



**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 October 2018

City Hall—McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation (7:00 p.m.)
  - Present: Erica Walker, Morgan Taylor, David Parkhurst, Ryan Clemens, Matt Caldie, Nick Kappas (Chair), Andrea Webster, Lindsey Hummel, Zoe Need, Andrew Guenther, Linda Thompson (Liaison), Kate Corcoran (SPEA Fellow), Erin Hatch (Intern)
  - Absent: Mike Litwin
2. Introductions: New Commissioners Andrea Webster and Lindsey Hummel (7:01 - 7:08)
  - Lindsey Hummel: Current master student at IU SPEA. Completed undergraduate education at Purdue in environmental science.
  - Andrea Webster: Currently works at IU at the Environmental Resilience Institute (ERI), which was launched around a year ago. Previously worked for the city of Louisville, KY, in their office of sustainability.
3. Approval of minutes (7:08 - 7:10)
  - Morgan moved to approve, Andrew seconded. Call for a voice vote, Andrea and Lindsey abstained, remaining commissioners voted yes. September minutes approved.
4. Public comment. Limit 5 minutes per person (7:10 - 7:20)
  - No public comment
5. Reports from TC, MoCo EC, BCOS, & ERAC (7:20 - 7:40)
  - Tree commission cancelled this month. Carrie from IDNR is supposed to come and speak at the next upcoming meeting.
  - Dave has not been able to attend the Monroe Environmental Commission meetings, as they overlap with ERAC.
  - BCOS has been reviewing the recent UDO updates, with a focus on the sustainability and affordable housing incentives. BCOS also discussed the success of the grant for the city to hire a value chain coordinator, which will work with local food growers and buyers to help build connections and the local food economy. This is one of four positions across Indiana, and was through a grant through Purdue and the USDA.
    - o Linda: What did you discuss in regard to the incentives?
      - BCOS is uncertain about linking incentives with the singular LEED standard, would like to have more of a matrix of choices and plan to look more into this. Also discussed the strength of the incentives

themselves, as they are similar to the last iteration which were not used much. Lastly, questions about whether the incentives for sustainability and affordable housing should be the same, as they have different impacts for the developer.

- o David: Hoping this new position will work to create a food hub.
- o Andrea: Is this a full time position?
  - Yes, full time for 3 years.
- At the last ERAC meeting was presented with a map of Switchyard Park. Additionally spent time talking the change in the deer cull that utilizes public participation with coordination from previous contractor, using local hunters rather than sharp shooters. Hoping that this approach will do better or just as well as getting the 60 some deer as last time from the cull. The Wapehani dam is now gone, and the plan is to put in native trees and wetland plants, should be interesting project.

## 6. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups (**A Cycle**) (7:40 – 8:05)

### **A Cycle**

#### A. ECPC/Planning Commission

- There are two projects about previously that have had their status updated. The Waterstone Bloomington property, a.k.a. Morton North Lot 1, which has been on the Plan Commission agenda the last couple of months. This proposal is for a motel and apartments along 11<sup>th</sup> St. There are no revisions to the plan, however the petition will not be moving forward. The second project is the Bloomington Cooperative Living project, which was discussed at the last ECPC meeting. The petition has been withdrawn, and the petitioners still want to proceed with the project but have to work on financing.
- The next project that is upcoming is the Curry Urban property on Pete Ellis Dr. This property is just north of Barnes and Noble, on a currently empty 3.2 acre lot. The petitioner is requesting rezoning from commercial to planned unit development (PUD), an area that creates its own zoning regulations as opposed to what's in our municipal code. The building, which would be adjacent to Pete Ellis Dr., will be commercial on the first level and the building that would be towards the back edge of the property would be only residential. This zoning district requires all first floors to be commercial. The project would consist of four floor buildings, with one building being five floors due to the slope of the terrain. The petitioner is proposing 280 units, 360 beds, and 306 parking spaces. Petitioner is also requesting smaller setbacks leading to half as much remaining greenspace as is required, and only half the commercial space that is required for this zoning area. The reason for the PUD request is economic feasibility. The petitioner has included a few green building and community elements, such as downspout cisterns to utilize roof water for irrigation, putting in an unspecified amount of workforce housing, public art and herb garden space for tenants, and a music room.
  - o David: I think of PUDs as being compromises, how do you think the negatives and positives balancing out in this project?
  - o Linda: Don't think they are balanced.
  - o Zoe: What is the ratio of units to parking spaces?
  - o Linda: 306 parking spaces, and there is some street parking.

