



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

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 | | |
| Karena 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*

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.