



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
Parks and Recreation

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION
REGULAR MEETING**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2021
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.**

**Zoom (virtual) Meeting
Meeting ID: 990 3776 6940**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:44 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Melissa Laney, Angie Shelton, Dan Myers, Cathy Meyer, Jeff Ehman, Dave Parkhurst, Denise Gardiner, Matt Flaherty, Bill Jones, Autumn Brunelle
Staff: Rebecca Swift, Steve Cotter, Paula McDevitt, Tim Street, Sydney Granlund, Joanna Sparks

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 2020

Angie Shelton moved to approve the meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. AGENDA

A. Public Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period

No members of the public were present for comment.

B. Old Business

B-1 Climate Action Planning (CAP) Update

Rebecca Swift provided a review of the current CAP initiatives, sharing the final Plan with ERAC members and asking for comment before being made available to the public. Dave Parkhurst submitted comments regarding formatting of writing in Section 6 and 8 of the Plan. Shelton asked if she would be able to share the plan with her students. Swift responded that the plan would need to be approved by Common Council before it can be shared to the public.

B-2 CHAP Results

Steve Cotter provided a background and impetus to the CHAP hunt. The CHAP program is undergoing change where reimbursement on a hunter-opportunity

basis will be changed to an acreage-based reimbursement system, in which 75% of acres made available to hunters will be reimbursed at \$25/acre. This reimbursement should be similar to the \$25,000 grant funding acquired in past years. The 2020 contract with White Buffalo, which has historically coordinated the hunt, cost approximately \$29,000 and is expected to be similar for the 2021 CHAP hunt. With hunting on the decline, Parks and Recreation is looking to involve more women hunters in future CHAP hunts. Cotter added that there is monitoring in place through Eco Logic, LLC which has been recording plant height, flowering, and indicator species.

B-3 Griffy Pier/Loop Trail Update

Designs for the pier and loop are near completion. Challenges have included permitting for dam improvements and mitigation plans for wetland loss. Due to the walkway connecting the loop will be built along the lake, Parks and Recreation is looking to purchase \$20,000 of wetland loss in-lieu credits for ¼ acre loss of wetlands. Due to high materials cost, hardscape infrastructure will likely be done first with soft-surface trail improvements to follow. Bidding for the project is set to begin in the spring, provided that permits are approved. Ownership of a parcel which the loop would run through is currently being investigated with Indiana University. Guardrails will also be a feature in this project. Swift added that a fishing pier is also a part of this plan which would allow for ADA accessible piers, in addition to a new crosswalk and amphitheater where park programming could be held, and improved stairs by the dam. Dan Myers asked what type of fill will be used for the construction materials and if we can determine if there will be invasive seeds in the fill. Steve Cotter responded that fill will likely be stone and there will be monitoring for invasives once the project is finished. Swift added that there will be a buffer of vegetation between the walkway and lake. Jeff Ehman asked if timing, erosion mitigation, and safety were considered in the construction timeline. Steve Cotter responded that the north shore trail may be of concern due to current erosion challenges. The critical safety areas are coves where there are sloping trails, which will be a priority for safety concerns. The walkway along Headley Road is of importance to allow for pedestrians to walk without creating a hazard to drivers.

B-4 Switchyard Park Native Plantings

Joanna Sparks reported that the Indiana Arborist Association awarded the Parks and Recreation Department the Gold Leaf Award for outstanding Arbor Day programs, tree plantings, and tree landscaping. Rebecca Swift announced that a native plant guide would be available electronically or in a hard-copy.

C. New Business

C-1 Election of Officers

Melissa Laney and Angie Shelton were given the option to step down as Chair and Co-Chair of ERAC. Both expressed willingness to step down to allow for others to take on responsibilities but were open to staying in their roles. Angie Shelton made a motion for Melissa Laney to be Chair and Dan Myers to take on the position of Co-Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

C-2 Education Update

Rebecca Swift provided an update on Parks and Recreation environmental education programs. Much of the programming has been outdoors allowing for safe distancing of participants. With Monroe County moving to “yellow” status larger groups will be allowed, but due to constraints of trail sizes, groups will continue to be under 20 individuals. Nature days will not be continued this semester, but virtual alternatives will be offered. The Outer Spatial application has updated events and outings posted, which ERAC members were encouraged to download. Steve Cotter asked if the Latimer Woods interpretive signage had been put on XR and if it was open to the public. Rebecca Swift responded that the information has not been updated and is not yet available to the public. Angie Shelton mentioned that a student from SPEA that has made an ARC-GIS application designed for roadkill tracking/recording and provided a link for ERAC members. Autumn Brunelle provided updates on virtual offerings on self-guided nature activities, and expansion into social media platforms. Larger programs such as pumpkin growing are being looked into for the fall season. Updating trails and signage are also being done. Monthly weed wrangles in parks and virtual weed labs are currently being offered to the public.

C-3 Duke Powerline Trail Progress

Steve Cotter provided an update regarding the location of the route, which will run from Rogers Street, to the west of the park to a point in a parcel owned by the Monroe County Board of Commissioners. The trail will eventually extend to Weimer Road. Trail designs are being developed in conjunction with Duke and Aztec Engineering construction could begin this year and may be completed within a year. The proposed trail will be paved and will connect Switchyard to RCA park, eventually connecting to Weimer Road near the Wapehani Mountain Bike Park entrance. If the project is successful, this will connect Clear Creek Trail and the Twin Lakes Sports Complex. Tim Street added that the first part of this trail development will be one-mile-long and that consultation with the Monroe County Commissioners are in the works prior to finalization.

C-4 Rogers Family Park Design

Steve Cotter presented a general plan for the donated property, which requires passive recreation use in accordance with the deed. Development of this property would disrupt some of the prairie, but USFWS is in support of the project and has been consulted to help mitigate prairie loss. The park entryway is proposed to be moved to allow for safer parking in the inside of the park. Shade sails and picnic

tables are proposed to be placed near the barn. Additionally, the park will undergo a name change from the “goat farm” to the Rogers Family Park. Tim Street added that much of the land is a floodplain, which will not be developed as part of this project. The chimney swift towers on the land will remain in place.

C-5 Prescribed Burn at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve

Approximately 8-acres were burned on the north side of the lake to improve habitat for oak, hickory, and wildflowers in the area. This year, alternative plots are being targeted and will be presented to Habitat Solutions, which carried out last year’s burn, to determine proper areas for controlled burns. Weather permitting, burning will occur in the spring.

C-6 2021 Initiatives and Topics of Interest

Topics of interest included water quality updates at Leonard Springs, updates on prescribed burn at Griffy Lake, IPM plan updates, Wapahani dam conversion updates, Cascades trail and creek updates, mobile app/website rollout updates, and COVID updates.

C-7 April 2021 Meeting Agenda Items

Meeting agenda items will be based on topics of interest discussed during this meeting and may include other topics that arise between now and the April meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14th, 2021 (virtual)