



**Bloomington Sustainability Action Plan Open House**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**13 February 2018**  
**City Hall McCloskey Room**  
**4 pm – 5:45 pm**

**Topic:** Environmental Quality and Natural Systems (*Air quality, Water quality, Storm water Management, Waste reduction, Protection of Biodiversity and Habitats*)

**Facilitator:** Lisa Marie Napoli

**Easel/Note Pad:** Farhana Z. Khan and Allissa Aardema

**Computer notes:** Daphney Richemond

**Number of participants:** 8-9

### **Summary of Interests Discussed**

- Appreciation expressed for Lake Monroe Reservoir, waste management, sidewalks, parking system, walkability, parks, trees, IU commitment to natural gas, progress on food waste, public water system
- Concerns expressed with water quality issues, recycling, deer management, education regarding Lake Monroe, stormwater management, privatization of water system
- Green Camino food waste collection company indicates an opportunity for partnerships
- Group expressed desire to learn more about existing City of Bloomington sustainability initiatives
- Group recommended improvements in public transit, walkability, green walkways, clearinghouse for information about environmental issues, collaboration between groups, better air quality monitoring, food waste composting, better water quality data, city run recycling programs, balancing Lake Monroe tourism with need to protect water quality, nature center, plastic bag ban, renewable energy, education regarding overconsumption, waste minimization, planting of native species, preservation of green spaces, improved tree inventories, improved community gardens

### **Detailed Notes**

#### ***What is going well in Bloomington?***

- Participant noted that after 34 years living in the city, he thinks that people are fortunate to have the Lake Monroe reservoir and thinks that education/awareness activity on the importance of the lake would be important for the city residents, particularly related to water quality
- Household waste management is going well, but we need to improve the recycling system
- The sidewalks and parking system are good, but still there is room for improvement
- Participants noted walkability of Bloomington, compared to other cities
- The parks and their natural habitat are a positive feature of Bloomington
- The trees are valuable assets for the city in terms of ecosystem conservation, habitat, and diversity
- Removal of Bradford Pear trees was a good decision
- IU commitment to natural gas is a great initiative
- Data collection is ongoing from private company working in composting (Green Camino), in partnership with City Hall, but they would like the involvement of the University in the process
- Public water system

### ***What is not going so well in Bloomington?***

- Concerns were expressed about Lake Monroe reservoir protection and water quality
- One participant expressed concerns regarding deer population while another drew attention to controversy (pro-deer vs. anti-deer); group discussed possible need to revisit Deer Task Force recommendations
- Concerns were expressed about processing of solid waste and raised questions about the future of recycling in the city and raised particular concerns about apartment recycling
- Group also discussed stormwater issue, noting repeated drainage issue in some residences
- One of the participants noted the issue is likely related to the old age of the drainage (piping issue) and expressed concerns that residents have to cover the costs of repair
- Another participant reiterated stress in the Waste Management facility, curiosity about stormwater with regards to highways
- Concerns were expressed about water quality due to Lake Monroe being main source of drinking water and also a tourism spot; concerns over water quality were due to excess tourism and recreation
- Concerns were also expressed over the possibility the supply of water will be privatized and citizen concerns about this prospect; recommended the water supply should be in the hands of the city and the county and it should not go into private entity's control

### ***What changes would you like to see in Bloomington in the next 5 years?***

- Improve operation of the public transit
- Maintain and improve the walkability of the city
- Develop a clearinghouse for information available about environmental questions
- Open line system (example 211 line) – a tip-line for information
- Bring groups together
- Air quality, need to know more about that; more studies need to be conducted on that topic to better make decisions, e.g., why don't we have an air quality monitoring system set up in Bloomington as per EPA guidelines?)
- Reduce waste; find composting opportunities
- Hire an intern to collect data on lakes and the water quality
- Create liaisons between the tourism board and the Chamber of Commerce and environmental groups to create a balance between the department of tourism, the revenue it generates, and the quality of water in Lake Monroe
- Tourism was a key factor which was taken into consideration to pass the food and beverage tax; need to balance economic impacts and economic drivers and the water quality and health of the lake
- Strongest recycling programs are always run by the city, so the city should consider taking up recycling efforts
- Need to shorten the chain of recycling, make it more accessible
- The city should take up recycling and set up recycling centers as it will reduce uncertainty on the marketability of recyclables and price fluctuations in recyclable materials
- Development of nature center
- Diversity in the species of plants
- Increase green walkways

### ***What can Bloomington do to move forward to address concerns and to achieve its vision for the future in the next 5 years?***

- The tourism board should become a stakeholder to devise solutions to keep the lake healthy
- Commitment of the City to renewable energy
- Education/awareness about how the new waste management recycling system works

- Practice more conservation to reduce/eliminate the solid waste generation issue in the City
- Solid waste recycling/recovery
- Conduct studies on the different issues to better make decisions
- Energy usage - learn from small green business working in the area (collaboration between businesses)
- Coordinate with Brown County and other counties using Lake Monroe about water management and protection
- Encourage the planting of native species
- Integrate planting of trees as part of the building regulation code
- Preserve green spaces either directly through City's initiative or through Sycamore Land Trust
- More food waste collection outlets
- Conduct a proper tree inventory
- Improve community gardens and orchards (want more orchards in the neighborhoods and community as it will bring children closer to nature and it will help them understand the importance of nature)
- Edible vegetable gardens in parking lots - expressed unhappiness when the vegetable garden which was open to all was shut down by the library
- Incredible edible vacant lots (Vegetable Garden) model in the UK
- Suggestion to redo planting lots in the library
- Suggestion for Bloomington Parks foundations: the trails can have a sign which says "would you like to see this trail grow? Increase greater cooperation with counties so that there is a growing trail and no interruption in the natural landscape
- Ask direct questions to increase citizen awareness and financial contributions; volunteers improve orchards and increase size or amount orchards
- Create awareness on CONSERVATION, people need to stop consuming a lot and should not presume there is water available forever; we are being lulled into the idea there is more than you need, but that is not the case, so people should be educated to use water carefully
- Recycling means our country could be independent economically, as we depend on other countries for the raw materials for the most basic things like aluminum, trees for paper, etc.
- Create individually focused interest for people in conservation, recycling, and better environmental practices
- BAN PLASTIC bags in Bloomington.
- Monterey Bay recycling center (good model)
- Waste can be converted into industrial feed (idea is not to compete with existing private players in recycling, but to identify them and support them)
- Bloomington is centrally situated in Indiana so it can set up a recycling hub with inputs coming in from other counties, as there are many metal scrap and salvage lots close by, glass can be crushed and used for asphalt
- The City should bring in other county members to see how the water resources are distributed and see how well they can be managed