



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

December 15, 2022, 6:00PM

Hybrid meeting

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

Call to order at 6:03pm.

Matt Caldie (vice-chair) Present
Mike Litwin (secretary and treasurer) Present
Megan Murphy Present
Don Eggert Present
David Parkhurst Present
Carrie Albright Present

Sam Armstrong (chair) Absent
Betsy McCleery Absent
Scott Shackelford Absent
Luke Swain Absent
Conner Wright Absent

The meeting was telecast live by CATS.

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

2. Introductions:

The commissioners and staff present briefly introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Vote on approval of October minutes.

Megan moved the minutes. Matt and David seconded.

Matt Approved
Mike Approved
Megan Approved
David Approved

Carrie Approved
Don Abstained

The EC voted to approve the October minutes.

Vote on approval of November minutes.
Matt moved the minutes. David and Carrie seconded.

Matt Approved
Mike Approved
Megan Approved
David Approved
Don Approved
Carrie Abstained

The EC voted to approve the November minutes.

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

None

5. Old Business:

A: Update from the Land Planning Working Group (ECPC) regarding UDO updates
Mike updated the EC on his most recent version of the draft amendments that have incorporated the comments and feedback he has received. Mike asked that the EC discuss a few of the comments.

The first comment regarded the Tree Commission's current tree list that will be added into the proposed UDO amendments. The EC finds that this list needs to be updated. Linda mentioned that the list does not include enough native species; she has compiled a tree list on her own and will be sending it around Bloomington for expert input and feedback. The EC decided that it will not be using the Tree Commission's current tree list; however, the EC will utilize the Tree Commission's input and feedback regarding the list compiled by Linda that includes more native species.

Mike's second question for discussion has to do with Matt's comment on the definition on nonnative species as used in the draft UDO amendments. The commissioners wondered if nonnative should refer to the eastern US or Monroe County. From there, the EC discussed how to define the native species of this geographic region. David emphasized that we should not limit the range of native species to county-only areas. Matt made an important point in that species migration, as a response to climate change, will alter landscapes and its composition of flora and fauna. Don echoed this sentiment by stating that in North America and Europe, this species migration has already been well documented and observed. The EC discussed what Bloomington's role should be in protecting native species as the city experiences the impacts of a warming climate. How can departments like Parks & Recreation anticipate changes like these in their yearly plantings? Mike redirected the definition conversation to Linda, who mentioned the use of "eco-region" to help

define the native and nonnative tree species list. The EC settled to list the trees specifically by name that need to be removed from the current list in the proposed UDO amendments.

The third item of discussion regards listing of environmentally sensitive areas. Linda and the EC resolved to add “conservation areas” to the already listed “conservation easements” to provide stronger language to the draft.

The last item of discussion regards green infrastructure (GI) and the need to be more specific about GI inconsistencies in parking lots. Linda provided Mike with citations from the UDO on green infrastructure requirements. She highlights that in one instance, the UDO mandates GI in parking lots with at least 100 spots. Another instance mandates GI in lots with only 3-4 spots. From there, the EC discussed whether they should define what they want this number to be in requiring GI. Generally, green infrastructure falls under the purview of City of Bloomington Utilities (CBU) even though it is included in the Planning & Transportation’s UDO. Mike asked the EC wants to vote on approving the draft UDO amendments, keeping in mind that the discussed items and their language changes will be implemented.

Vote on the approval of the Draft UDO Amendments.
Mike moved the vote. David and Matt seconded.

Matt Approved
Mike Approved
Megan Approved
Don Approved
David Approved
Carrie Approved

The EC voted to approve the draft UDO amendments unanimously.

B: Update from Biodiversity Working Group regarding the Habitat Connectivity Plan
Matt discussed the possibility of resurrecting the Habitat Connectivity Mapping project that was completed by the previous O’Neill fellow. Alauna and Matt have been thinking of ways to incorporate and update the Habitat Connectivity Google Map in order to increase participation. Matt asked the EC if this is something that they would like to pursue; he asked if this was a project that the EC could promote, and if so, how? Carrie mentioned that there are a lot of ways to keep this project in motion, especially for a tabling or outreach event; providing clearer access to the Habitat Connectivity map could be a priority for the EC. Further, the EC could reach out to school networks in order to see if they would like to become involved in this mapping project. Linda brought up that the Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department has a neighborhood newsletter and is currently calling out for any groups or organizations to write an article. This could be a way for the EC to further engage participation of the Habitat Connectivity Plan and mapping project. Don commented that the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS) is going to work with the neighborhood associations for aims at reducing emissions and engaging local involvement. This could connect to school corporations and where they might be

located on the listed habitat corridors, as well as working with the Parks and Recreation Department. Megan offered that this mapping project could be useful to the Monroe County-Reduce and Identify Invasive Species Commission (MC-IRIS), as well as provide material for the HAND department article and tabling events at the Farmer's Markets. Linda stated that even one listing of a native species is worthwhile to the mapping project. Carrie is interested in writing up an article for the HAND department. The EC decided that this is something they would still like to promote, as well as passing along this project and participation to other groups and organizations.

