



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.

## MINUTES

18 May 2017

City Hall—McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

1. Introductions (7:00-7:05 p.m.)

Present: Nick Kappas, Mike Litwin, Dani Graf, Chris Neggers, Chaim Julian, Ryan Clemens, Andy Marrs, Ramsay Harik, Riley Zipper

Absent: Dedaimia Whitney, Linda Thompson, Dave Debikey, Kristina Wiltsee, David Parkhurst

Guests: Dave Rollo, Michael Kaczorowski

2. Approval of minutes (7:05-7:10 p.m.)

Motion is made to approve minutes. Voice vote -- all in favor, no opposed or abstaining.

3. Public comment (7:10-7:30 p.m.)

Michael Kaczorowski, registered landscape architect and horticulturist

- Concerned about parcel on Crescent, memo was written by Linda to deny feasibility as a unit development because of sensitive environmental features
- Doesn't fit in with other housing in the area
- Asking for help for us to come up with additional reasons for denying the development
- First course is to send comments to Plan Commission on June 12
- Don't usually deny petitions, but this is an unusual case
- Copperhead snakes are near the property, so it could be a risk
- Mike says that Planning staff has recommended evaluation of environmental resources near the property, so it's possible as a result of these evaluations the plan could be amended
- 8 acres of heavily wooded area

Dave Rollo, Councilmember

- "[Redefining Prosperity: Energy Descent and Community Resilience](#)," the report produced in 2009 by the Bloomington Peak Oil Task Force, should be revisited, because of the CMP and Environmental Sustainability plan the City is putting together
- It's about reaching peak petroleum production
- Should consider including it in the CMP
- Also, Rollo serves on sustainability commission and they did an update
- He would like to give us a 25-30-minute presentation about the new findings since 2009, which he may do at the July meeting

4. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups (A cycle) (7:30-7:45 p.m.)

A Cycle

A. ECPC working group/Plan Commission

- Plan Commission:

- CMP deadlines have been extended by a month
- Two petitions by the same company: at Crescent Rd. and 3<sup>rd</sup> and Grant, four-five story apartment buildings where houses are currently
- Plan Commission wasn't as friendly to the projects as the developers had hoped
- Three major hurdles -- (1) it doesn't fit stylistically in the area, (2) green roof plan isn't refined, (3) and the developer wants valet parking
- Next meeting, the Plan Commission will be discussing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), AKA, "tiny houses"
- There will be a pilot project of 30 ADUs around the city
- Maybe add to the UDO pocket neighborhoods, in which residents live close to neighbors, in homes with small square footage, where there's lots of green areas -- almost communal-type living
- CMP discussions will be every Monday in June and will be voted on at the last Monday meeting
- All meetings are at 5:30 in Council Chambers

#### B. Waste/Hazards

- Main topic at last meeting was citywide composting
- Created a flow chart of the main issues facing them now:
  - Residents knowledge and skill is a hurdle
  - How it will be collected, process and certification, will there be a local plant or will it be sources out to contractors "un-locally," which is not ideal
  - The group has reached out to other communities and looked at some of the modeling used in Justin Ross's 2015 SPEA capstone about composting
  - Other cities are excited to talk about how their programs work
- Hoping to prepare a report to show to the city, probably by this year, to present to City Council
- Could automate the process, esp. considering the City is modernizing their sanitation pickup
- Ideally, the project stays in Bloomington -- we don't want it outsourced to Indy, for example
- How would it become policy?
  - Must pass the EC
  - Second, make a presentation to the Council
  - Third, talk to the mayor to get his buy-in
  - Important to have all interested parties on the same page at the same time -- CBU, the mayor, public works, the Council, etc.

#### C. Water

- At its previous meeting, the group discussed the stream inventory classification system project, which is now promoted by the CMP
- They're only in the research phase so far, but unfortunately they were having a hard time finding much about programs like this in other municipalities
- Also talked about improvements in the drinking water system, which is also in the CMP
- Hoping to get a plan together in the next couple months
- Lake Monroe watershed was on the agenda, but nothing new on this front really
- Should keep track of Friends of Lake Monroe's activities
- Monroe County EC would have more jurisdiction over the lake
- Chris: any news about the Lake Monroe water analysis the mayor supposedly appropriated funds for?
- Nobody had heard any news about this

### 5. Old business (7:45-8:15 p.m.)

#### A. Comprehensive Master Plan response

- We had the most amendment suggestions as any commission
- Couple were sent back for more clarification
  - One about leaving agriculturally designated districts as such was worded a little strangely and confused staff
- Some language is in the CMP related to the food policy charter, advocating for community gardens in the downtown area
  - Councilmember Isabel Piedmont-Smith was instrumental in pushing this through
- When we rewrite the amendments, is there a need for a representative of the EC to appear at the Plan Commission meeting to advocate for the amendments?
  - It couldn't hurt to have someone speak on behalf of the EC, maybe some members of the outreach working group could put something together before the June 5 meeting in support of the amendments and to keep the environment in mind when making these decisions
  - Might help to clarify some of the amendments in person
  - Motion in favor of having the outreach group work with Linda Thompson and prepare talking points to present to the Plan Commission
  - Passes unanimously