- o Ryan: It seems there are many other PUDs in that area, and would this project be similar to other PUDs in the area?
  - o Linda: Unsure, I know the apartment complex across the street has multiple green elements such as greenspaces and detention pond.
  - o Andrea: Are these circles, on the project blue print, trees?
  - o Linda: Yes, but that is not where they will go exactly, especially since some of these overlap with underground lines, so there won't actually be as much room for tree plantings. Some of the proposed tree plots are also not as wide as required. This plan shows their general idea of what they want to do to see if they can change the plot zoning from commercial to PUD, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting that would examine more of the details if they are approved to rezone.
  - o Andrea: What is role of this commission on these matters?
  - o Linda: The role of the commission is to say what can be made better environmentally, and to advise on these changes. This is a little tough in the urban area as its primarily green building and landscaping.
  - o Nick: Our comments can be used to advise and support decisions by the Plan Commission to either approve or deny petitions. Right now we have this battle between the need for affordable housing development and environmentally sensitive development. This is due to the fact that if you want to support affordable housing it often starts with affordable land, which tends to be environmentally sensitive land. This relationship between the environment and affordability is one that is not fair for anyone in the community. Hopefully the ongoing UDO update process can help address this issue.
  - o Andrea: This is all about the PUD decision; can you talk more about the timeline for this decision?
  - o Linda: The comments need to be in by next Monday for final revisions, the sooner the better, after that we will write a memo for the Plan Commission meeting for November 5<sup>th</sup> with the packet going out the week before. A PUD in a perfect world is a convergence between the commercial properties on 3<sup>rd</sup> St. and the residential properties behind it. PUDs are supposed to be greater than 5 acres. They were originally intended to help environmentally sensitive areas, for example a plot has an area of nice wooded land on the back of the plot so request a smaller set back in the front or increased density on the rest of the property in order to leave the wooded area intact.
  - o Lindsey: Would that sort of language be included in the PUD?
  - o Nick: The PUD would have to state what their guiding zoning district would be and what the other aspects would include and their plans on how to achieve their proposed plan.
  - New members on the ECPC
    - o Andrew and Ryan are interested in joining the ECPC working group.
- B. Waste/Hazards
- No updates.
- C. Water
- No updates, due to pause in meetings until after UDO process.

**B Cycle**

A. Outreach

B. ECPC/Planning Commission

C. Biodiversity



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7. Old business (8:05 – 8:15)

A. UDO recommendation session planning

- Module 3 is set to be released in November and will involve administration and operations. After the release of that module then the ratification process will occur. At that time the EC should still be developing a plan of action to speak at those ratification meetings.
- Recommend that we make it a December meeting activity where we can all go over Module 2 environmental section then have a discussion.
- Linda: Is this document with our comments the most up-to-date?
- Erica: We were working off of the old UDO and the only one who looked at the new UDO was Mike, so he brought his comments to the module 2 meetings. I merged his thoughtful and well researched comments into the last document of our comments. We should formally approve any comments in an upcoming meeting. Happy to send my notes to everyone after this. Each comment should just be a bullet point on what needs to be changed.
- Linda: We need to be specific. Rather than simply state “change riparian buffer widths”, you should instead be stating the specific desired riparian buffer width.

