



Bloomington Sustainability Action Plan Open House
Meeting Notes
21 February 2018
City Hall
4 pm – 6 pm

Topic: Environmental Quality and Natural Systems (*Air quality, Water quality, Storm water management, Waste reduction, Protection of biodiversity and habitats*)

Facilitator: Stephanie Hayes Richards

Easel /Note Pad: Stephanie Hayes Richards, Allissa Aardema, and Farhana Z. Khan

Computer notes: Farhana Z. Khan/Daphney Richmond

Number of participants: 7-8

Summary of Interests Discussed

- Food waste
- Concerns about Lake Monroe Reservoir, the water quality and stress on protecting the watershed
- Water quality and the presence of PCBs in water
- Use of Superfund sites for other purpose
- Recycling
- City-coordinated programs and support for volunteers for recycling programs
- Create awareness on how to recycle and provide knowhow
- More bio-swales, native tree plants, and vegetation

Detailed Notes

What is going well in Bloomington?

- Dealing with storm water – Bloomington is making positive efforts
- The zoning ordinance is doing a good job protecting sensitive environmental features like wetlands, streams, and canopy
- Guarding of/protection of the Lake Monroe watershed as it is the sole source of drinking water
- IU-SPEA class studies sediment deposits on the lake (Class with Melissa Laney)
- Accessibility to native plant species and vegetation and biodiversity
- Ecological knowledge sharing
- Active transportation, promoting cycling and pedestrian issues
- Conditions of the Superfund sites have improved with approximately 98% usable conditions
- Recycling program could improve (Seattle and Portland have effective recycling strategies)
- Private food composting reference to “Green Camino” (curbside composting)
- IU is doing a good job related to educating on recycling within the university campus for a few students in the Dining Hall
- Planting requirements to improve landscaping prevent invasive species

What is not going well is Bloomington?

- Not strict enough with protecting the Lake Monroe watershed; more could be done

- There has not been any attempt to create a regional (jurisdiction) body to govern Lake Monroe
- No air quality monitor - we don't know the quality of air we breathe; it's better than Evansville, but we don't have numbers to say how much better
- Excessive silting of Lake Monroe at Gilmore Ridge Road
- Increase in backwater silting due to untimed opening of the dam/reservoir gates at the lake
- Storm water drainage issues in the city and the city should address the issue of pollutant in the water body due to storm water runoff
- One participant noted the zoning board is too generous in granting variances (e.g., Culver's on West 3rd Street)
- Plastic bags in the woods, waterways that are not biodegradable and they need to be banned
- We are not meeting standards in water quality
- PCB contamination in Clear Creek through landfills (e.g., the Westinghouse ABB, Lemon Lake Landfill)
- Westinghouse ABB Superfund site has a unit to recycle cardboard, but we may not have enough water to recycle
- Starbucks coffee containers and straws all over the city creating a litter issue; the city should put up recycling bins outside or ask them to request their customers to recycle
- New apartments are being constructed without recycling facilities/services
- There is no mandatory recycling at the municipal offices
- Waste reduction in offices and accessibility for recycling
- The city offices do not recycle and city has not made recycling a part of their working requirement
- Most sustainability efforts done voluntarily and people (mostly private or through Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC)) face exhaustion as there is no other body helping providing labor or financial resources
- Monroe County schools have a contract with "RUMPKE" company to collect waste to recycle, if there is a buyer for recyclables we recycle or else we don't; the city may want to take up recycling to insure continuity in the recycling program
- There is recycling in schools but there is not enough data to show recycling happens across the city, the city of Bloomington should do more to support recycling efforts
- Lack of communication between the city and the county commission; better communication and collaboration would help in discussing the water quality at Lake Monroe and other issues related to sustainability plan development and implementation
- Lack of business regulation regarding recycling

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

- Broader collaborations - schools and city, business, residents
- Measure the ecological footprint of organizations and work towards reducing them
- Effective use of Superfund sites that have been cleaned to the maximum possible level using current technological standards
- Waste reduction from the city's perspective
- Repurpose and reuse/ repurpose and resell and use the funds from sustainability measures to fulfill the sustainability requirements of the city (e.g., the Cyberinfrastructure Building)
- Save money through sustainability by generating revenue from recycling different waste streams
- Bio-swales in the city to reduce flooding
- Citywide food waste composting
- Support and improve concept of Hoosier to Hoosier sales (e.g., IU surplus stores that sell used items instead of throwing them away)
- More collaboration with the city and IU for salvaging the good stuff school students leave behind
- Creation and implementation of a Lake Monroe Watershed plan/program
- Create more ditches and fewer culverts to manage storm water
- Plant native species/vegetation, grass, bio-swales and rain gardens

- Greater transparency in the utilization and management of the storm water fee which is levied to clarify what the city is doing regarding storm water management
- Referencing standards for ecosystem assessment in Bloomington to achieve best management practices
- Scoring system / ranking system for city (there is STAR program for schools)
- New report by the environmental commission for environmental action and habitat connectivity improvement and the adoption of a plan
- Referencing LEED standards, ISO standards, and STAR standards
- Promote recycling in businesses
- The new multi-unit/apartment buildings in Bloomington to have a recycling unit/facility requirement
- Participants think it is important to work with the planning commission on a zoning ordinance to manage recycling
- Education about recycling for residents, information sessions for households on recycling
- Setting a “pay as you throw” rule as an incentive system to have people produce less waste
- Participants would like to see business in the city and the Indiana University practice recycling
- Elimination of plastic bags and composting program run by the city
- Better collaboration between the city and the county on storm water management
- Better education about the existing resources available in the city; a more visible customer service in the public sector

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

- Recreate wetlands which will filter water to help filter out the pollutants, hold sediments, and prevent sediment deposit in the water bodies
- Tax incentives for businesses to reduce the use of plastic bags
- Encourage recycling containers, have more recycling bins outside the businesses (especially cafes and restaurants like McDonalds)
- Attach a flyer to the water bill to educate the public on the ill effects of using plastics, use city letters and bills to convey messages which promote the use of recyclable materials
- Give solutions to the general public and create awareness on how to handle waste reductions
- The city can hire a sustainability coordinator and hire more people to work in sustainability
- Food waste reduction through composting
- Create awareness to encourage composting in cafeterias
- Food rescue, which prevents and eliminates food waste (collect food and give it to the community food banks, sharing of food at the lunch tables in schools instead of throwing it and eventually composting it)
- Reduce tax on solar energy generation or provide tax incentives for buildings using solar energy
- Support MCCSC, help them have more impact on environmental projects
- Awareness programs, door hangers, periodicals, etc. spreading the message on recycling and better environmental practices (i.e., marketing and education campaign)
- Green building incentives, educational efforts for businesses
- The city can create an education package on recycling and other activities through businesses and what can be done at apartments
- Planting vegetation conducive to needs of wildlife
- Habitat protection
- Ban on pesticides and herbicides, create an outreach program on the ill effects on humans and environment due to the use of pesticide, education of alternatives to pesticide/herbicide use
- Decrease the use of herbicides, promote organic fertilizer
- More recycling containers all over the city