



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.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION NOTICE and REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

February 27, 2025, 6:00 PM
Hooker Meeting Room #245
Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting here:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/8657231124?pwd=mPqboSiD0AhVwKSgkuW2aO7NHixihO.1&omn=81563021562>

Meeting ID: 865 723 1124

Passcode: COBPT

or on Community Access Television Service (CATS): <https://catstv.net/government.php>.
Auxiliary aids are available upon request with adequate notice.

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation:

2. Introductions and Roll Call

	<u>In Person</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
Carrie Albright			
Nadia Cain			
Matt Caldie			
Shannon Gayk			
Adam Martinez			
Mitchell Owens			
David Parkhurst			
Rachael Johnson,			
City Liaison			

Fiona Kilgore,
Graduate Fellow

3. New Business

- a. Nominations and officer election*
- b. Review of quorum requirements (Legal)
- c. Riparian Buffer regulation (Jackie Scanlan)

4. Approval of January 2025 minutes*

Yes

No

Abstain

Carrie Albright
Nadia Cain
Matt Caldie
Shannon Gayk
Adam Martinez
Mitchell Owens
David Parkhurst

5. Public comment

Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total

6. Old Business

- a. Working group updates
 - i. Light Pollution
 - ii. Water Quality
 - iii. Biodiversity
 - 1. Bee City USA – draft resolution*
 - iv. Special Projects
- b. Eco-Heroes Planning

7. Staff Update

- a. City Council Schedule Update
- b. Environmental Commission 101

8. Reports from:

- a. Tree Commission (TC)
- b. Environmental Resource Advisory Council (ERAC)
- c. Friends of Lake Monroe (FOLM)
- d. Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS)

e. Monroe County – Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS)

9. Commissioner announcements

10. Social Media

a. March Posts

11. Upcoming Meeting

a. March 27, 2025, 6:00 pm, Hooker Room, Zoom, and CATS

***delayed one week due to Indiana University spring break

12. Adjournment:

** Item to be voted on*

The City is committed to providing equal access to information. However, despite our efforts, at times, portions of our board and commission packets are not accessible for some individuals. If you encounter difficulties accessing material in this packet, please contact Melissa Hirtzel at hirtzelm@bloomington.in.gov and provide your name, contact information, and a link to or description of the document or web page you are having problems with.

As a quorum of the Commission or its committees may be present, this gathering constitutes a meeting under the Indiana Open Door Law (I.C. § 5-14-1.5). For that reason, this statement provides notice that this meeting will occur and is open for the public to attend, observe, and record what transpires.

The Bloomington Environmental Commission (EC) wishes to acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities native to this region, and recognize that the City of Bloomington, Indiana was built on indigenous homelands and resources.



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Environmental Commission

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION NOTICE and REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

January 16, 2025, 6:00 PM
Hooker Meeting Room #245
Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting here:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/8657231124?pwd=mPqboSiD0AhVwKSgkuW2aO7NHixihO.1&omn=81563021562>

Meeting ID: 865 723 1124

Passcode: COBPT

or on Community Access Television Service (CATS): <https://catstv.net/government.php>.

Auxiliary aids are available upon request with adequate notice.

1. Call to order and quorum confirmation: 6:00 pm
2. Introductions and Roll Call

	<u>In Person</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Nadia Cain	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Shannon Gayk	X		
Mike Litwin	X		
Adam Martinez	X		
Mitchell Owens	X		
David Parkhurst	X		
Karena Tankersley	X		

Rachael Johnson, City Liaison	X
Fiona Kilgore, Graduate Fellow	X

3. Approval of November 2024 minutes*

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Carrie Albright	X		
Nadia Cain	X		
Matt Caldie	X		
Shannon Gayk	X		
Mike Litwin	X		
Adam Martinez	X		
Mitchell Owens			X
David Parkhurst	X		
Karenn Tankersley	X		

David motioned to vote; Matt seconded. November 2024 minutes were approved with 8 commissioners voting yes.

4. Public comment

Limit 5 minutes per person, 20 minutes total

Abby Garcia introduced herself as a fellow with the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

Dave introduced himself.

Joanna Sparks, present via Zoom, introduced herself as the Urban Greenspace Manager for the city with Parks and Rec.

5. Staff Update

- a. Monroe County Environmental Commission
- b. 2025 Calendar

a. Rachael spoke to the Monroe County Environmental Commission and reported that they are open to having a joint meeting sometime in 2025. Shannon chimed in that she thought this would be a good idea.

b. Updates to the EC's 2025 Calendar were discussed.

6. Old Business

- a. Riparian Buffer
- b. Working group updates
 - i. Water Quality
 - ii. Special Projects
 - iii. Biodiversity
 - 1. Bee City USA
 - 2. Habitat Connectivity Map
 - 3. Presentation

Matt motioned to move the BDWG update before WQ and Shannon seconded. All present voted yes. Mitchel abstained. The motion passed.