C. Updates from Interns

- Erin: Continued work on Agreements of Development tracking document and report. This is an update of a database and report created in 2010, I am updating to December 2017. This tracks various agreements for development approval for petitions that go in front of the Plan Commission that relate to environmental quality. This should help us understand trends in development across the years.
- Kate: Have been examining riparian buffer and sinkhole ordinances for other similar municipalities. Each ordinance has been pretty unique, with a commonality being that most cities have riparian buffers with different zones and widths that are dependent on the type of water body or stream classification. These have been anywhere from 10ft to 300ft in width, with most falling in the 55ft to 100ft range. Currently Bloomington has a 75ft buffer with three distinct zones. Sinkhole ordinances are more difficult, as not many other municipalities have sinkhole ordinances and there is large variation between those municipalities that do have sinkhole ordinances.
  - o Nick: Let's plan on having you present at the December meeting.
  - o Dave: Madison, Wisconsin, may be a good municipality to examine, but they don't have sinkholes.
  - o Andrea: Kentucky has a lot of karst land, and Bowling Green has dealt with a major sink hole that receive a lot of press, so they might have an ordinance.

B. Tabling at Farmers' Market process and dates

- Erin: Was able to give out all of the milkweed plugs.
- Nick: Had lots of people talk to us and tell us about their monarch experiences.

- Dave: It's very hard to start milkweeds from seeds to plugs are better.
- Erin: It may be good to give away native plants other than milkweeds in the future since many people expressed already having milkweeds in their yards.
- Nick: Farmer's markets will often reach the same type of individuals, so I would like to do more work with schools.
- Dave: Leonard Springs Nature Days is a way to do outreach to kids, they take kids out to different stations to learn about streams, forests, and more.

## 8. New business (8:15 - 8:50)

### A. Guest speaker discussion

- Nick: Kate will be guest speaker for December on her intern work. In the past we had the quality director of water for CBU to talk about their changes, had Green Camino come in, Friends of Lake Monroe, the Nature Conservancy, and DNR to talk about urban deer. Maybe we want to reconnect with recycling individuals and those working within the student waste stream.

### B. Transportation Plan update

- Nick: We went through the first round of public comment. Improving our bike alleyways will only increase our ridership. We are nowhere near platinum, and we are actually going backwards from this goal. If the Transportation Plan is approved by Plan Commission, it will become an appendix in the Comprehensive Master Plan which will then shape the infrastructure plans into the future for the planning department. As part of a statutory requirement in Indiana any municipality with a planning department has to come up with a thoroughfare plan, so this Transportation Plan is just an update as part of that statutory requirement.
  - o Linda: There are proposals for road extensions through the greenspaces we have identified as corridors in our Bloomington Habitat Connectivity Plan, as they are currently open land.
  - o Nick: Is that something that the environmental commission should have a memo written about, and have it go out before the Plan Commission meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>. We can all take a look at the transportation plan and roadways and we can formulate a memo pre-emptively approve the memo.
  - o Nick: Let's draft an EC letter concerning this, not an ECPC memo, then plan to have it go into the packet for Plan Commission November 9<sup>th</sup>. Due by October 31<sup>st</sup>, comments sent to myself.

### D. 2018 mini project discussion

- Morgan: A mini project could be to conduct outreach to figure out what incentives would incentivize industry to environmental action and to do more in terms of environmental quality.
- Nick: Do you think that your survey would accomplish that?
- Morgan: This would be more likely to involve one on one conversation and not a survey.
- Nick: What can we do to help restaurants and businesses to compost their food waste?
- Lindsey: I suspect that we would find that the main barriers would be cost.

### E. Slate committee for officer election

- Nick: Per our handbook in November each year, the chair nominates a slate committee, who then garners nominations for each of the positions, which are up on an annual cycle.
- Dave: The interns do all the secretary part and Linda does much of the treasurer part, so what is the purpose of the Secretary/Treasury position?

