



# Minutes

## Commission on Sustainability

Tuesday, December 11, 2018, 6:00 p.m.  
McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 N. Morton

1. Call to Order
  - Called to Order 6:05pm
2. Roll Call
  - Present: Gwen White (Chair), Cynthia Bretheim, Erin Hatch, Teddie Mower, Jana McGee, Pam Weaver, Dave Rollo, Olivia Ranseen, Autumn Salamack (Liaison)
  - Absent: Sneha Dave, Chris Reinhart, Andrew Predmore, Nejla Routsong
3. Approval of Agenda
  - Dave moved to approve the agenda, Teddie seconded. Unanimous voice vote yes. Agenda approved.
4. Approval of November Meetings minutes
  - Meeting minutes will be approved in January as Erin is running late in editing minutes.
5. Announcements
  - Jana: Mother Hubbard's cupboard is having advocacy sessions for bills in the Indiana General Assembly, including an upcoming session this Friday.
  - Dave: City Council is weighing a vote on two garage bonds, and have been discussing them for about a month now. Due to structural problems the 4<sup>th</sup> St. garage has been slated for demolition. This garage would be replaced and expanded to increase from 350 to 550 car capacity. The other bond is for a garage in the trades district for about 300 cars. There is a lot of sustainability conversations around this, as this can be seen to facilitate car traffic, but on the other hand could be a more compact use that surface parking. Together the bonds are about 29.5 million dollars. Hopefully these garages will be there for around 50 years, so these projects have to take into consideration what people will use 50 years from now. Discussions have included sustainable elements to be included such as electric vehicle charging station, solar photovoltaic on the roofs,

infrastructure for future electric vehicle charging expansion, bike parking, retail space on the ground floor, and bathrooms.

- Gwen: Where would the trades parking garage be?
- Dave: Don't know yet. Right now there is a preference for locating the garage on already city owned property.
- Pam: I attended one of the meetings, and the city didn't really do a good job about explaining how the tax increment financing (TIF) districts work, which the trades district is.
- Dave: The bond buyers will be looking at the ability for the bond to be paid back with 25% coming from garage revenue and 75% from TIF. Payroll taxes continually flow into the TIF. There is a concern that the TIF should be used for other purposes besides the garage, such as funding affordable housing.
- Pam: It was passed over pretty quickly that the new 4<sup>th</sup> St. garage would be built in order to be convertible with the ability to change floors in the future from parking to other uses such as retail or office.
- Dave: Yes, a preference in the proposal is have at least part of the garage convertible. The 4<sup>th</sup> St. garage is currently about 90% capacity, and increasing its capacity seems prudent as future growth is projected. With the trades district garage the total expected need is 1500 spaces by 2026, this garage would address 1/5 of that projected need. Right now one thing people want is a parking demand study, as maybe there are ways to mitigate demand. Next July there should be a finished demand study. We currently don't know what the future holds, so hopefully this study can give us some insight.
- Cynthia: Previously I thought there were issues with the 3 hour free parking and usage by downtown residences rather than usage by downtown shoppers.
- Pam: Is it hard to have garages go down below street level rather than up?
- Dave: You have bedrock pretty close to the surface, so not much space to build down.
- Brian: It also displaces people and takes a lot of time and money.
- Cynthia: It's a little daunting adding that amount of cars on our roads, I know previously there were discussions about locating parking outside of the main downtown area and then having downtown shuttles from those garages for individuals who can't walk.
- Dave: The shuttle is still being talk about.
- Pam: Is that something the TIF district could pay for?
- Dave: TIF is used for infrastructure improvements.

## 6. Public Comment

- No comments.