Special projects had not met.

BDWG

- The BDWG met in December to talk about the group's goals. The BDWG needed input from the city and external stakeholders to continue pursuing Bee City USA certification. The BDWG had drafted the resolution needed for Bee City, and had been in touch with IU Sustainability and Parks and Rec.
- The BDWG anticipates that filling out the application and paying the fee, and receiving certification could happen in the spring.
- Rachael said Rebecca Swift mentioned it might be nice to have this figured out by Earth Day.
- Matt mentioned that Linda in the past had helped get things in front of council. Rachael agreed to do this for the Bee City USA project.
- Rachael met with Megan Blair, the GIS person with the city, and reported that Megan is available to meet with Matt over how to help update and improve the Habitat Connectivity map.

Abby Garcia mentioned that the formation of the committee would be the most difficult, which is the first step toward Bee City USA certification. Abby mentioned that Joanna and an additional person from Parks and Rec would be interested in being on that committee.

WQWG

- The WQWG was unable to get an undergrad capstone course organized to work on water quality projects, including a stream buffer analysis project.

7. New Business

- a. 2024 Annual Report
- b. Eco-Heroes

a. 2024 Annual Report - Nadia mentioned adding participation with the sustainability team's heat mapping project as an important mention. Mitchell mentioned that it could center around the theme of collaboration including the heat mapping project, the water quality group working with the city, and the bee city opportunity. Carrie mentioned that she will be presenting this to council, potentially including the Bee City resolution. Matt pointed out that the Annual Report presentation might end up being after Earth Day or Bee City certification.

b. Rachael mentioned that she had met with the Earth Day Celebration event organizers. The celebration will be April 19th, at Switchyard Park. Rachael confirmed with the EC that the EC still wanted EcoHeroes to happen at this celebration. She also mentioned that she filled out the application for the EC to have its own table at the event. The organizer also asked if the EC wanted to have a slideshow again this year during the EcoHeroes event, which Carrie said yes to because it acknowledges donors/ sponsors. Rachael asked how important it would be for the mayor to have a photo op with the winners, and Matt and Carrie agreed that it was preferable. The organizers also wanted to know the EC's theme for EcoHeroes. Rachael asked if additional materials and organizing would be possible for the commission members to do, as the Fellow will be gone after April, and has another project that is a priority. Shannon shared that a simple theme would be the best way for things to get done including choosing a theme, materials, outreach with educators, timing, and budget.

The EC members then discussed a possible theme. Fiona mentioned a pun on "in Bloom" to emphasize flowers. Matt mentioned "Decomposers, Predators and Pollinators, Oh My!" to emphasize the variety of ecological roles insects play. Karennna mentioned "Bugs in Bloom" to fuse these ideas, and allowing for broad interpretation. Fiona mentioned adding a secondary title to explain the relationship between native insects and plants. Nadia agreed that there should be a secondary part to expand on the role of bugs in Bloomington.

Karennna mentioned doing Bloomington's Big Bad Bugs in a future year, if the EC choses a theme less focused on pollination.

Fiona asked if there were any exclusively native plant nurseries in Bloomington. The other EC members mentioned a number of important native plant resources, including MCIRIS, Sycamore Land Trust, and Indiana Native Plant Society, however EC members collectively confirmed there are no native-only nurseries in Bloomington.

8. Reports from:

- a. Tree Commission (TC)
- b. Environmental Resource Advisory Council (ERAC)
- c. Friends of Lake Monroe (FOLM)
- d. Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS)
- e. Monroe County – Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS)

David

- Tree Commission
 - o Urban Forester, Haskell Smith, reported working with the street department on removals, planting 30 trees, completion of stump grinding, and working on an urban forestry policies and procedures document. TC also mentioned creating an Arboretum plan for Bryan Park to get it certified as an arboretum.
- Nothing to report for ERAC
- Nothing to report for FOLM

BCOS - Nothing to report

MC IRIS – Rachael mentioned that the date for the Native Plant Sale has been set to September 6th at Switchyard Park.

9. Commissioner announcements

Carrie: Shawn Miya offered to present to the EC on the reports they have made on the Heat Watch project. She also mentioned we might have John Huett come present to the EC as a guest about a composting survey. Carrie also shared that officer elections will be happening next month.

Mike: Mike mentioned that this was his last meeting. He first ended up on the EC because his supervisor at a city department told him to go in 1997. The Plan Commission was not environmentally friendly at the time, nor was a property rights group, or the Planning Director. He reflected that the city has improved immensely over recent years.

Shannon: Shannon will be giving a talk on her new book about ecology, which weaves together narratives of ecology in Southern Indiana. The talk will be at the Bishop at 6:30 pm on January 29th.

Karenn: Also shared she was leaving.

