



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 APRIL 2024 MEETING MINUTES

April 18, 2024, 6:00 PM  
Hooker Meeting Room # 245  
Hybrid meeting

Join Zoom Meeting here:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/6359441221?pwd=bXRYTnNJV2xMbTRLLeE00QW9XWnRjQT09>

Meeting ID: 635 944 1221

Passcode: COBPT

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: **6:02 PM**

| 2. Introductions and Roll Call: | <u>In person</u> | <u>Absent</u> | <u>Zoom</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Carrie Albright                 | X                |               |             |
| Megan Bankowski                 | X                |               |             |
| Nadia Cain                      | X                |               |             |
| Matt Caldie                     | X                |               |             |
| Shannon Gayk                    |                  | X             |             |
| Mike Litwin                     | X                |               |             |
| Adam Martinez                   | X                |               |             |
| Megan Murphy                    | X                |               |             |
| Mitchell Owens                  | X                |               |             |
| David Parkhurst                 | X                |               |             |
| Gabby Robles                    | X                |               |             |
| Karenna Tankersley              | X                |               |             |
| Alauna Keeley                   | X                |               |             |
| Linda Thompson                  | X                |               |             |

| 3. Approval of March, 2024 minutes:* | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Abstain</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Carrie Albright                      | X          |           |                |
| Megan Bankowski                      | X          |           |                |
| Nadia Cain                           |            |           | X              |
| Matt Caldie                          | X          |           |                |
| Shannon Gayk                         |            |           | X              |
| Mike Litwin                          | X          |           |                |
| Adam Martinez                        |            |           | X              |
| Megan Murphy                         | X          |           |                |
| Mitchell Owens                       | X          |           |                |
| David Parkhurst                      | X          |           |                |
| Gabby Robles                         |            |           | X              |
| Karena Tankersley                    | X          |           |                |

Matt moved to vote, Megan M seconded. The minutes were approved with 7 yeses.

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

**Mathew Austin** - Mathew introduced himself as a member of the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS), and wanted to introduce the idea of an organic waste task force and speak on behalf of an urban farm that wants to address barriers in the UDO to meet city CAP goals.

**Ellee Spier** - Ellee introduced herself and spoke about a part of the city Climate Action Plan (CAP) that includes revising city ordinances to remove barriers to urban agriculture. She runs a nonprofit hoping to make climate progress in urban agriculture. She is looking for a variance for her own work, but is also hoping to get the UDO revised. She is interested in demonstrating her commitment to the EC and is looking for a letter of support to send to city council.

Linda asked what barriers there are. Ellee explained that the UDO does not allow for teaching both inside and outside of the building in Zone 6b, posing a challenge to teaching from 'seed to table'.

Mathew added that they do have chickens and want to expand the number of chickens allowed based on property size.

Carrie discussed that we have historically weighed in on recommending changes to the UDO and suspects that we will be able to show EC support through a letter. Carrie also mentioned we have good timing because our last meeting touched on where we wanted to weigh in on the CAP with Shawn. Carrie mentioned that this will likely be a voting item in the future - we will decide if we want to send a letter to the council, the planning commission, etc.

#### 5. Old business:

- A. Eco Heroes planning
- B. Grandview STEM-night planning April 25th
- C. ECPC update
- D. Discussion and specific questions regarding the Climate Action Plan for Shawn Miya in June. Find at CAP webpage. <https://bloomington.in.gov/sustainability/2020-climate-action-plan>

- A. Alauna mentioned winners had been determined for Eco Heroes and reminded everyone to attend the Eco Heroes portion of the Earth Day event at Switchyard. Carrie asked about sponsors, and Alauna stated there were 20 sponsorships.

