



**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

22 March 2018

City Hall—McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

1. Introductions (7:00-7:15 p.m.)

Present: Linda Thompson, Ramsay Harik, Andy Marrs, Nick Kappas, Matt Caldie, Erin Hatch, Riley Zipper, Chris Neggars, Erica Walker, Zoe Need, Morgan Taylor

Absent: Dave Parkhurst

Guests: None

A. Introduction of new Commissioners: Zoe Need, Morgan Taylor, Erica Walker

Erica Walker: Graduated from SPEA with a dual MPA/MSES in 2016. Works for Indiana Finance Authority, who also hires scientists. Erica works mainly with water resources and infrastructure planning. Water science is her primary interest. Joined because, since she's out of school now, she's interested in being a part of the community.

Zoe: First year MPA student, from Bloomington. Concentrating in environmental policy and natural resource management. Focused on plant interaction in undergrad, which is what brought her to the EC.

Morgan: From Texas, received a dual MPA/MSES from SPEA in Dec. 2016. Studied music and oceanology in undergrad. Works for Crane as a Contract Specialist, specifically in implementing more sustainable warfare solutions at Crane. Wants to begin giving back to the community now that she's out of school.

2. Approval of minutes (7:15-7:17 p.m.)

Ramsay said that at the very end of last meeting, a bomb was sort of dropped about the EC's role in the administration, and he was hoping that we could discuss that at some point tonight.

Nick said that he wanted to put a poll out to have a special EC session for us to discuss that and our path forward. Specifically, our role in the City as Commissioners, since we've been taking a more proactive role regarding petitions and development and have been seen in the public more often.

Minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Public comment (7:17-7:30 p.m.)

None.

Brief discussion of Erin's first meeting for Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS) and other liaison related matters:

- Both of the last two meetings, one of which was a work session and the other a regular commission meeting, have revolved around much of the things we were talking about and also the Sustainable Action Plan.
- There was some discussion of their approach in putting these together, focusing on the environmental aspect of sustainability, but most discussion was an overview of the processes and timeline for the SAP.
- Nick thinks it would be prudent to make sure they know there's an open line of communication, because they can do well on the other social and economic factors of sustainability and we can collaborate on the environmental aspects of sustainability
- If we're speaking with two separate voices, they could end up becoming confusing later on
- Erin said she could suggest the chair get in contact with Nick
- Linda said they will soon have a new staff liaison (Sustainability Coordinator for ESD), from the west coast, who has been a sustainability coordinator before her two year stint with the Peace Corps.
- We have several liaisons with other commissions, including ERAC, Tree Commission, and others, and we're making an effort to reach out more to the Monroe County EC as well.
- Nick needs people to step up to the plate to go to other commission meetings, especially the tree commission, but it's difficult because their meetings are at 9:30 AM.
- Zoe said she would be willing to go to the Tree Commission meetings for at least the rest of this semester.
- Chris also said he would be willing to go as our rep once at the April meeting, because he knows Lee Huss professionally, to take notes and report back, potentially to prepare Zoe, if she decides to serve as liaison
- Chris also has another TC related announcement. The City has been given 200 tulip poplar trees, and Lee is selling some and also looking for good sites to plant them around the City
- Erica asked if the sites had to be dry, and Chris said they can be a little moist but well-drained
- Trees can be in City parks and between the street and the sidewalk (the easement)
- They're big trees, so they might not go well in an easement

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

A Cycle

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

B Cycle

A. Outreach

- Linda said that we used to table at the County Master Gardener Fair, but it's been canceled this year
- We could also talk about tabling at the farmers market again this year to engage the public more in what we're doing
- Nick is envisioning tabling at the farmers market including information about our habitat connectivity plan, including maps, and examples for the public

B. ECPC/Planning Commission

- ECPC: One case to talk about: Bloomington Co-Housing
 - At the intersection of Maxwell and Short St.
 - The past one in 2014 included housing and parking clustered, with common space for a kitchen, workroom, gardening spaces, etc. to share
 - But the people that proposed it couldn't make it work, probably financially, so someone bought it from them and they added another parcel, which is the biggest change
 - Loren Wood is developing it

- Controversy includes vacating a part of Short St., because it would dead-end and the City doesn't like that, so they recommend that instead of vacating it altogether they'd be granted an easement
- The impediment is the that the Montessori school is there, and students have to cross it to get to the playground
- Made up of 27 single-family houses, all with a very small footprint
- Some are two stories, close together on small lots with parking along the outside perimeter
- A log house is on the property which will be made into a "guest house"
- Not many trees on the site, which will all go, but there are some along the edges
- Nearly to the limit on impervious pavement
- Have said they might have some green features, but have made *no commitments* yet
- Erin asked if someone else is working on it, because someone from BCOS might be involved
 - Linda is unsure of this
- Lot is just north of the southeast YMCA and just southeast of the Montessori school, the developer is not committing to pathways through yet, prefer for it to be kind of its own community
- People walk through the area now though, so it could be impeding pedestrian movement
- Just yesterday they turned in a tree preservation plan
- Haven't committed to affordable housing yet, however, they could be talking with the administration, but it's currently unclear
- Plan Commission: Comprehensive Plan was approved at special session, and the first round of UDO talks should be coming soon
 - Even though the environmental section probably won't come until the summer, it's still important for us to be involved because all land use will impact the environment – so every chapter will affect us in some way

