



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

Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023, 6:00 PM

Hooker Meeting Room # 245

Hybrid meeting

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

Call to order at 6:00pm.

2. Introductions and Roll Call:

	<u>In person</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Megan Bankowski	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Don Eggert	X		
Shannon Gayk	X		
Mike Litwin	X		
Kristen Mann		X	
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Karenna Tankersley	X		
Conner Wright	X		
Alauna Keeley	X		
Linda Thompson	X		

3. Approval of August, 2023 minutes:*

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Megan Bankowski	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Don Eggert	X		
Shannon Gayk	X		
Mike Litwin	X		
Kristen Mann			X
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens			
David Parkhurst	X		

Karena Tankersley
Conner Wright

X
X

4. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total
No public comments.

5. Old business:

A. Bug Fest planning discussion, tabling items (brochures & giveaways), & logistics
The EC will be tabling at this year's Bugfest which will be located at Karst Farm Park Saturday September 23rd. Megan will be leading the EC table and has promised that plenty of insects will be available for kids and adults to look at, up close and personal! Volunteer slots are filled and it is expected to be a great day. Mitchell mentioned that IDEM will also have a table at Bugfest with plenty of informational posters and bugs. The EC is hoping to receive a stamp as part of the program brochure next year.

B. Follow up on letter to Planning & Transportation regarding riparian
Mike has led the EC in correspondence with the Planning & Transportation Department concerning riparian buffers in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Jackie Scanlan, Development Services Manager, and Scott Robinson, Director, are open to communications with the EC on UDO changes; however, Linda pointed out that any changes made to the UDO will not be heard until next spring. This timing issue led the EC to table conversation currently, and revisit as the spring approaches.

C. Joint meeting/gathering with other boards and commissions
Carrie asked what it would look like for the EC to engage in possible collaborations with other city/county boards and commissions. This item turned into a discussion regarding the Novak Report and the organizational assessment made on the City's boards and commissions. Dave proposed that this discussion be saved for an item in New Business.

6. New business:

A. Meeting reports and how we approach them
Carrie asked the EC about their thoughts and feelings on the monthly meeting reports. The EC determined that monthly meeting reports on the action and projects of other commissions are valuable, as well as informational. Dave and Don discussed their experience and thoughts on why their reporting on ERAC, FOLM, BCOS, TC, and MC-IRIS are beneficial for the EC (*see Item 7 for full commission names*). Additionally, Megan M. and Megan B. highlighted that the reports usually provided information on other commissions before the official meeting minutes are posted. The EC's discussion on this item led to the topic of how the EC can learn from other commissions. For example, other commissions were granted funding to carry out research, projects, etc. This could be a great learning opportunity for the EC. Linda pointed out that the EC retains voting powers on commissions, such as TC and ERAC, which means that having an EC member attend their meetings is important. Ultimately, the EC asked if there are any boards and commissions that the EC is missing out on by not having a commissioner attend the meeting. Linda mentioned that Bike/Ped Commission could be a potential meeting to attend. The discussion ended with ideas regarding any community groups or student organizations in Bloomington and Indiana University that may be great for EC members to attend meetings on.

B. Novak report & Commission Organization

The City of Bloomington hired consultants to assess the boards and commissions. This analysis, the Novak report, concluded that many of the commissions overlap, should be merged, or gotten rid of. The EC's task is to revisit the original Bloomington Municipal Code (BMC) and ordinance that prescribes the powers and duties of the commission. The commission overseeing the re-organization process asked the EC if their listed powers and duties are actually what the EC does today. Any changes in scope or

interests that the EC wishes to make to BMC need to be sent to the special commission by November 20th. The EC discussed the possibility of the merger between BCOS and EC and what this would look like. How does the EC want to define its roles and responsibilities? Who holds the EC to task of their powers and duties? Regardless of whether the merger occurs or not, Carrie and Matt pointed out that this is an opportunity to look at what is best for the EC and its interests. In discussing how to approach this issue, the EC created a working group to parse out the main scope and potential changes the commission needs to make in the code. The working group will be made of up Shannon, Dave, Matt, Karena, and Linda. First step: read the report!

