



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 January 2018

City Hall—McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

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

Present: Ramsay Harik, Andy Marrs, Dave Debikey, Linda Thompson, Erin Hatch, Dedaimia Whitney, Mike Litwin, David Parkhurst, Chris Neggars, Matt Caldie, Riley Zipper, Nick Kappas

Absent: Chaim Julian

Guests: 2 guests

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

Motion was made to amend the agenda to discuss (1) ESD Sustainability Plan, (2) BHCP Press Release, and (3) EC Vacancies. The motion passed by voice vote.

Motion was made to approve the minutes of the December meeting, which passed with 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

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

No public comment

4. Board & Commission reports (7:30-7:40 p.m.)

Tree Commission: nothing to report

ERAC: David P. sent out the minutes electronically. Last topic of discussion was the deer cull, which will be on a bi-monthly basis. The dam at Weimer is also coming down, which will result in natural wetlands. Unsure about impacts on the mountain bike park. David asked Steve Cotter about details, but has yet to get a response.

5. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups (A cycle) (postponed until February)

A Cycle

- A. ECPC/Planning Commission
- B. Waste/Hazards
- C. Water

B Cycle

- A. Outreach
- B. ECPC/Planning Commission
- C. Biodiversity

6. Old business (7:40-8:00 p.m.)

A. End-of-year working group reports

- Thank you to working group chairs for writing up their reports. Nick is compiling them for the annual report.

B. Meeting presenters for 2018

- Nick asked Gwen and Ryan from BCOS to speak to us about their latest initiatives.
- The consultant on the ESD Sustainability Plan wants to speak with us in February
- Nick will work on booking presenters we came up with at the Dec meeting
- Invite whoever is in charge of salting roads (Public Works) to talk to us about the salt

7. New business (8:00-9:00 p.m.)

A. Bucket-list for 2018

- We have some of our 2018 accounted for, like the BHCP, but we need to think of other ideas that will help Bloomington thrive for the next year and beyond

Ideas

- Ramsay: The salt situation is disappointing. There's a lot of it and it's dumped very erratically, in clumps, all over the city; there has to be a better way to do it.
 - What are they actually spreading? It's toxic on the spot and it's toxic when it enters the waste stream.
 - There are more environmentally friendly materials, like grit, that can make the roads safer.
 - We should look into:
 - (1) Change the content of what's put down
 - (2) Change how they do it
 - (3) Be more judicious about *when* they do it
 - We should talk to whoever does it to find out their thought processes for how they do it and explain our concerns
 - Several years ago, they were putting down a green gel, but supposedly it was too expensive and they switched back to salt
 - They were also using sand but stopped because cyclists hated it
- Dedaimia: We should develop a systematic, intentional working relationship with the County EC.
 - David has been going to their meetings
 - But there are surely more ways we can collaborate
- Mike: UDO revisions are the most important this year.
 - We need to discuss what we want from an environmental standpoint and how we can get the habitat plan worked in
- Andy: There are several places on city property you can see Bradford pears and thousands of seedlings, and he'd like to see the city take out all the mature Bradford pears
 - According to Chris, if it's a deciduous tree, you need to spray the stump to prevent re-sprouting
 - Bradford pear, however, is vigorous, and the sprouts in the ground tend to be very productive
 - Invasive species BMP when birds are to blame for spreading the seeds is to focus on large concentrations of seed-producing individuals
- Dave D.: Clean building in the UDO
- David P: Changes to the UDO involving food, specifically allowing fences higher than four feet and allowing electric fences; recommending allowing people to sell vegetables from their land, even if they live within land zoned residential
 - The front yard can have four-foot fences, but the side yard can have an eight-foot fence
- Chris: Mayors Monarch Pledge - actually make it happen
 - Can we get the NWF to directly contact the city?
 - The administration knows it's on our radar, but we just need to take the final step
- Matt: The amount of waste that's created when students move in and out is concerning, surely there's something we can do about it
 - There's dorm appliances being set next to dumpsters that many people could probably use
 - How is there a way to reduce this waste?