7. Brian Payne - Economic Sustainability, Department of Economic and Sustainable Development

- Brian: There are a lot of state tax credits and tax incentives, only responsible for local incentives. The City of Bloomington Department of Economic and Sustainable Development (ESD) is a local portal for those seeking incentives. There are incentives for both existing businesses who are expanding and new businesses.
- Type 1: tax abatement. This abates a certain amount of tax liability of the increased assessed value of the property; this doesn't affect the base value but net gain. In order for businesses to obtain an abatement they can petition the economic development commission (EDC) for a tax abatement. Under recent state law this abatement can be for up to 10 years and abate anyway from 0 – 100% tax liability, so terms are flexible for the locality. These have to be in an economic revitalization area, which are determined on project-by-project basis, where an area has become undesirable or impossible of normal development or occupancy. The businesses have to create full time living wage employment, and have to make capital investments enhancements to the tax base. Also, there is a preference for businesses that improve sustainability, quality of life, community services, or affordable housing stock. So businesses come to ESD work out a deal, then take that to EDC then take to city council for approval.
- Type 2: Community revitalization enhancement district (CRED). Increased sales and use, and income tax dollars flow to state, which then goes back to the locality. Three types of incentives come from these districts: 1) make payments directly from CRED to reimburse businesses for expansion and infrastructure enhancements they make, 2) future revenue reimbursement, or 3) state tax credit to business that make investments to CRED. These are administered by the state not the locality.
  - Pam: How are these districts set?
  - Brian: Under Indiana statute, and Bloomington currently has two defined CREDs.
- Type 3: Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. Property tax revenue above pre-TIF designation tax base go into redevelopment commission, this money can be bonded off of or directly spend the money. Bloomington has six TIF districts currently. Money from TIF districts have to be spend in the TIF or TIF adjacent areas, this is less strict than CRED.
- Type 4: Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction (EZID). These areas have to have a certain amount of poverty and population demographic characteristics; most of Bloomington is in an Bloomington Urban Enterprise Zone. Any business in the zone can apply for tax deductions for property investments, purchase investment equity, payments to employees, and loans for investments. Businesses then have to give 21% of their tax savings to the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Associate (BUEA), if they are also in a TIF district then 9% fee to the BUEA. Businesses may apply

for receive anywhere from 1-4 incentives, and don't need council approval or negotiations. Employees are also eligible for tax deductions on wages, if they live and work in those zones.

- Pam: Where does the money the BUEA receive go?
- Brian: The BUEA is an independent non-profit association. This funding has been used to give business scholarships, education scholarships for residents, or give loans to businesses.
- Erin: Is it typical for other cities to use a NGO to manage this money?
- Brian: It is mandated by state statute to use an independent non-profit organization to manage this money. What these groups do with the funds is totally up to them.
- Cynthia: Is there a preference for local businesses?
- Brian: There is not a statutory preference for local businesses, but the staff and local legislators can weigh in on those preferences. There are written standards for what the EDC should consider, but within those they can interpret the regulations however they want.
- Erin: Who utilizes this type of incentive?
- Brian: Yes, the EZID, the CRED, and TIF have been used towards existing businesses. Typically the tax abatements are for newer businesses, however lately these have been used for affordable housing.
- Dave: How do retain wealth in the community, how do we build businesses and grow wages, and how do we direct what kind of community we want to be? What is your view on optimal growth and direction of growth?
  - Brian: We in the ESD do think about what is sustainable for the community; I personally look at it through wage growth. We want wage growth. We do currently have a lot of people in poverty who need a living wage from a company that will be sustainable, we also need housing stock so that low and mid-wage workers can own their own home We try and look at those ideas and apply them when we consider these applying these economic growth tools.
  - Autumn: In terms of economics, its not growth for growth sake its economic prosperity.
  - Brian: Factors that shrink the demand of parking, right now there is flight back into cities, if we ever make walnut and college two way and we have a density that makes it annoying to drive downtown you'd see more people bike and walk.
  - Cynthia: That is a slippery slope as replacing already existing affordable housing to increase density isn't always best.
  - Pam: Just because you change how many people are living in a neighborhood, doesn't mean it has to change the neighborhood

feeling, as long as previous housing stock isn't replaced with all high cost development.