- B. Alauna mentioned that Grandview STEM Night would be April 25<sup>th</sup> and that tables chairs, and an outlet would be provided. Matt suggested a computer for the Habitat Connectivity Plan.
- C. Linda gave a brief update for the ECPC mentioning there will be a new planning director, and the possibility that previous responsibilities might be added back into her position. Carrie recommended the ECPC keep an eye on the Sudbury development. Linda described the history of the ECPC for new members and mentioned the new Summit Development as being a reason it is gearing back up again. The letter the ECPC wrote got sent to the Plan Commission and had been sent to council. Mike asked about the recommendation to do a subsurface karst analysis. Linda confirmed that they did do that analysis and there is a report, but Linda does not know the contents of the report yet. Carrie promised to share some of the documents on the Development with new Commissioners.
- D. Carrie prompts folks to share questions they've come up with about the CAP. No one shared any questions. The EC decided to pick back up on this next time.

## 6. New business:

### A. City Council questions from the EC Annual Report

Dave Rollo asked: How do we consider urban deer problems when promoting the Habitat Connectivity Plan (HCP), and wanted the EC to consider the problem beyond deer resistant plants.

Hopi Stosberg was looking for help with using the HCP. A legend for the tool was suggested and it was mentioned that currently users have to split attention between many different documents.

### Comments from EC members:

- Karena jumped in to address HCP usability and agreed that the Biodiversity Working Group (BDWG) would consider options to improve it.
- Mitchell suggested making a StoryMap for usability.
- Matt is concerned improving the HCP would require starting over.
- Carrie suggested that ArcGIS sounds like a better alternative, and mentioned that Grandview Night might be a good trial run to get feedback on usability. She also mentioned that deer can pose a barrier to people successfully taking native plant action.
- Nadia asked about deer management education materials from the city, and it was mentioned that the EC does not have such information beyond deer resistant native plants. Nadia mentioned that IDNR has a deer hotline that she volunteers for.
- Karena mentioned the BDWG has a goal of consolidating digitized educational materials and resources and suggested the BDWG can consider resources on the deer problem.
- Megan M. mentioned that the deer resistant native plant guide is very popular.
- Mike mentioned there was a Deer Task Force report that could be used as a resource.

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).

### Dave

- Tree Commission: Urban Forester's report emphasized removing Callery Pears, and a tree removal program from Duke Energy to access power lines. They are looking to replace those removed trees. They will be giving away 800 tree seedlings. The tree commission is also short 2-3 commission members.

- ERAC: Canceled the most recent meeting.
- FoLM Science Committee: Canceled meeting.

BCOS did not have a meeting this past month, because they did not meet quorum.

Linda

- MCIRIS: MCIRIS was looking at plant sale logistics. County residents can also now sign up to get yard evaluated for invasives. Carrie suggested plugging MCIRS tool at Grandview.

Andrew Guenther

- MCEC: MCEC was looking at budget items with the hope of moving some money towards MCEC initiatives. He mentioned solar conversion projects including outfitting some rural buildings for solar, looking at stormwater flooding and drainage which is cost prohibitive, and mentioned MCEC has an ERI resilience fellow working on a resiliency plan (to be voted on in summer or fall) but they might drop this position due to lack of oversight. MCEC was also looking to budget for a Senior Environmental Planner. They are also considering Project 46, a regional greenhouse gas emissions plan and are trying to get county to join initiative. Lastly, MCEC passed a support resolution for expanding Deam Wilderness.

## 8. Commissioner announcements:

Nadia mentioned an American Conservation Coalition (ACC) Nationwide cleanup on Sunday at 10 am at Sample Gates for trash cleanup.

Matt suggested reaching out to Sam Armstrong for support if we redo the HCP.

Mitchell considered asking for support from IDEM and undergrad projects. He mentioned that the Water Quality Working Group is looking through water quality data from IDEM and Hoosier River Watch and meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month.

Carrie mentioned a citizen science opportunity from iNaturalist, which was having a competition for biodiversity tracking.

Linda mentioned it is Alana's last meeting tonight and extended her appreciation for all the work Alana had done, and celebrated that Alana will be working for the EPA after graduation.

Linda also announced that May will be her last meeting because she will be retiring on May 24<sup>th</sup>. She expressed uncertainty about who will be filling her place and about how the transition will go. Linda is celebrating 22 years with the EC.

## 9. Adjournment: 7:22 pm

\* Item to be voted on

Next EC meeting: May 16, 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](mailto: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.