C. Biodiversity

- Talked about Habitat Network implementation at the last meeting, including Erin and Riley's proposed ordinance for a Habitat Connectivity Overlay District
- We could possibly send a mailer around the city because spring is coming and people are thinking about gardening, maybe a postcard or something
 - HT Articles, letters to the editor
 - What about local stores that sell plants, if they would let us post something in support of natives
 - This effort has been headed up by Grow Native and INPAWS
 - The press release for the habitat plan hasn't gone out yet, and Mary Catherine Carmichael has been replaced by another Comm Director at OotM
- Could biodiversity put together a guest column to send to the HT?
 - Linda talked to someone at the MC-IRIS luncheon and said she was interested in getting stories, so we should send our information her way
 - Action item for biodiversity is to meet and discuss to start drafting a letter or guest column in support of natives in Bloomington as Spring is coming
- Ramsay brought up the conflict of interest, since he owns Deep Roots, a native plant nursery
- About the overlay, Nick talked to the consultants about a green overlay district, but they talked about incorporating the things we recommended into the existing districts and overlays
 - But Andy says the point is to protect a high-quality corridor

- The consultants were telling the city employees, that many green features we ask for are standard elsewhere, so why don't we just write them directly into the ordinance?
- The consultants should have a first draft by the first week of April, and they'll send a draft a couple weeks before they come back for another visit and will have another round of stakeholder meetings so we'll have something to look at
- Chris says that the map files probably shouldn't live only on his computer, so he'll send them to Linda

5. Old business (7:45 - 8:25 p.m.)

A. Eco Heroes update

- Donor letters have been sent out, and \$300 in pledges have been made so far
- Only one entry so far, but many people have emailed Riley and Erin back and said that they plan on entering
- We'll get together a committee in the next couple weeks to judge the entries and compile the prizes
- We could also use volunteers to help the morning of the event, as well as an emcee to announce the winners and congratulate them
- Nick wants Erin and Riley to send an update on April 2

B. Mayor's Monarch Pledge update

- Erin is looking for external confirmation about what kind of actions the City has completed
- Ryan hasn't gotten back to us about the letter he wrote, and Erin suggested that we just write our own letter
- The date for Bugfest was confirmed, but Erin can't remember the exact date so she'll get back to us on that
- We were planning on having the mayor make the proclamation at this event (but the mayor doesn't know that yet)

C. EC handbook review, discussion, and adoption

- Riley sent the handbook out again
- Mike found a housekeeping item, in the Relationships with other Commissions and Organizations. It mentioned ERAC, but it didn't mention how it's connected to the Parks Department
- Linda suggests that we vote on the handbook but not the history section, since the files haven't been sent to City Hall yet (still)
- Nick asks for a motion to be made to adopt, which Ramsay made and was seconded. The handbook is adopted unanimously
- Nick would like to be bound in a physical copy, in the binders
- To save trees, we could possibly print one copy and keep it in the office for safekeeping, as well as a digital copy on Google Drive

D. UDO working groups: processes & schedule

- Discussed above, under "ECPC/Planning Commission" bullet

6. New business (8:25-8:45 p.m.)

A. EC's involvement with the following plans:

a. ~~Comprehensive Plan~~

b. Transportation Plan

- Last Linda heard is that they wanted more input from Planning
- The public meetings were good and well-attended and everyone shared their ideas, but it was a lot of the same people who go to all the meetings (and thus the same ideas), and many of them were interested in only one or two particular issues
- Linda's comments had to do only with the map, because they had roads and side-paths through a lot of places that looked empty on the map but that were

actually wooded—making the point that it's not good to cut down trees to install a path

c. Sustainability Action Plan

- SAP is the first of its kind for the city, but it also mimics a large part of the BEAP
- Alex Crowley, director of ESD, wants it to be aspirational but also practical
- The text will be released around June, so the summer will be busy!
- We will have to think about having other meetings where we can put together all our input
- Morgan asks if the SAP is the strategic plan for the department
 - Not exactly, but the department is writing it for the City as a whole, but is limiting their scope to environmental sustainability for the most part

7. Commissioner announcements (8:45-9:00 p.m.)

Andy: None

Ramsay: Deep Roots opens the 31st, expanded and with lots of new stuff in the early spring they didn't have last year

Linda: Put an advertisement together for a summer intern

Mike: Re the SAP, he's been going to the working group meetings for the Environmental Quality and Natural Systems part of the plan and will forward his notes on. Also thanks to Riley for the legislative updates, and it looks like none of the really bad things we were worried about are going to happen, except for multiflora rose and purple loosestrife being taken off the prohibited list of plants. He also went to the Friends of Lake Monroe meeting, and the first hour was a presentation. He didn't get to stay for the rest of the meeting but he'll send the notes around.

Morgan: None

Zoe: None

Erica: None

Chris: Offered to go with Lee to plant one of the bicentennial poplars

Riley: None

Erin: None

Matt: None

Nick: At the next meeting, we could go to the Irish Lion to celebrate Chris and Riley's time, and the new commissioners. Nick is also on the County Plan Commission too for a one-year term as a City PC representative. They don't consider the environment much in their discussions, so he'll work to try to encourage these conversations during his term.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM

Meeting times

- A. Environmental Commission: 19 April, 7:00 p.m., McCloskey Room, City Hall
- B. EC Planning Committee: 28 March, 11 April, 4:00 p.m., Lemon Room, City Hall
- C. Tree Commission: 18 April, 9:30 a.m., Rose Hill office
- D. BCOS meeting: 10 April, 6:00 p.m., McCloskey Room
- E. MCEC Com.: 11 April, 5:30 p.m., Nat U Hill Room, Courthouse
- F. ERAC: 11 April, 4:30 p.m., TBD
- G. MPO CAC: 28 March, 6:30 p.m., McCloskey
- H. MCSWMD Board: 12 April, 4:00 p.m., Nat Hill III Room, Courthouse