



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

October 20, 2022, 6:00PM
Hybrid meeting

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

Call to order at 6:02pm.

In person

Sam Armstrong (chair) Present

Matt Caldie (vice-chair) Present

Mike Litwin (secretary and treasurer) Present

Megan Murphy Present

Carrie Albright Present

David Parkhurst Present

Conner Wright Present

Betsy McCleery Present

On Zoom

Dedaimia Whitney Present

Donald Eggert Absent

Luke Swain Absent

Scott Shackelford Absent

The meeting was telecast live by CATS.

Staff present included Linda Thompson (Sr. Environmental Planner) and Alauna Keeley (fellow)

2. Introductions:

The EC welcomed Betsy McCleery as a new commissioner. Betsy is a recent graduate from Purdue University and works as an environmental engineer.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Sam moved the minutes. Matt seconded.

Mike Approved
Megan Approved
Carrie Approved
David Approved
Conner Approved
Betsy Approved
Dedaimia Approved

The EC voted to approve the September minutes unanimously.

4. Public Comment: Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total

None

Motion:

Matt moved to permanently discuss item no.5 reports until after item no.7 new business.
Megan seconded this motion.

Sam Yes
Mike Yes
Megan Yes
Carrie Yes
David Yes
Conner Yes
Betsy Yes
Dedaimia Yes

The EC moved to permanently discuss reports after old business and new business unanimously.

5. Old Business:

A. Update from Land Planning Working Group (ECPC) regarding UDO updates
Mike updated the EC on the ECPC's latest developments. Mike received comments from Linda on the draft amendments to the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance). The final draft amendments will be sent to the Planning and Transportation Department to be reviewed by Scott Robinson, Director of Planning and Transportation. Scott Robinson wants to bring the finalized UDO amendments to the Plan Commission by the New Year (2023). Mike and Linda told the EC that the edited drafts need to be completed by the end of the calendar year (2022). The ECPC's final draft will be completed before the commission's November meeting, such that the EC may review and approve of the UDO amendments.

B. Summary of Bug Fest

Megan reported on the success of Bug Fest, which took place October 1st at the Hilltop Garden & Nature Center at Indiana University. It was declared that this year's Bug Fest was the biggest ever: nearly 1,100 people attended. The EC table was extremely popular; kids and adults alike stopped by the booth to interact with a box of pinned insects that are local to the Bloomington-area. Megan also reported that EC educational brochures and pamphlets were distributed.

C. Air Quality Working Group & IRA funding for stationary monitoring

The AQ Working Group did not have an official meeting in the month of October. An informal meeting took place between Matt and Alauna. At this time there is no formal update on the Working Group's progress. Sam commented that the low-cost air sensor, Flow 2, generates significant doubts as to its consistency in measurements and accuracy in data collection. It was noted that the AI in this sensor needs a long burn-in period, ranging anywhere from 4 to 8 weeks to calibrate correctly. The EC commissioners who have been testing the Flow 2 do not regard the sensor as being useful for the purposes of a possible air quality project. Matt agreed, saying he does not want to use the Flow 2 for data collection. Sam would like to see a higher caliber sensor purchased to collect air quality data.

Alauna updated the EC on her progress in researching funds and grants that could be allocated to updating air quality monitoring in Bloomington. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides \$50 million for states to update their air quality monitoring systems; IDEM (Indiana Department of Environmental Management) published their 2023 plan to implement air monitoring network changes using ARPA funds. The current Bloomington-Binford monitoring method will be replaced with a more accurate monitoring method. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) also provides funding for states to enhance their air quality monitoring networks. Matt discussed this \$281 million available for funding; he also reached out to IDEM for more information.

Sam attended the Boards and Commissions dinner where he got the chance to speak with Mayor John Hamilton about air monitoring; the mayor seemed enthusiastic about enhancing air quality monitoring in Bloomington. Megan told the EC that the Monroe County Environmental Commission (MCEC) is open to help with the EC's interests in air quality, and could offer some data to the AQ Working Group. Sam and Matt ended this update by stating that the AQ Working Group needs to establish their goals in order to entertain a possible collaboration with the MCEC further down the road.

D. Follow up on storm water management, especially IUB plans

Sam updated the EC on the city's storm water management plans. Sam spoke with Vic Kelson, Director of the City of Bloomington Utilities Department. Vic Kelson relayed that the new underground tunnel project is going to increase storm water capacity to handle the influx of rainfall as experienced in June of 2021. CBU is working closely with IU on the runoff located in the main watershed of the city. Sam noted that while this is not one of CBU's top priorities, they are working to utilize the \$400,000 annual budget to implement green infrastructure projects as a management technique for storm water.

CBU is also petitioning to fund projects to address storm water issues and money for the MS4 office. Sam also updated the EC on the detention basin that is being installed adjacent to Deer Park Manor. The EC would like to focus on their next steps regarding CBU's storm water management projects. The commission may be interested in developing pointed green infrastructure projects for CBU.

6. New Business:

A. Discussion on BCOS changing number of chickens allowed to 10; letter, resolution, etc.

Sam opened up this discussion to the EC, relaying his engagement with BCOS (Bloomington Commission on Sustainability) at the Boards and Commissions Dinner. BCOS would like to work closely with the EC on the possibility of changing the number of chickens allowed for single-family lots from 5 to 10. The EC had varying opinions. Dedaimia owns her own flock so she provided personal experience to raising chickens, offering that chickens are much more than a resource for eggs. Chickens provide insect control and reduce household food waste. Sam agreed that keeping chickens contributes to composting and creates far less dependency on industrial agriculture for protein. Megan, Dave, and Betsy voiced concerns regarding noise disturbances, waste produced by chickens, and the runoff contamination that could occur in doubling the chicken populations.

