



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 Special Session MEMORANDUM

December 14, 2023, 6:00 PM
Monroe County Public Library Downtown
Meeting Room 1B

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation: 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		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Karena Tankersley		X	
Conner Wright	X		
Alauna Keeley	X		
Linda Thompson	X		

3. Approval of November, 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		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Karena Tankersley			X
Conner Wright	X		

Megan moved to vote, and Matt seconded. EC votes to approve the November meeting minutes.

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

No public comment.

5. New business:

A. Vote on support letter for the Urban Forestry grant*

Approval of Letter of Support, 2023 minutes:*	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Don Eggert	X		
Mike Litwin	X		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Conner Wright	X		

Dave drafted the letter for the EC and edited based on comments he received from other commissioners. Dave read aloud the final letter of support for a grant that supports the city’s tree assistance and tree re-inventory programs. The EC shows support for this grant because the funds will be used in disadvantaged communities. Bloomington is designated as a tree city and the EC is very proud of this title. Dave moved to vote on the letter, Mike seconded. EC unanimously voted to approve the letter of support to be sent to Haskell Smith, the city’s urban forester. Carrie will sign and date the letter, so that Dave can send it the forester.

B. Vote on the meeting dates for 2024*

Approval of Meeting Dates, 2023 minutes:*	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Don Eggert	X		
Mike Litwin	X		
Megan Murphy	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Conner Wright	X		

Carrie opened the floor on discussion about next year’s meeting dates. These are generally held every third Thursday of the month in Hooker Room. Matt moved to vote on the approval. Don seconded. EC unanimously voted to approve the 2024 meeting dates.

Announcements:

- Dave recently sent the commissioners a press release from the City of Bloomington that announced the city’s grade-A rating on the climate action plan. The press release can be found [here](#).
- Alauna asked the commissioners for any ideas for the 2024 Eco-Heroes contest. Alauna and Linda discussed water as the possible theme. Don offered the idea to reach out to City Utilities based on the type of water (storm, drinking, waste) we highlight.
- Mitchell provided an update on the water quality working group. From their previous meeting, the city’s MS4 coordinator, Liz Carter, talked about what the city is working on right now. Some special projects include monitoring Clear Creek’s basin, conducting studies on tributaries, and other initiatives centered on storm water drainage. The city is looking to use a new street sweeper. Additionally, the city is writing a new stormwater ordinance. Mitchell volunteered the EC to give feedback on the draft and help with outreach.

- Dave mentioned that E.coli does not make people sick, as there are millions in our bodies right now. It is used as an indicator of dirty water because it signals to whether there is sewage around the water. It is also the standard test. Dave attended a meeting in Cincinnati with the EPA where they discussed a paper he helped to write. The paper revealed that there is not much correlation with E.coli in swimming beaches and the things that make people sick. Dave left the EC with a question of whether testing for E.coli should continue to be used as a water quality indicator.
- Carrie used these conversations to bring up the need to collaborate with others to teach and learn. Additionally, Carrie highlighted the importance of citizen science and engagement, which prompted discussion on Adopt a Stream, Hoosier River Watch.
- Carrie asked the EC to keep thinking about these ideas for the next meeting, which will be the Bucket List meeting.
- Dave reported on ERAC's previous meeting. The commission met at Switchyard Park and discussed the updates regarding Griffy Loop Trail. There is a new stairway up the dam, and across the dam are rails on both sides. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony Friday, December 15th. The two prescribed burns at Griffy Lake this year went well. The burns aim to get rid of maple and beech to restore oak and hickory for wildlife. The fires were hotter and there are improved conditions for oak and hickory. There is a planned prescribed burn for 2024. In discussing vegetation management, the city recently developed a dashboard to provide data on the number of hours spent working in parks, pulling, and planting, etc. The dashboard, however, is difficult to access. The urban forester gave a report that 80-100 callery pears were removed this year, with 800 trees planted. ERAC also reported on the deer hunt results for November 25th and December 8th: 33 deer were hunted, compared to 46 from last year. Vegetation heights have been increasing over the years, possibly indicating the success of deer hunts. RCA Park interpretive signs are coming soon, and there is more GIS set up for parks for the community to use. Finally, educating people about property lines at the parks seems to be helpful.
- The final announcement called for officer inquiries for next year.

6. Adjournment: 6:32pm.
Happy holidays to all.

* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: January 17, 2024, 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.