



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

January 19, 2022, 6:00PM
Hybrid meeting

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

Call to order at 6:07pm.

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

Scott Shackelford Absent
Sam Armstrong (chair) Absent
Carrie Albright 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 December minutes.
Megan moved the minutes. Don seconded.

Matt Approved
David Approved

Megan Approved
Mike Approved
Don Approved
Betsy Approved

The EC voted to approve the December minutes unanimously.

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

None

5. New Business:

A: Discussion of officers and working groups for 2023

Linda introduced this to serve as a reminder for the EC. Sam has asked that any commissioner who may be interested, to think about being an officer. The EC has no official plans to align working groups with commissioners at the moment because terms end January 31st. For this reason, officer voting will not take place until the February meeting. Matt offered that the EC should create the election committee; he asked if David and Mike would form the committee. If any EC commissioner has any interest, they are to reach out to David and Mike via email. If no one offers interest, David and Mike may reach out to commissioners regarding the officer positions before the February meeting.

B: 2023 project-priority or bucket list discussion

The EC began the discussion to offer commissioner ideas about priority projects. Commissioner ideas included the following:

- Matt offered the idea to *promote and utilize the Habitat Connectivity Plan*. Regarding this idea, Don asked the EC if any commissioners would be willing to reach out to neighborhood associations and/or attend their meetings, especially neighborhoods that are targeted in the connectivity plan.
- Megan offered the idea to *revamp the outreach plans and activities* through identifying clear goals and developing materials to be as intentional as possible. Regarding this idea, Don offered that other commissions, such as the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS), engage seriously with the EC in efforts related to outreach projects.
- Don offered the idea to participate in *training of plans for climate emergencies*. This includes requesting that the city develop training exercises regarding multi-hazardous climate incidents. Regarding this idea, David posed the question of whether or not it would make sense to have the Air Quality Working Group work separate from this possible project. Linda suggested that the Air Quality Working Group meet to choose a new direction. Matt echoed that the Air Quality Working Group is needed in order to research, write reports, and work on projects. The group will need to meet again to figure out its new direction.

- Sam offered the idea to *keep the Air Quality Working Group*.
- Mike offered the idea to have the *EC work to better coordinate with the City of Bloomington and the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS)* so as to lessen any redundancies in projects and outreach. Regarding this idea, Linda mentioned that there is overlap with the Tree Commission and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Commission. Matt echoed that this coordination is very important. Linda then mentioned the idea of hosting a summer picnic and inviting the various commissions that overlap with the work that the EC does. Commissions mentioned include: BCOS, BPSC, TC, ERAC, and MCEC.
- Mike also offered the idea to *promote the use of electric-powered lawn equipment*.
- Betsy offered the idea to *create or sponsor a volunteer event for the public*. This includes reaching out to high school and IU students to engage more publicly.
- Linda offered the idea to *update the EC's Bloomington Environmental Quality Indicators Report*. This report is required to be updated via ordinance. Regarding this idea, Don mentioned that the Parks & Recreation Department and MC-IRIS have created new metrics to measure what they have accomplished, thus it could be beneficial for the EC to reach out to them to ask for data.
- Carrie offered the ideas to: *update and revise the EC reports and outreach materials; pursue collaboration across boards and commissions; identify three specific actions to vote on regarding outreach activities; and look into grants and funding*. Regarding grants and funding, Linda mentioned that it might be useful to have the EC choose a project first in order to better guide the grant-writing process.
- Conner offered the ideas to *increase outreach efforts* in educating and informing the community about easy, tangible ways to become green and more environmentally friendly. Regarding this idea, Megan emphasized that because most of these ideas are outreach-oriented, the EC needs to maintain intentionality. Linda mentioned the creation of an outreach kit; Matt also emphasized the need to engage participation through social media, tabling, and more. Linda responded that it may be beneficial to table at the Farmer's Market, to which Don asked if it would be helpful to invite partnered commissions to table, as well. Betsy added that this could be a viable way to collect community input and concerns, which may be useful in guiding EC projects and outreach.

Following this discussion, the EC then voted by way of tallies. Three tallies represent each commissioner's first priority, two tallies represent second priority, and one tally represents third priority.

Tally Results:

Promote Habitat Connectivity Plan- 19

Revamp Outreach Programs and Activities- 15

Create or Sponsor a Volunteer Event for the Public- 8

Coordinate with the City and BCOS to Avoid Overlap- 3

Keep the Air Quality Working Group- 1

Promote Electric-Powered Lawn Equipment- 1

Update and Review EC Reports- 1

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: David updated the EC. During the last TC meeting, a speaker from the engineering department talked about the West 1st Street reconstruction from College Ave. up to Maple St. This road will be narrower with larger sidewalks and tree plots. 21 trees are being removed and replaced with new ones. These trees were removed because of utility conflicts, are in poor health, or are Callery Pears, an invasive species. The Urban Forester gave an update on their efforts to work on problem areas that contain the Callery Pear. They are in the process of planting new trees and pruning existing ones. David also updated the EC that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has removed 27 trees from land that belongs to Indiana University. These were removed due to the changes being made to the intersection of State Road 45 (10th Street) with Pete Ellis Drive. INDOT will be paying IU \$45,000 to compensate for the removal of trees.

MCEC: Megan updated the EC. Monroe County applied for funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These funds would go toward the refurbishment of retention ponds, septic systems in the county, and solar projects. On February 17th, IUPUI will be hosting the Indiana Sustainability and Resilience Conference.

BCOS: Don updated the EC. BCOS is working with multiple city and county departments, IU Health, and IU to form a response plan to the heat emergency which incorporates issues related to equity, social justice, and environmental justice. BCOS commissioners also discussed reaching out to the community and other commissions working on environmental sustainability (such as the EC). BCOS seems more open to working collaboratively.

ERAC: David updated the EC that there was nothing new to report.

MPOCAC: Sam was absent, nothing new to report.

FOLM: David updated the EC that there was nothing new to report.

MC-IRIS: Don updated the EC on the continued efforts of the commission and the Parks & Recreation Department to clean up Winslow Sports Park and the Lower Cascades. This is a volunteer opportunity that many around the area participate in. Don reported that the strenuous work led to a health incident regarding a volunteer, but among other participants a physician was present and able to help. Volunteers contribute a significant amount of their time and work which comes with some amount of risk. This makes their efforts even more cherished and appreciated.

8. Commissioner Announcements:

Reminded by the volunteer incident mentioned by Don, Dave told the story of a 1986 trek in Nepal where the group was fortunate enough to have a physician among them to rescue a trekker from an unwelcomed leech attack. Linda reminded the commission to re-apply for commissioner positions via the EC's page on the Bloomington Government website. Mike has been closely following COVID-19 reported cases and updated that the average cases per day is less than 10% of the cases that occurred one year ago. Betsy reported that a new Whitehouse guidance release on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has instilled strong recommendations to consider GHG analyses in permitting processes. Subsequently, contractors across the United States will begin to incorporate GHG analyses in their projects. For more information, this guidance can be found on the [Federal Register](#). Matt announced to everyone that they should all sign up for officer positions and to email David or Mike. Matt thanked everyone for the food. Don mentioned an upcoming volunteer activity with MC-IRIS and the Parks & Recreation at the Lower Cascades Saturday, January 21st, at 1:00pm.

9. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

Next EC meeting: February 16, 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.