Rachael: Mentioned that an updated Native Landscaping brochure was created by Matt and printed copies were available.

10. Social Media

a. February Posts

Fiona brainstormed social media post ideas including

- Acknowledging February is national bird feeding month
 - o Dave shared how to strategically keep English sparrows away but not natives. Fishing line dangles from the feeder with a weight
 - o Adam shared that seeds still in the shell are harder for starlings
 - o Mike shared how to get bluebirds.
- Acknowledging Groundhog day in February

Fiona wanted EC members to forward special days, and educational materials to share via social media.

Karenn mentioned World Wetlands Day is February 2nd, World Rewilding Day is March 20th, and that Rewilding Day will have a lot of material available for reposting.

11. Upcoming Meeting

a. February 20, 2025, 6:00 pm, Hooker Room, Zoom, and CATS

12. Adjournment: 7:34 pm

Matt motioned to adjourn; David seconded.

** Item to be voted on*

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The Bloomington Environmental Commission (EC) wishes to acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities native to this region, and recognize that the City of Bloomington, Indiana was built on indigenous homelands and resources.

Please do not pass this resolution until your city/county has started a Bee City Application and Bee City USA has approved your draft resolution. Upload your draft resolution to your "Application" tab.

Below, you may modify the "Whereas" section of your resolution. The "Now, Therefore" section can be lightly modified, but the commitments cannot be deleted or greatly modified.

Questions? Email beecityusa@xerces.org.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION of the Common Council of Bloomington, Indiana
designating **Bloomington** as a BEE CITY USA® affiliate.

WHEREAS, the mission of BEE CITY USA is to galvanize communities to sustain pollinators, responsible for the reproduction of almost 90% of the world's flowering plant species, by providing them with healthy habitat, rich in a variety of native plants and free to nearly free of pesticides; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the more than 3,600 species of native bees in the United States, along with introduced honey bees, we have very diverse dietary choices rich in fruits, nuts, and vegetables; and

WHEREAS, bees and other pollinators have experienced population declines due to a combination of habitat loss, poor nutrition, pesticides (including insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides), parasites, diseases, and climate change; and

WHEREAS, pollinator-friendly communities can benefit local and regional economies through healthier ecosystems, increased vegetable and fruit crop yields, and increased demand for pollinator-friendly plant materials from local growers; and

WHEREAS, ideal pollinator-friendly habitat (A) is comprised of mostly native wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees blooming in succession throughout the growing season to provide diverse and abundant nectar and pollen, since many wild pollinators prefer or depend on the native plants with which they co-adapted; (B) is free to nearly free of pesticides, as many pesticides can harm pollinators and/or their habitat; (C) comprises undisturbed spaces (leaf and brush piles, unmown fields or field margins, fallen trees and other dead wood) for nesting and overwintering; and (D) provides connectivity between habitat areas to support pollinator movement and resilience; and

WHEREAS, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a long-term approach to maintaining healthy landscapes and facilities that minimizes risks to people and the environment by: identifying and removing the causes of pest problems rather than only attacking the symptoms (the pests); employing pests' natural enemies along with cultural, mechanical, and physical controls when prevention is not enough; and using pesticides only when no other method is feasible or effective; and

WHEREAS, supporting pollinators fosters broad-based community engagement in environmental awareness and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, **Bloomington** should be certified as a BEE CITY USA community because **the city has long been committed to planting pollinator friendly and native plants in its parks and public greenspaces. The city conducts regular weed wrangles (targeting invasives) and native plantings with volunteers, encourages and supports neighborhood pollinator gardens, and partners with a range of local organizations to run annual native plant sales (MC-IRIS), collect and distribute native seeds (Project Wingspan), improve the urban tree cover (Canopy Bloomington). In 2018, our city Mayor signed the monarch pledge. The Environmental Commission contributes to city-wide education focused on pollinators and**

native plantings at our annual Bugfest, Earth Day events, our Ecoheroes contest for students, and our habitat connectivity plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, in order to enhance understanding among local government staff and the public about the vital role that pollinators play and what each of us can do to sustain them, **Bloomington** chooses to support and encourage healthy pollinator habitat creation and enhancement, resolving as follows:

1. The **Bloomington Environmental Commission** is hereby designated as the BEE CITY USA sponsor.
2. The **Chair** of the **Environmental Commission** is designated as the BEE CITY USA Liaison.
3. Facilitation of **Bloomington's** BEE CITY USA program is assigned to the **Environmental Commission**.
4. The **Environmental Commission** is authorized to and shall:
 - a. **Celebration:** Host at least one educational event or pollinator habitat planting or restoration each year to showcase **Bloomington's** commitment to raising awareness of pollinator conservation and expanding pollinator health and habitat.
 - b. **Publicity & Information:** Install and maintain at least one authorized BEE CITY USA street sign in a prominent location, and create and maintain a webpage on the **Bloomington Environmental Commission's** website which includes, at minimum a copy of this resolution and links to the national BEE CITY USA website; contact information for your BEE CITY USA Liaison and Committee; reports of the pollinator-friendly activities the community has accomplished the previous year(s); and your recommended native plant species list and integrated pest management plan (explained below).
 - c. **Habitat:** Develop and implement a program to create or expand pollinator-friendly habitat on public and private land, which includes, but is not limited to, Identifying and inventorying **Bloomington's** real property that can be enhanced with pollinator-friendly plantings; creating a recommended locally native plant list to include wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees and a list of local suppliers for those species; and, tracking (by square footage and/or acreage) annual area of pollinator habitat created or enhanced.
 - d. **Pollinator-Friendly Pest Management:** Create and adopt an integrated pest management (IPM) plan designed to prevent pest problems, reduce pesticide use, and expand the use of non-chemical pest management methods.
 - e. **Policy & Plans:** Establish, through the **Bloomington Common Council**, a policy in the **Bloomington** Comprehensive Plan to acknowledge and commit to the BEE CITY USA designation and review the Comprehensive Plan and other relevant documents to consider improvements to pest management policies and practices as they relate to pollinator conservation, identify appropriate locations for pollinator-friendly plantings, and consider other appropriate measures.
 - f. **Renewal:** After completing the first calendar year as a BEE CITY USA affiliate, each February, **if funding is available**, apply for renewal of **Bloomington's** BEE CITY USA designation following the format provided by BEE CITY USA, including a report of the previous year's BEE CITY USA activities, and paying the renewal fee based on **Bloomington's** population.

ADOPTED by the **Common Council** of the **Bloomington, IN**, this ____ day of _____, 20__.

Environmental Commission 101

February 2025



TITLE 2

Bloomington Municipal Code 02.12.050 provides statutory authority for the EC to exist.

It is declared to be the public policy of the City of Bloomington and the purpose of this section to **promote the stewardship and preservation of the City's environment and natural resources by seeking out and responding to emerging issues, addressing them with sound long-term policy recommendations, and increasing local environmental awareness and engagement.**



HISTORY OF BLOOMINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

1970S

Bloomington Environmental Quality and Conservation Commission created on August 20, 1971.

Top Priorities:

- PCB inventory & cleanup
- Other toxic substance issues in City & County
- Lake Monroe

1980S

EC stabilized with priority shifts, including development review.

Top Priorities:

- PCB inventory & cleanup
- Other toxic substance issues in City & County
- Lake Monroe
- Land use in large greenspace areas

HISTORY OF BLOOMINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

1990S

EC moved to Planning Department for administrative and budgetary purposes, along with EC often commenting and reviewing developments.

Top Priorities:

- PCB testing, cleanup, & disposal
- Other toxic substance issues in City & County
- Lake Monroe watershed
- City master planning process
- Review of large development proposals

2000S

EC involved in master planning and zoning ordinance update, as well as City environmental projects.

Top Priorities:

- Review of large new developments
- Zoning ordinance update
- Involvement with other advisory bodies
- Maintaining & restoring City greenspace
- Outreach & environmental education
- Climate change & GHGs

HISTORY OF BLOOMINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

2010S

Environmental standards more stringent within City ordinance - focus of green building techniques, energy savings, and landscaping.

Top Priorities:

- Outreach & education
- Low-impact & green development
- Climate change impact & mitigation
- Habitat connectivity
- Review of new development projects

2020S

Global pandemic reduced scope of what could be accomplished. Large focus on outreach, producing reports, and review development petitions.

Top Priorities:

- Outreach & education
- Habitat connectivity
- Reporting



WORKING GROUPS



Water Quality

- Riparian buffer regulation
- Water quality data analysis & report

Light Pollution

- Light pollution data collection
- Dark Sky Place Certification research

Biodiversity

- Habitat Connectivity Plan update and relaunch
- Bee City USA & native pollinators projects

Special Projects

- Administrative support for certifications & other projects as needed



ECOHEROES

The Eco-Heroes Art Contest seeks to connect the natural curiosity of students and residents to their passion for the environment and creativity as artists, writers, and craftspeople.

Recent themes:

- 2024: Drops to Drains: Eco-Heroes Working with the City on Stormwater Strains!
- 2023: LET IT GROW! What trees give us
- 2022: Fighting Fragmentation!
- 2021: Mission: Lower Emissions!

Environmental Commission Expectations

- ✓ Attend meetings
- ✓ Communicate your ideas
- ✓ Be involved

**CHANGE
BEGINS WITH
EACH OF US**

There have been
approximately 180
Commissioners since 1971



Don't hesitate to reach out!

www.bloomington.in.gov/boards/environment

Rachael Johnson
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Planning & Transportation Department
City of Bloomington

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