- Nick: Because for a while the chair did anything, what I envision is that the secretary is the individual who talks to the chair to help decide the upcoming meeting agendas and distributes of minutes. The chair is responsible for everything external representing the commission, while the vice-chair is everything internal such as meeting with working group chairs. The secretary creates the agenda with the chair and gets it to Linda, and talks with Linda about the budget. These position descriptions are in the handbook.
  - Linda: We actually used to have a woman from a temp agency who would come to take minutes for us.
- F. EcoHeroes theme discussion and early-stage planning
- EcoHeroes is an annual art contest in April on Earth Day. It has K-12 categories and an adult category with each having their own 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner.
  - By December, the goal is to pick a theme and start reaching out to all of the schools either before or after the winter break.
  - Linda: Also the teachers can include it in their semester curricula if we can get it out to teachers early enough.
  - Nick: We do solicit donations from businesses for prizes and monetary donations as well, so the earlier the better. We should pull our last four themes to figure out what they are to make sure we don't repeat themes.
- F. ~~What to do with left over milkweed~~
- G. Update and/or report regarding the "to do" list in the BEAP
- Linda: Erin made a list of what we have and haven't done from the BEAP and should recirculate this list before our bucket list meeting.
9. Commissioner announcements (8:50 – 9:00)
- Matt: No announcements.
  - Dave: He attended the state meeting for the Society of American Foresters. The presentation was all about how forests and birds interact and how different birds come into different age forests. The last talk was about corridors, and since the biodiversity committee came up with three different corridors in Bloomington thought this was pertinent. This talk mentioned various grants available to studying corridors. Additionally, he was elected to the board of BloomingFoods, so thank you to everyone who voted.
  - Morgan: No announcements.
  - Erica: On the 25<sup>th</sup>, next Thursday, the FLM has asked one of us to show our faces at their meeting and have invited the director of the forest service to talk about a logging project in the southern area of the Lake Monroe watershed with a large acreage impact (~4000 ac). Looking for the EC to provide a statement or input about this either during or after the meeting. Tomorrow, Bernie Sanders is going to be town at Dunn Meadows and is speaking on behalf of Liz Watson at 11am. Additionally, she has accepted a new job with 120 Water Audit as their director of lead programs.
  - Linda: Six bradford pears have been taken off the b-line trail after 10 years.
  - Andrew: No announcements.
  - Erin: No announcements.
  - Zoe: She is searching for actual full time employment right now.
  - Lindsey: No announcements.
  - Andrea: No announcements.
  - Kate: She offered to share the spreadsheet on the riparian buffer spread sheet, and voted recently as well.
  - Nick: Thank you to the Mayor's Office and City Council for the push on commission appointments, and thanks to Linda. He hopes to come back to the commission at some point. Thanks to Erin and Matt and everyone else for the

farmer's market tabling and plant plug giveaway. Helps to get our name out and for awareness.

- Dave: Last comment. He attended a seminar today at SPEA. The seminar was by a women from Alaska and involved research on pollutants including PCBs. When he first came to Bloomington, PCBs were considered good for electric cathodes and it was just coming to light that they were dangerous, but the city leaders at the time were all in support of Westinghouse. As a result, it took a long time until PCBs became a city issue and it was only a few years ago that the pollutant level in the fish in Clear Creek were low enough to be safe.

#### 10. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 9pm.

#### Other meeting times

- A. Environmental Commission: 15 November, 7:00 p.m., McCloskey Room, City Hall
- B. EC Planning Committee: 24 October, 4:00 p.m., Lemon Room, City Hall
- C. Tree Commission: 21 November, 9:30 a.m., Rosehill
- D. BCOS meeting: 13 November, 6:00 p.m., McCloskey Room
- E. MCEC Com.: 14 November, 5:30 p.m., Nat U Hill Room, Courthouse
- F. ERAC: 12 December, 4:30 p.m., TBD