- There's the Hoosier-to-Hoosier sale at the Warehouse, as one example
 - Part of it is working with the university and having the RA tell students where to put their waste
 - Jacki Bauer was heavily involved in the creation of the Hoosier-to-Hoosier program
- Chaim (in absence): MRF advocacy letter
- Riley: Native landscaping fund
 - A fund that private individuals and organizations can draw from for native plant installations
 - Potentially, developers could make in-lieu payments to the fund when they're taking out native species during construction activities
 - At the BZA meeting, the petitioner for Culver's offered to put trees elsewhere
- Erin: Expand recycling to all buildings and mandate source separation (separating compost from trash from recyclables)
 - Check out San Francisco's law on this, which includes fines for violations
- Nick: Researching our water infrastructure and the lifespan of our current water source
 - Erin was reading a Utilities Board plan from 2014 on water conservation, and it seems like they haven't followed through with it at all
 - We could reach out to them and ask them what's going on with this
 - Nick talked to the Mayor nine months ago or so and has expressed that there's not really a good handle on our water, and he suggested the EC take this up as a project to improve water quality
- Results:
 - Tied for first place: Habitat Network worked into UDO and UDO environmental standard changes
 - Tied for third place: research water infrastructure and find and take out Bradford pears

B. ESD Sustainability Plan

- Specific aspects is what ESD wants from us and a time commitment
- But we don't know how much to commit because we don't know that much about it; whether it's just for PR or anything will actually come from it

C. Habitat Plan Press Release

- Nick recommends that he be the point of contact, since he's the Chair of the EC
- Two places where the wording was problematic
 - (1) "unchecked development"
 - Andy didn't read that as an accusation, merely a statement
 - Ramsay says it's a generic statement, not about Bloomington
 - Dedaimia suggests "certain types of development"
 - Erin suggests that we move the "Bloomington is no exception" part goes at the end
 - But this would likely still be read negatively
 - Instead of "unchecked development," say what we want from the city - reexamining how developments are approved
 - Put the object in the place of the subject - "biodiversity can be threatened by development, government oversight is paramount."
 - (2) "It's imperative that the City...adopt policies and practices...that protect species within its borders"
 - Could we combine this with the last sentence?
 - Mary Catherine Carmichael said she would change it to "The EC recommends that..."
 - We're asking more for regulation and oversight as opposed to a "check"
 - This wordsmithing may be annoying but it goes back to what Nick and other have said about being more measured in our tactics
 - Our job is advocating for the environment to the city
- A motion was made to amend the press release per our discussion
 - It was approved unanimously

D. Vacancies on the EC

- Dave Debikey, Chaim, Dedaimia, and Chris are rolling off, on top of our two vacancies, which brings the total to six vacancies
- So it's important for us to do some recruiting and send names of qualified people along to Nick
- There are a few applications in currently that the Council hasn't been acting on, but Linda is bugging them
- One reason Dedaimia values the Tree Commission is because it's small, so she would encourage us to take advantage of the smallness for a while and to not fret about our size

8. Commissioner announcements (9:00-9:15 p.m.)

A. Farewell to Commissioners rolling off the EC

Nick: Wants to thank Dave, Dedaimia, and Chaim for their hard work and time when it mattered the most and for making the EC stronger.

Ramsay: Also wants to thank you all.

Andy: Ditto

Dave: Enjoyed his time on the EC and maybe he'll come back someday

Linda: Also wants to thank everyone and please encourage them to drop in sometimes

Erin: No announcements

Dedaimia: Terri Porter asked her to be on the UDO advisory committee, and she accepted. She'll be hanging close to Linda, Mike, and Nick to bring herself up to speed, so she'll stay in tune with what we're doing and fully intends to represent the EC's concerns on the UDO committee.

Mike: We've had a lot of people on and off that weren't productive, and many that were productive that we'll miss

David: Thanks to the retirees and for the pizza

Chris: April will be his last meeting, so hopefully we can get some new people on by April

Matt: No announcement

Riley: Echoing everyone else's sentiments

9. Adjournment

Nick made a motion to adjourn, which was passed. The meeting was adjourned around 8:35.

Meeting times

- A. Environmental Commission: 15 February, 2018, 7:00 p.m., McCloskey Room, City Hall
- B. EC Planning Committee: 24 January, 31 January, 4:00 p.m., Lemon Room, City Hall
- C. Tree Commission: 21 February 2018, 9:30 a.m., Rose Hill office
- D. BCOS meeting: 13 February 2018, 6:00 p.m., McCloskey Room
- E. MCEC Com.: 14 February 2018, 5:30 p.m., Nat U Hill Room, Courthouse
- F. ERAC: 14 February 2018, 4:30 p.m., TBD
- G. MPO CAC: 24 January 2018, 6:30 p.m., McCloskey
- H. MCSWMD Board: 8 February 2018, 4:00 p.m., Nat Hill III Room, Courthouse