next steps of each working group. At each meeting a chair will be elected. The outreach working group needs to figure out how to distribute the oak trees that Linda has.

8. Commissioner announcements

The proposed state regulation limiting wetlands was modified greatly. So, it is not as bad as before.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:01

Next EC meeting: 20 May, 2021, 6:00 p.m., ZOOM