



**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 April 2019, 6:00 PM  
City Hall—Hooker Conference Room 245, North Morton Street

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation
2. Introductions
  - Present: Andrew Guenther, Don Eggert, Kate Corcoran, Erin Hatch, Matt Caldie, Erica Walker, Chris Ericson, Andrea Webster, David Parkhurst, Linda Thompson, Mike Litwin, Zoe Need, Ryan Clemens
  - Absent: Lindsey Hummel
3. Approval of minutes
  - Chris moved, Don seconded, unanimous voice vote in favor of approving March minutes. Minutes approved.
4. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person
  - No comments.
5. Reports from TC, MoCo EC, BCOS, ERAC, & MPO
  - Zoe, TC: Davey has started their tree inventory of all street trees in Bloomington. They have found 11,000 trees, which is 3,000 trees short of the 14,000 trees the city estimated. They will soon put together a story board on ArcGIS website, Sarah Mincey is now teaching Burnie Fisher's class. TC is doing a planting on May 4<sup>th</sup> at farmers market, planting a ginkgo and giving away seedlings. They are doing some replacement of west side trees, there was a strand of Bradford pear on private property. They are having a volunteer planting at end of month. Coming up to 3<sup>rd</sup> and last emerald ash borer treatment, 320 ash. TC is adding two more advisory members to the tree commission but they won't be voting members.
  - MoCo: no quorum
  - BCOS, Erin, no update.
  - David, ERAC: Discussed Wapehani Park and the lake being drained. The deer hunt is going to happen this year, but nothing else really new. David will send those notes when they come out. Working on getting trails for bike park at Wapehani back in place
    - o Erica: Why is Wapehani being drained?
    - o David: It seems to be leaking, and could collapse and drain in an uncontrolled way.
  - MPO: talked more about the drones that were discussed last time.

## 6. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups A Cycle

### A Cycle

#### A. ECPC/Planning Commission

- Morton North on 11<sup>th</sup> was denied at the last plan commission meeting because the uses do not align with what the city envisioned them being, as this was in the trades district but instead of being business/commercial, it was a hotel and apartments. There was a clause in the original plan that it had to be certain kind of businesses, that clause only lasted for 5 years and that period of time has passed, so they shouldn't be required to do that, but that is still what the city wants so they denied it. So this is dead, but we don't know if they will come back with something new.
- David Howard, on south Walnut St and Driscoll. They want to tear down existing house and replace it with a mixed use building with coffee shop and restaurant space and apartments, with one accessible apartment on ground floor. They are proposing to have on street parking, as in back behind the building they only have 3 parking spaces. This would mean that the parking spaces would be on their property which raises the question of who maintains them. This also uses space for street trees, so it trades street trees and tree plots for parking instead.
  - o Discussion of permit parking, and the process of getting parking variances for a lot.
- North Walnut where Motel 6 is. They want to tear down Motel 6 and build student apartments, 8 stories tall. 270 units, 842 bedrooms, there are 22 micro studios, 39 2-bdrm, & 65 4-bdrm units. 3 buildings in total. They have managed to stay within impervious surface limits. This is commercial arterial and they want to change to a PUD, we will be hearing more about that.
  - o Discussion of the effect of this project on affordable housing: there won't be affordable units included, they are marketing to students.
  - o Discussion of the effect of removal of 240 hotel rooms on the homeless population that uses this Motel.
  - o Discussion of the effect of this project on traffic flow.
    - Linda: They may be asked to do a traffic study on plans this big, but one of the issues is if there is enough bus service for that many new people. Transit doesn't have the money to make any more routes/runs. Transit feels like the small charter busses these apartments frequently provide is a problem.
    - Andrea: Is there a way to require traffic calming, like what is the walkability? Walking to campus from here is not unfeasible.
    - Linda: They don't have anything in their plan about that.
    - Erica: I think the walkability from this complex is a safety concern as there aren't lights and low visibility for pedestrian crossing.
  - o Discussion of the occupancy rates of apartments.
    - Don: There is trend of lower enrollments and a decline in international students, there is a fair amount of non-occupancy of student apartments.

