



**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 June 2020, 6:00 PM
ZOOM meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/95539446110>

Meeting ID: 955 3944 6110

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1. Call to order and quorum confirmation
2. Introductions
 - Present: Mike Litwin, acting chair; Meredith Dickerson; David Parkhurst; Matt Caldie; Don Eggert; Regan Metzger; Shelby Hoshaw; Suzannah Evans Comfort; Linda Thompson, liaison; Jesus Rivera, EC intern; Kate Corcoran, EC intern; Tom Coleman, Tree Commission; Jim Shelton, Chamber of Commerce
 - Absent: Andrew Guenther, chair; Daniel Olsson
3. Approval of minutes
 - Dave proposed a motion to approve the minutes from the May 2020 meeting. Matt seconded. Unanimous voice vote in favor. Minutes approved.
4. Public comment: Limit 5 minutes per person
 - No Public Comment
5. Reports from TC, MoCo EC, BCOS, ERAC (2/12), MPO-CAC, & FOLM
 - TC: Dave: TC met yesterday and discussed the monthly report from Erin, the urban forester. An update was emailed to those on the commission. Mia Williams from IU mentioned they are currently looking to hire an arborist. Approximately 30 new trees were planted, and dead ashes were removed from the IU golf course. TC also compared the 2016 and 2019 tree inventories and discussed the letter concerning the proposed site of the new MoCo Library branch.
 - MOCO EC: No update.

- BCOS: Don: Communication has been sparse; it is likely meetings have moved to Zoom format. Don will reach out to BCOS and follow-up.
- ERAC: Dave: ERAC discussed disinfecting processes for public facilities at Griffey Lake. There was also discussion on the differences in water quality between Shirley Springs and Leonard Springs, with the former being sub-optimal and the latter being ideal. The reason behind these differences is currently unclear. Brush replacements for the trails at Griffey were mentioned, as well as a proposed “adopt-a-trail” program. There will be landscaping updates to Switchyard Park in the near future. Updates are also coming to Clear Creek and other trails; over 22 acres of woody material were removed from Clear Creek. Over the last few years, the Parks Department has planted over 15,000 trees; Parks has begun to put fencing around some of these as a preventive measure against deer.
- MPO-CAC: No update.
- FOLM: Dave: No update.

6. Discussion from Environmental Commission working groups: A Cycle

• ECPC/Plan Commission

Linda: There is one upcoming proposal for a locale called the Annex on East Third and Grant Streets. It will be comprised of several buildings on the east and west sides of Grant. Zoom meeting format proves challenging for plan review, but the Annex will be reviewed by the ECPC in the near future

7. Old business

• Library branch building

- Mike: Just emailed the latest draft letter to the Commission with the aim of voting on it tonight.
- Dave: To give background, this began as a project/letter from the TC. Mike and Dave made modifications.
- Dave proposed a motion to send copy of letter to: Herald Times, MoCo Schools, MoCo Library Board, MoCo Planning Commission, MoCo Commissioners, MoCo EC, and other interested parties. Don seconded. Unanimous vote by show of hands. The motion is approved.
- Mike: Requested to receive any additional grammar and style edits. It is possible that EC may publish a longer-form editorial that Linda wrote.
- Linda: Will send copy to Commissioners so they may review and offer suggestions.

8. New business

A. EC Chair

- Linda: Andrew is currently filing suit against CoB and will not attend meetings while litigation is ongoing. Linda will review rules concerning absences to inform EC at next meeting.

B. Discussion regarding CATS

- Linda: Chamber of Commerce reached out in hopes of improving transparency from EC and maximizing exposure to the public. Other commissions and boards already broadcast meetings through CATS. If the EC opts to put meetings on CATS, it may be necessary to designate a parliamentarian. EC is technically only required to make minutes public.
- Dave, Don, and Suzannah: Agreed on improving transparency.

- Mike: Issue may be alright for now since meetings are being broadcast through Zoom and Facebook Live during COVID-19 social distancing. It will be key to get more details concerning the CATS contract.
 - Jim Shelton (Chamber of Commerce): CoC has been in dialogue with the Administration and the logistics of a meeting are being worked on. EC is one of the few commissions that is definitely not on CATS. The CoC would like to see continued Zoom-style meetings and is looking into the possible raised costs to enhance meeting security and prevent “Zoom bombing.” The CoC have proposed some form of training for City staff to adequately manage the new public platforms. CATS is also able to automatically record meetings. Divta Kidd and Rick Dietz are the designated contact persons at the City.
- C. Environmental justice statement
- Jesus: Political discourse in the US and Bloomington has come to focus on histories of racism and how to best address its inequalities. Since planning shapes the way cities are organized, it is a part of that legacy. There is research indicating that, across all 50 states, race proves to be a bigger indicator than poverty as to whether someone will live near an environmental hazard. EC may want to seize the opportunity to a.) craft some sort of statement making the public aware of environmental racism and denouncing it, and b.) discuss and build out some sort of framework or rubric to use in promoting equity during EC plan reviews.
 - Suzannah: The outreach team is assigning topics for op-eds/letters. It would be great for someone to cover.
 - Shelby: Volunteered to write an op-ed.
 - Jesus: Linda, Kate, and Jesus will discuss further steps and follow up.
 - Don: It would be a good thing to inform the public about, perhaps at the Farmers Market.
 - Suzannah: There is more activity at the Market, but people are not encouraged to linger.
 - Linda: In-person meetings/awareness would be optimal, but there is still no defined timeline for it.
- D. New commissioner on ECPC
- Linda: To replace Andrew, a new member is needed on the ECPC. They meet occasionally to review plans and sometimes conduct site inspections. The meetings are set by consensus and usually occur a few days after a submission deadline. Historically, they have met on Wednesday afternoons.
 - Matt: Volunteered to join.
 - Linda: It is not clear how these can take place over Zoom, but that is soon to be figured out.
9. Commissioner announcements
- Matt: Update his email address.
 - Don: It would be great to get folks to work on mitigating invasive species and is excited to do some outreach work on emissions awareness.
 - Dave: Since Dave serves on EC and TC, will consolidate signatures and send library site letter to the listed groups. A final copy will also be sent to Linda.

10. Adjournment at 6:53pm.

Next EC meeting: 16 July, 6:00 p.m., location to be determined