- Cynthia: Increased density can be done nicely, but if its all rental it can change that sense of community.
- Dave: The Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) and Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) both present a nice balance between redevelopment and maintaining current neighborhoods.
- Brian: One of our budget goals in next year is an economic strategic plan, which BCOS can participate in.
- Gwen: When will the economic development strategic plan occur? What are the sustainable development metrics included and can BCOS be involved in helping to devise those metrics?
- Brian: Within the next year as one of the budget goals. In terms of sustainability metrics, currently SPEA fellows are working on compiling economic development data relevant to a town and how to display on a platform that is legible internally and attractive externally. That platform should be up in the next few months.
- Autumn: Have you had conversations about green jobs in particular? We didn't really touch upon that when looking at the SAP.

8. Report from Autumn Salamack, Department of Economic and Sustainable Development

- Autumn: Just received letter from the Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship, who are going to do a week long intensive process in the spring to create a solution to a problem in the community and will seek grant funding to address a sustainability project. Asking the commission to work with them to during the week of March 18<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> to talk about Bloomington challenges around sustainability. I can follow up with them to clarify what exactly they want, number of people, and when we should tell them by.
- In November sent out first community sustainability newsletter, only had 150 names to sent out to, with about 70-80 people opened the email, The next newsletter is planned for February 2019, let Autumn know by end of January if there is anything to add to the newsletter.
  - Dave: Maybe send the newsletter to CONA for them to distribute to their own lists.
  - Jana: Were we going to include information about the sustainability awards?
- Going to re-launch the City of Bloomington employee green team, and am putting out the call by end of this week for participation.
- Submitted all data for recertification of city hall for LEED. The city did renew their gold level certification with the League of American Bicyclists. As part of that, I am working with Planning and Transportation to increase the number of businesses that apply to be a bike friendly business. Goals is to get at least five applications in. I will send a link to a

flier and what we are sending out to businesses. Once you are certified it is good for four years. It would be great to increase the number of businesses. Everyone who submits an application gets feedback on how to increase their biking amenities, regardless of if they get certification.

- The value chain coordinator job description is hopefully going out in next few days.
- I would like to try and get a group photo of BCOS sometime in January.
- Interviewing new appointments to BCOS tomorrow to fill vacancy.

#### 9. Teddie Mower – Houston South Project

- Teddie: After discussion with Sherry from Friends of Lake Monroe (FOLM), there is a proposed logging plan by the U.S. Forest Service which may affect Lake Monroe. FOLM is asking for other groups to request for extended public comment on this project proposal, as many stakeholders didn't receive notification (fell into spam accounts most likely), and the fact that the comment period is falling over the holiday.
  - Gwen: Who should this be sent to?
  - Teddie: I sent a sample copy, which is just asking for an extension so that stakeholders have time to conduct good research and present feedback.
  - Gwen: Should be vote on a short draft being put together?
  - Teddie: Waiting until January meeting would be too late.
  - *Teddie moved to have BCOS draft a letter to the U.S. Forest Service requesting an extension to the public comment period, Pam seconded. Unanimous voice vote yes. Erin is to draft a letter and send by email.*

#### 10. UDO Module 3

- Deadline for the module three comment period is January 4<sup>th</sup>.
- After January 4<sup>th</sup> consultant will include those comments for the consolidated draft.

#### ~~11. Commission strategic plan goals – updates~~

- ~~• Sustainability Indicators~~
- ~~• Sustainability Awards (Document on Google Drive)~~
- ~~• Food Policy~~
- ~~• Climate Action~~
- ~~• Sustainable City Planning~~
- ~~• Collaboration~~

#### 12. New Business

- Gwen: Comment about the scooters, someone mentioned the ADA blockage.
- Autumn: The agreement signed with bird and lime went into affect a week ago. Individuals are encouraged to take a picture and submit through u-report if they see a scooter blocking the right of way. Bird and Lime have a certain amount of time to address the report.

#### 13. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned 7:42 pm

**Next Meeting:**

January 8, 2019 McCloskey Room, City Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Auxiliary aids for people with disabilities are available upon request with adequate notice. Please call 812.349.3837.