- Linda: According to them the occupancy rate is still such that is profitable.
    - Don: Their rent reflects how they can support empty spaces.
    - Chris: The city is trying to get people out of houses.
    - Linda: Neighborhoods are maybe trying to ensure that houses stay owned by families rather than student rentals, but the city isn't actively doing that.
  - o Discussion of the need/benefits for apartments.
    - Erica: When the development comes before the city, do they have to prove that there is a demand for that housing? Are there no rules or regulations about keeping occupancy rate?
    - Linda: Sometimes they are asked but it's not codified that they prove it. Every zoning district has occupancy maxes, but they don't have to prove there is a need to provide that housing. I have heard that some of these building just have to keep a 20% occupancy rate to remain profitable.
    - Andrew: I actually like this project, since replaces a motel which is a source of crime and there is a demand in the area for housing. The apartment complex Evolve is booked out for two years, for example.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Street across from Butler Park. This lot currently has a building on property. The proposed project changes this to be a two story Co-op, with each floor including a big kitchen and living room, gathering places, a shared bathroom, and a single bedroom with multiple beds. Additionally, each floor will have two to three apartment style units with two bedrooms each, with their own kitchens and bathrooms. They haven't talked about green building features, but have talked about the focus being sustainability. Right across the street is a community garden. This is a use variance, as this is in a residential neighborhood. They are requesting variance from minimum parking standards. 45 residents who will all be screened for being low-income as they all have to be low-income, does not specify if section 8 or what that means. They have to buy into it. Planning for 6-8 vehicles, with 5 additional spots behind house.
  - o Discussion of the environmental issues associated with the project.
    - Linda: Same issues as previous project of parking in place of trees, along John St they want to put parking instead of trees.
    - Andrew: How many street trees will they lose?
    - Linda: 3-4 trees. We are worried about the precedent for switching parking for street trees, but otherwise like the general idea.
    - Erica: How did they get around impervious surface issue
    - Linda: They aren't changing the building just remodeling it.
  - o Discussion of the negative perception the neighbors have about the project.
  - o Discussion of writing a memo.

- Erica: If we wanted to write a memo when do we want to do that?
- Linda: For a memo, anytime between now and the end of first week of May.
- Erica: What do we think about writing a memo addressing this parking vs trees tradeoffs?
- Linda: There are two examples today and two more on the table, and one has already passed. There are several companies in Bloomington who do most of the design work, so once it works once they will keep doing it.

B. Waste/Hazards

- No news

C. Water

- No news

A. Working groups

- Andrew: My idea was that we would put the working groups aside during the UDO process. Keeping ECPC and Outreach now that the farmers market is in session.
- Linda: The target date for the end of the UDO process is the fall. For this round it's the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. Then they it will start going to official committees on stuff, like plan commission and council and stuff like that, where there are amendments.
- Matt: My concern is, how long will we put working groups on the backburner, as the UDO might take up the whole year.
- Linda: There will probably be a lot of amendments. We do not know the next draft date.
- Clarification that at the amendment stage, Linda and Andrew would bring relevant amendments to the commission, for example if we want to write memos.

B-Cycle

~~A. Outreach~~

~~B. ECPC/Planning Commission~~

C. Biodiversity



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7. Old business

A. Eco Heroes update

B. UDO

- Linda suggested replacing Dedaimia with Mike as the official EC representative, as her name is still listed on the website and Mike has been going in Dedaimia's place to the advisory meetings.
- Mike reports that he's been to four meetings that introduced the modules and drafts, in all cases there was a generic slide show and it was the same presentation they gave at the stakeholder group.
- Kate will get the UDO comments from the last meeting into the appropriate form and submitted through the online comment process. Erica will create a letter to accompany the comments.
- Chris: One of the leading killers of birds is building strikes, there is a guide for improving building design to reduce bird deaths from FWS. Maybe something we could add.
- Linda: The planning staff still don't want to allow reflective windows.

D. 2019 priority projects

- Nothing to cover

E. Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019 letter for HT & City Council

- Don: I would add senators Young and Braun, and rather than the direct numbers and email, list url to the contact page.
- David moved to finalize letters, Zoe seconded, unanimous voice vote of approval.

8. New business

~~A. How to send UDO comments~~

B. EC minutes process

- Minutes are lengthy, we would like to condense them.

9. Commissioner announcements

- Zoe: This is my last official meeting with the EC.
- Mike: There is a student group/graduate class doing a windshield survey of Lake Monroe watershed and they doing a presentation on Monday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:15 in SPEA A221.
- David: Lucky's sells milks in reusable/returnable glass bottles, they also deliver too. In Dave Rollos for city council campaigning the other day, he said that there are several people on city council that are working on a plan to control deer within the city, with a goal of 6 per square mile. The city council seems to be supportive, and Mayor Hamilton as well. Don't know how they are planning on doing that. There is one deer that is attacking children. They are going to use ticks to justify this control plan.

- Andrew: I have something to send about FLM and storm water regulations for construction run off, I will send that email to everyone.

## 10. Adjournment

Next EC meeting, 16 May, 6:00 p.m., Hooker Room, City Hall