



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 19, 2023, 6:00 PM
Hooker Meeting Room # 245
Hybrid meeting

Join Zoom Meeting here:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/6359441221?pwd=bXRYTnNjV2xMbTRLeE00QW9XWnRjQT09>

or on Community Access Television Service (CATS): <https://catstv.net/government.php>.

Auxiliary aids are available upon request with adequate notice.

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

6:01pm

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		
Karena Tankersley			X
Conner Wright	X		
Alauna Keeley			
Linda Thompson		X	

3. Approval of September, 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			X
David Parkhurst	X		
Karena Tankersley		X	
Conner Wright	X		

Dave moved to vote on the minutes, Matt seconded. The EC voted unanimously to approve the September meeting minutes.

4. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total
 None.

5. Old business:

A. Update from working group regarding combining the Environmental Commission and the Commission on Sustainability.

Matt gave an update to the EC on the working group’s discussion and progress regarding the Novak Report. The current working group is composed of Matt, Shannon, Dave, and Karena. Don showed interest in joining as well. Matt asked Linda to connect their working group with a few members on the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS) to provide a space to parse out what each commission wants. Some of the main points that the EC working group focused on is deciding what the EC wants to do, what differentiates the EC from BCOS, and the possibility of a merger. Matt began re-working the City Ordinance to modernize the language and purpose of the EC so that there is a clearer differentiation between the two commissions. After this initial report given by Matt, the EC began to have a deeper conversation relating to the functional differences between various commissions, such as the Tree Commission or the Environmental Resource Advisory Council. Don mentioned how there are aspects of the work done by the EC that overlaps with the work performed by other boards and commissions, especially relating to social justice. The Novak Report suggests that the Bloomington Environmental Action Plan (BEAP) overlaps with plans published by BCOS. Dave and Mike emphasized that each commission has no true overlap. Ultimately, the working group is motivated to make the case that the EC is fundamentally different than BCOS and should be differentiated in the City Ordinance. Once the working group finishes their drafted update of the language in the city code, they will ask the EC as a whole to comment.

B. Update from working group regarding the water working group.

Mike gave an update to the EC on behalf of the working group. The group held a brief meeting and discussed storm water pollution and treatment, especially as it relates to Bloomington streams. Mitchell did not attend this month’s meeting, but Mike relayed that Mitchell wants to look more into the extent of the water data available; he is more interested in the possibility of collecting more data. Collecting more data enables the EC to know which streams are in poorer conditions and thus guide efforts in focusing on those stream conditions and water quality. Don mentioned the possibility of connecting with the Bloomington City Utilities because they also have data. Megan brought up the fact that Liz Carter and Kriste Lindberg are two resources for the EC to use. Liz Carter has made themselves available to attend the water quality working group meetings and/or EC

meetings. Don discussed the storm water management in the UK and the problems that municipalities are having regarding urban flooding which have resulted in at least one death; he also provided some interesting mitigation solutions being used to address urban flooding and storm water management. Dave asked Don if he could compile a list of mitigation solutions and provide them to the working group. Megan added that the City's project, Hopewell, could be a great opportunity for the EC to present some of these storm water mitigation solutions. For more information on the Hopewell development, [click here](#).

6. New business:

None.

7. Reports from: Tree Commission (TC), Environmental Resource Advisory Council (ERAC), Friends of Lake Monroe (FOLM), Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS), Monroe County-Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS), Metropolitan Planning Organization, Citizens Advisory Council (MCMPOCAC), & Monroe County Environmental Commission (MCEC).

TC: Dave could not attend the TC's meeting, but has sent the September EC minutes to the commission members.

ERAC: Dave reported that ERAC met on October 11th in the RCA Community Park. Much of the discussion focused on the park management plans for Miller-Showers Park and Park Ridge East Park. City utilities has historically managed the Miller-Showers Park rather than the Parks Department. There is a concern that there is excess sediment that needs to be removed. In Park Ridge East Park, the trails are now a part of the park. ERAC also discussed the gateway project that has sparked controversy across Bloomington. Many have voiced concerns regarding the light emitted from the proposed tower gateway as source of harm for migratory birds. Tim Street, Director of Operations & Development in the Parks & Recreation Department told ERAC that the gateway will turn off the lights. In fact, Street said that lights coming from the immediate surrounding area are brighter than the proposed gateway tower. For more information on the gateway project, [click here](#). Dave also updated the EC on the development of Rogers Farm Park, which is now finished but lacks adequate parking. Steve Cotter, Natural Resources Manager of the Parks Dept., announced that the loop trail being created around Griffy Lake will be finished by the end of this year. Additionally, all safeguards have been put in place to protect from erosion and sediment displacement. The trail has been designed to specifically mitigate these concerns. The south part of this trail project will also be done this year. ERAC also celebrated a successful Nature Days and Bugfest. There will be an upcoming opportunity to receive instructional training from Hoosier River Watch. There will be a climate action plan workshop at Switchyard Park, as well. Finally, ERAC discussed the issue of Stiltgrass and vegetation management and the possibility of pushing back the fall burn of trees at Griffy if the conditions are too dry. ERAC is concerned with the encroachment of housing and human involvement on the parks.

FOLM: No reports.

MC-IRIS: Don provided this update to the EC. MC-IRIS discussed a number of items regarding the annual plant sale that occurred earlier this fall with plans to improve the 2024 event. MC-IRIS is considering what specific invasive plant should be targeted in their program to provide or subsidize replacement, native plants.

BCOS: Don reported to the EC that BCOS is also discussing the Novak Report. The commission considered what it would be like to merge with the EC and is carefully looking at

what the City Council's record of what the EC and BCOS do. This commission meeting focused on the legalistic aspect of city codes. BCOS is aware of the complexity of this problem. Additionally, the commission discussed development on the composting program. One method has been talked about but requires large workforce power that may not be available.

MPOCAC: No reports.

MCEC: No reports.

8. Commissioner announcements:

Mike mentioned that the EC discuss how the commission should stay up-to-date and involved in the planning of new developments in the Planning Department. Dave asked the EC if anyone has noticed cars with bigger grills after he posed his hypothesis last month. A few commissioners commented that they noticed! Matt brought cookies to share and asked everyone to eat them.

9. Adjournment:

6:42pm.

* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: November 16, 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.