#### B. Eco-Heroes

- Quite a few submissions
- Many more in the child category but still enough in the adult category to have first-, second-, and third-place winners
- The ceremony went well; Dedaimia was emcee and the mayor made an appearance

#### C. New commissioners in working groups

- Dani is in the waste/hazards group at the moment, with a lot of work to do, but is also interested in biodiversity
- Kristina has shown interest in waste, water, and outreach working groups. Outreach is currently a little dormant
- Dani - maybe can't legislate good environmental behavior, but outreach could be used to elevate organizations being environmentally responsible
  - We could talk about using less Styrofoam to-go containers by highlighting those restaurants that do so
  - In the past we've done outreach about Styrofoam containers

### 6. New business (8:15-9:00 p.m.)

#### A. BEAP outreach plan

- Dedaimia sent her thoughts to Nick: A few years ago, we agreed the intern would produce a PowerPoint to take on the road and present to commissions and committees throughout the city
- The EC already presented it to the Council
- Riley can go back through the presentation that Sarah made to make it relate to commissions and committees
- Should also present it to members of the public
- Must be prepared to answer questions on a wide array of topics when making the presentation
- A main summary of some of the most important information could be helpful
- Riley will review the full presentation and prepare a modified version to present at the next EC meeting

#### B. Meeting with Mayor Hamilton/vacant commissioner spot

- Nick met with Mayor Hamilton about a month ago
- Nothing has changed with how he sees the EC since the December meeting

- The City doesn't have a very good grip on water infrastructure, so he looks at the EC as another subject matter expert to help guide the city into the future of our water source
- Nick made it known we don't want to combine with BCOS but will be happy to collaborate with them because we have different but equally important missions
- Last vacancy on the EC is the Mayor's to appoint
- Nick gave him the list of individuals we felt were qualified and he said he would get on it soon
- One of the issues we had in December was procedural, concerning how much approval we need to get from "superiors" before e.g. making a press release or announcing a position, etc.
- What he's looking for is more of a "heads up," not asking for permission
- BEAP presentation is important for this -- we want to frame it as an EC document that doesn't mean much unless the public puts pressure on elected officials to enact it into policy

#### C. Discussion around collaborations with other commissions

- Mayor has been talking with county commissioners about what to do with all the commissions
- One of their ideas was for the commissions in the City and County who have the same names/missions to merge, like a City/County EC, for example
- Some political problems could arise, especially considering the budget - where "City" and "County" money is going
- One advantage is that we wouldn't be so limited by our political boundaries
- Only two people showed up at the last MCEC meeting
- They're mostly focused on structures and new development, considering buildings are the largest GHG emitters in the city/county
- Collaborating with the county EC could present many benefits to us without necessarily combining with them
- Maybe we could let them know of projects we're working on, like giving them access to our minutes, inviting them to a meeting, or having a liaison to working groups
- It would be a good question to ask of any new projects we're taking on whether we should let other groups like the MCEC know about them and potentially work with them

#### D. Roberts Rules of Order

- Nick is looking for an individual to come give us a refresher course on procedure using RRO
- This could potentially happen at the August meeting

#### E. Recording our meetings (last-minute addition to agenda)

- Could be some value to have our meetings available online for the public to see
- Practically speaking though, when we know we're being recorded, we may not be as open and willing to speak freely
- We aren't currently being "secretive" with our meetings, and we don't have a lot of authority anyway, so why do we need to record meetings?
- More people than we may realize could be interested in it
- But we have minutes online, which is a good summary of what happens but isn't verbatim
- Is the benefit of having meetings recorded worth the possible drawbacks of some people being uncomfortable and potentially censoring themselves around a camera?

#### 7. Commissioner announcements and adjournment (9:00-9:05 p.m.)

- Dani: would like to get involved with outreach working group

- Mike: will be gone for June meeting
- Chris: Saturday, June 10 is Sustaining Nature and Your Land (SNAYL) day during Farmers Market in Showers
- Ramsay: Ditto. Deep Roots will be there
- Ryan is the new intern for the EC this summer. He just finished his second year at SPEA doing MPA/MSES with a concentration in community and environmental planning. His Service Corps fellowship is with Monroe County Planning. He received his undergrad degree from Iowa State. He would be interested in being part of the biodiversity working group. He's currently working on the Mayors Monarch Pledge.
- Nick: Let Nick or Linda know of any new CMP amendments before May 30

#### Meeting times

- A. Environmental Commission: 15 June, 7:00 p.m., McCloskey Room, City Hall
- B. Planning Committee: 1 June, & 8 June, 4:00 p.m., Lemon Room, City Hall
- C. Tree Commission: 21 June & 19 July, 9:30 a.m., Bryan Park
- D. BCOS meeting: 13 June, 6:00 p.m., McCloskey Room
- E. MCEC Com.: 14 June, 5:30 p.m., Nat U Hill Room, Courthouse
- F. ERAC: 14 June, 4:30 p.m., Winslow
- G. MPO CAC: 24 May, 6:30 p.m., McCloskey
- H. MCSWMD Board: 8 June, 4:00 p.m., Nat Hill III Room, Courthouse