Dedaimia disclosed that the City of Bloomington has chicken inspectors who are responsible for investigating all households that keep chickens; she offered that the city could reinstate the signature process of requiring neighbors to sign-off on the keeping of chickens. The EC could recommend that the chicken inspectors are left to determine whether or not a household has sufficient room to keep more than 5 chickens. Dedaimia also responded to the concerns of the EC regarding chicken waste and runoff, stating that their excretions are good fertilizer for gardens which reduces dependency on the retail manure market.

Sam posed the question as to whether the chicken inspectors consider chicken waste in their role. Carrie commented that neighbors should give consent and have buy-in to the keeping of chickens. Linda stated that she will ask higher-ups in city government to see if anyone else has seriously thought about the expansion of chicken keeping in Bloomington. Overall, the EC determined that the expansion of 5 chickens to 10 chickens in single-family lots should depend upon a square footage to chicken ratio. The EC wants to know what BCOS expects in this collaboration. Mike offered that the EC look over the BCOS chicken expansion draft.

Motion:

Sam moved to revisit the possible partnership with BCOS on chicken expansion at next month's meeting.

Dedaimia seconded this motion.

Matt Yes

Mike Yes
Megan Yes
Carrie Yes
David Yes
Conner Yes
Betsy Yes

The EC voted unanimously to revisit this next month. Sam will return to BCOS to tell them about the EC's discussion.

B. Outreach Working Group discussion

Carrie opened up this conversation with the EC to talk about tabling events that could engage with the community. The Outreach Working Group would like to gather commissioners of the EC that are interested in the outreach process who want to help facilitate events, engage and interact at events, and/or produce materials for events. Carrie wants to better the process of collecting information on previous projects in order to better future outreach events. Linda mentioned how it would be beneficial for a group to review the EC fact sheets, brochures, and pamphlets to determine if they should be continued in use, revised, or gotten rid of.

7. 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: Dedaimia updated the EC on the previous meeting. The TC tasked themselves with generating a list of trees to add to the interior short list. Bloomington's new Urban Forester presented to the commission and provided an article on the causes of tree failure. Dedaimia is glad that the new forester is interested in educating the commission. The city is currently pruning and removing trees in anticipation for the fall weather. There is a current plan to replace trees downtown that have died. The TC would like to see the city enlarge the tree grates from 4x4 to 5x5. Dedaimia talked about the waivers for legacy trees to remain in place in light of UDO distance requirements.

MCEC: Megan stated that the MCEC is interested in potential spaces for collaboration with the EC. The MCEC has recently started work on getting an ERI (Environmental Resilience Institute) intern. The MCEC is also working through the Monroe County Council budget to add charging stations for EV's; MCEC is creating a solar survey in hopes of adding solar panels to county buildings. MCEC is excited to see how the new Zero-In Bloomington Initiative will be beneficial to residents of Monroe County that do not live within the city, but live within county lines.

BCOS: Don was absent. Linda attended a meeting regarding heat preparedness and informed the EC about the group.

ERAC: David informed the EC that this year's annual deer hunt has been shortened to only two weekends compared to the previous year, of which was three weekends. This deer hunt will take place in Griffy Woods. ERAC also discussed the prescribed burning that will take place at Griffy Woods. The new Urban Forester spoke at this ERAC meeting.

MPOCAC: Sam informed the EC that the MPOCAC has no new business to report on. MPOCAC continued conversation about the EV infrastructure deployment plan for Indiana and ADA compliance in transportation.

FOLM: Dave informed the EC that there was no meeting, nothing to report.

MC-IRIS: Don was absent. Linda stated that there was nothing to report.

8. Commissioner Announcements:

Carrie works for the North American Association for Environmental Education and recently attended a workshop that has led her to think more closely about how the EC teaches and engages in classrooms and the community about climate justice, equity, the environment, etc. Carrie wants the EC to ponder about a mission to impact and create change with those that the EC interacts with.

Megan announced Science Fest will be taking place on the IU campus Saturday, October 22nd from 9am-3pm.

9. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07pm.

Next EC meeting: November 17, 2022, 6:00 PM, Hooker Room, zoom, and CATS

Statement on public meetings during public health emergency

As a result of Executive Orders issued by the Governor, Eric Holcomb, the Commission and its committees may adjust normal meeting procedures to adhere to guidance provided by state officials. These adjustments may include:

- allowing members of the Commission and its committees to participate in meetings electronically;
- posting notices and agendas for meetings both by electronic means and physically.
- using electronic meeting platforms to allow for remote public attendance and participation (when possible);
- encouraging the public to watch meetings via Community Access Television Services broadcast or livestream, and encouraging remote substitution of public comment (via email, to environment@bloomington.in.gov).

As a quorum of the Commission or its committees may be present, this gathering constitutes a meeting under the Indiana Open Door Law (I.C. § 5-14-1.5). For that reason, this statement provides notice that this meeting will occur and is open for the public to attend, observe, and record what transpires.

The Bloomington Environmental Commission (EC) wishes to acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities native to this region, and recognize that the City of Bloomington, Indiana was built on indigenous homelands and resources.