

# Environmental Commission Minutes

May 19, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:04.

## 1. Call to Order

Members present in person were Sam Armstrong (chair), Matt Caldie (vice-chair), Mike Litwin (secretary-treasurer), Don Eggert, Dedaimia Whitney, David Parkhurst, Megan Murphy. Members attending via Zoom were Carrie Albright and Luke Swain. The meeting was telecast live by CATS. A quorum was confirmed.

Staff present included Linda Thompson (Senior Environmental Planner) and Ben Sharaf (intern).

It was noted that this would be Ben's last Environmental Commission (EC) meeting before departing Bloomington. He was given enthusiastic accolades for his top-quality work for the EC.

## 2. Introductions                      none

## 3. Approval of minutes from the April 21 meeting

The previous two month's minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

## 4. Public comment                      none

## 5. Presentation

Christian Freitag, an associate professor at the Indiana University Maurer School of Law, gave a presentation on the Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape Project. The project is a joint proposal by the US Department of Defense, US Department of Agriculture, and several conservation groups and agencies, to fund conservation of undeveloped land within 3.5 million acres of southern Indiana, surrounding 4 military bases. Bloomington is within the watershed of the project area, and might benefit from its conservation funding.

## 6. Reports from EC attendance of other commissions and groups

Of the meetings that were attended, EC members noted the following items of interest:

Dave and Dedaimia gave a summary of the Tree Commission meeting.

Don mentioned that BCOS discussed a downtown composting project.

Dave stated that the Friends of Lake Monroe is conducting a series of public meetings on the Lake Monroe watershed plan.

Don mentioned that MC-IRIS is involved in a project to remove invasive plants from Cascades Park.

## 7. Discussion from Active Working Groups

The Biodiversity Group did not have a meeting in May. Sam suggested that we should look for grants to assist with enhancements of the Habitat Connectivity Plan corridors.

The Air Quality Group (Sam) met and discussed sites with notable air emissions. The Planning and Transportation Department agreed to purchase air quality monitors.

Members of the EC Planning Commission (ECPC) (Dedaimia, Sam and Mike) had a meeting with Planning and Transportation Department director Scott Robinson. We discussed how EC concerns regarding how new development proposals will be addressed, since Linda Thompson will no longer participate in the Plan Review process. Scott prefers to address our concerns primarily through amendments to the UDO, probably in Autumn. ECPC members want to reserve the opportunity to review and comment on plans for projects that have site-specific sensitive environmental features. EC recommendations might be added to our website.

It was noted that one of the 2020 changes to the UDO required measurement of riparian buffers from the center of a stream channel instead of the previous top-of-bank measurement, which is the industry standard. The EC proposes an amendment requiring that the measurements be taken from the top-of-bank, as it was before.

### **8. Old Business**

A. The EC voted (at the start of the meeting) to send a letter to the City recommending a ban on polypropylene erosion control netting. The motion passed unanimously.

The EC handbook is being amended to reflect the city's new rules for meeting attendance. A vote on the changes was tabled until next meeting.

### **9. New Business**

The EC discussed this year's Bugfest, to be held on October 1, and agreed to table at the event.

### **10. Commissioner announcements**

Don informed the EC that the City of Bloomington Utilities (CBU) is planning to unplug a storm drain that was obstructed by beavers.

Sam mentioned the letters he and Andrew Guenther wrote to the H-T editor concerning Climate Action efforts at IU, and flooding related to the IU campus.

The EC bid farewell to Ben, with more statements of appreciation.