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)*.

The order of reports changed to allow Dave and Don to speak on their reports consecutively. There was no commissioner report available for MPOCAC.

TC: Dave reported on a lot of wonderful Tree Commission news! The City Engineers attended the previous TC meeting to look at three reports. 1) The first engineering report mentioned a trail from one neighborhood to another. It also described improving traffic flow between Third and Hillside. This will have tree plots and the TC's task is to decide which trees should be planted. 2) On the west side of town, Liberty Street will be getting a sidewalk as well as a tree plot widening the gap between the road and sidewalk. 3) There is a trail improvement happening near Moore's Pike SE Park area. The sidewalk change would occur between the parking lot (at the stream) and the tennis courts. Dave also reported that the Urban Forester gave a report on winning a \$100,000 to prune trees. A type of native tree, the Kentucky Coffeetree will be called Decaf, and is going to be used it has better branching habits. Additionally, tree planting has kicked off in downtown Bloomington. There will be an urban forestry info booth at the Farmer's Market for anyone who is interested in learning more; and, a tree steward training is being offered within the next month. Last, the TC has nearly finished revising the Tree Care Manual.

ERAC: Dave reported that ERAC did not meet. The original plan was to meet in Winslow Woods, but due to stormy weather it was cancelled.

FOLM: Dave informed the EC that there is nothing to report.

MC-IRIS: Don reported that the Native Plant Sale was a smashing hit. MC-IRIS is providing volunteer opportunities on a need basis.

BCOS: Don reported that Matt Flaherty of the City Common Council discussed the greenway project occurring at State Road 46. Don posed the question about whether or not the EC's work on biodiversity and habitat connectivity would be a great resource for greenway projects. BCOS also discussed the Novak report. The commission had a conversation about food waste now that EarthKeepers is no longer operating. Todd Thompson, Director of the Indiana Geological and Water Survey and State Geologist, presented to BCOS. This presentation touched on the aspects of the karst geology of Bloomington.

Linda gave a quick update on the Planning Commission and their verbal promise to adopt the language that the EC wants.

8. Commissioner announcements:

- Dave posed an interesting observation/hypothesis that he would like the other commissioners to think about: His idea for why vehicles need bigger “mouths” (grills) because as air temperatures increase with global warming, cars will need more air flowing over their radiators to cool their engines. That is because with convective heat transfer, the rate of cooling is proportional to the difference in temperature between a surface and the fluid flowing over it.
- Mike announced that a magazine he subscribes to released an issue on the changing names of plants and animals. Asian Carp is now Invasive Carp; Gypsy Moth is now Spongey Moth.
- Megan promoted Bugfest *and* Nature Sounds. Nature Sounds is a program being put on by the city that combines live sounds with educational presentations. This event will focus on Katydid!
- Mitchell plugged the IDEM table that will be at Bugfest!
- Linda mentioned that she attended a climate action and resilience meeting to gauge what projects will be taken on. Interestingly, the committee is looking to move forward in limiting and/or banning the use of gas-fired leaf blowers and small appliances in Bloomington! Dave recently found out that he can use a leaf blower to drive bees away in efforts to retrieve the honey—and happily found out that his leaf-blower is battery powered and not gas-powered.

9. Adjournment:

Adjournment at 7:21pm.

* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: **October 19, 2023, 6:00 p.m., Hooker Room, Zoom, and CATS**

-The City is committed to providing equal access to information. However, despite our efforts, at times, portions of our board and commission packets are not accessible for some individuals. If you encounter difficulties accessing material in this packet, please contact Melissa Hirtzel at hirtzelm@bloomington.in.gov and provide your name, contact information, and a link to or description of the document or web page you are having problems with.

-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.