C: Update from the Outreach Working Group regarding tabling items

Carrie reported to the EC that she cleared out archives of documents, brochures, and materials that the EC has developed and used over the years. There are some items that have not been utilized or are no longer relevant. Carrie reinforced that the EC should look at the links, information, references, and accuracy of these materials to be as up to date as possible. Carrie asked the EC if there are any materials that the commission may want to re-frame or change what is being communicated. She also provided an example of a nature flyer that engages with local organizations, provides resources, maintains organizational flow, and is accessible. She asked the EC if anyone was interested in looking through the various materials and assessing any changes; and, if this is a priority to have done before the first spring outreach events. Megan made a case that tackling this project should be a priority. Don asked whether or not the EC could partner with BCOS in outreach events and materials.

6. New Business:

A: Reminder of January's 2023 project-priority agenda

The next meeting will be the annual bucket list meeting. Linda reminded everyone to start thinking about what they would prefer to be EC priorities for 2023. Matt offered that it will likely be one idea per person with vision layouts and table discussions. There was an emphasis placed on bringing up new focuses and ideas. The February meeting will consist of electing officers.

7. Reports from: Tree Commission (TC), Monroe County Environmental Commission (MCEC), Blooming Commission of 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: Deidamia's resignation from the commission has prompted discussion of which EC commissioner will take her place in attending Tree Commission meetings. David reported that he would be willing to be the EC representative, but asked if there were other commissioners who were interested. Matt decided that he will reach out to the absent commissioners via email to ask if any of them would be interested.

MCEC: Megan reported that there were no updates.

BCOS: Don updated the EC on the previous meeting. BCOS discussed their budget, a commissioner stepping down, and the local jail exceeding carrying capacity which has created overcrowding and

warrants safety concerns. The commission has also voted to use the same terminology to define sustainability as adopted by the UN. Discussions of environmental justice and waste also took place. Don mentioned that the BCOS Working Groups overlap with the Working Groups of the EC. BCOS has an interest in the Heat Island Effect, air quality, and other heat related challenges in Bloomington. BCOS needs funding in order to develop and implement any monitoring program. Carrie proposed it might be beneficial if the EC invited a BCOS commissioner to an EC meeting in which they can learn and hear about EC's current Working Groups. Matt offered that he or Sam could reach out to BCOS and establish a connection of communication for possible collaborative discussions.

ERAC: David reported to the EC about ERAC's previous meeting. This commission is still working to develop deer management. Over the course of the 2-weekend deer hunts, 46 deer were successfully killed. Interestingly, the estimated carrying capacity for deer in this area is only 10. ERAC has also been monitoring the deer population through plant grazing and deer exclusions. There were no prescribed burns at Griffy this year due to a no burn advisory placed on Indiana. ERAC discussed the efforts to get rid of maple and beech trees in favor of pre-climax species such as oak and hickory. These efforts are aimed to provide better food for the wildlife. ERAC is hoping to do two burns in the year of 2023: late march and early April. This plan is still in the works. The trail near the bypass located by the 7th St. Greenway has been completed. There is a new bikeway; however, there are now 34 trees with a low rate of survival, as well as many trees being lost to vandalism. ERAC also talked about the interpretative signs put up at RCA Park. Appointments and decisions for the New Year (including chair and vice-chair) are taking place in February.

MPOCAC: Sam was absent. There was no update.

FOLM: David reported to the EC that FOLM received two grants that will help to implement best management practices for people updating their septic tanks and farmers to plant more cover crops to reduce eutrophic runoff. So far, there is no set committee to track the grant project's process.

MC-IRIS: Don reported that MC-IRIS did not meet and will not be holding a meeting until February. Right now MC-IRIS is prioritizing Winslow Sports Park. Don commented that this area is populated with Asian Bush Honeysuckle, plastic waste, concrete, PVC pipes, and wires.

8. Commissioner Announcements:

Carrie mentioned that on the reports and plans completed by the EC that it may be helpful to reintroduce and review them. Matt, Megan, and Mike agreed.

9. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.

Next EC meeting: January 19, 2023, 6:00 p.m., 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.