



MONROE COUNTY GOVERNMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
&
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Dave Parsons, Chair
Peter Iversen, Vice Chair
Andrew Guenther, Secretary

Monroe County Commissioners

812 349-2550
Courthouse, Room 315
Bloomington, IN 47404

5:30-7:00 pm
Nat U. Hill Meeting Room
Monroe County Courthouse

"The Monroe County Environmental Quality & Sustainability Commission will provide education, advice, and encouragement to residents, local businesses, organizations, and county government to adopt practices and develop policies that preserve and strengthen Monroe County's economy, ecology, social justice and health initiatives."

April 13, 2016

I. Call to Order

- a. Meeting called to order at 5:34 PM.

II. Roll Call

- a. Member Present: Andrew Guenther, Peter Iversen, Dave Parsons, Eric Spoonmore, Megan Darnley, Kristina Brethova, Clark Sorenson, Julie Thomas, Rhonda Baird, Bob Austin.
- b. A quorum is present.

III. Public Comment (5 minute limit)

- a. There is no public comment at this time.

IV. Community Presentation

- a. Cathy Meyer from Monroe County Parks & Recreation is present. She explained the management structure of Parks & Recreation and the parks managed by the department. Parks & Recreation is also planning on expanding/under taking new projects in the new future to expand trails, parks, and other plots. The department has received many grants from various organizations. They also manage a community garden and will work with Hoosier Hills Food Bank to grow food for their clients. Parks & Recreation also stocks ponds with fish from the Department of Natural Resources and has established beehives and fruit trees. Bloomington Parks & Recreation has worked to remove invasive species and promote native species around the community and have been awarded by the Monroe County Identify & Reduce Invasive Species for their efforts. The department also manages educational opportunities within the community to educate the community on wildlife and nature. They also promote a variety of volunteer projects – such as Adopt-A-Stream – that encourages volunteers to get involved with the environment in our community.
- b. Eric asked if there's a wishlist the department has of items they haven't been able to complete/work on yet. Cathy responded that they haven't been able to complete many trails that would encourage/enable additional bike use.
- c. Peter asked what environmental quality issues the department has seen that should be addressed now or in the near future. Cathy responded that invasive species are particularly important for monitoring/removal. Stormwater also continues to be an issue regarding the quality of life in Monroe County. Additionally, public awareness is important to continue to push forwards with education initiatives and programs.
- d. Dave Parsons asked if there are any concerns/observations about the use of land near Lake Monroe and the impact it has on water quality. Cathy said that working on maintaining this water quality is a regional effort because we cannot control a lot of the upstream pollutants/concerns.

- e. Dave Parsons asked about carbon sequestration and its prioritization by Parks & Recreation. Cathy mentioned that working to ensure that we don't pave over more land than is necessary.

V. Approval of Minutes

- a. Clark moved to approve the minutes as written. Bob seconded. The March 9, 2016 minutes were approved unanimously.

VI. Old Business

a. Monroe County Energy Challenge (MCEC)

- i. On Saturday the 23rd, the MCEC will be present at the Bloomington Farmers Market.

b. Review of Annual Report

- i. Dave Parsons brought up that we need to tweak the datasheets in order to refine how we process future years' data. Thus, this year's Annual Report will only include a Letter from the Chair, Year in Review, and a general summary, but no specific data. Julie Thomas asked if the Annual Report would include ordinances/resolutions passed by the County Council/County Commissioners – it was agreed that we would include it. Megan Darnley mentioned she will work to include any updates to the Annual Report that the commission has in mind. This year will largely be focused on refining and updating those datasheets for future analysis. Julie asked if this datasheet update regarded temperature normalization – Megan responded that this is accurate. Previous years analysis has been inconsistent due to these datasheets, so they are working to iron out those inconsistencies. Bob mentioned that this year, due to Honeywell, we may be able to get monthly updates of utility usage and asked whether that would help with our Annual Report process. Julie responded that we could see usage on the dashboard, not cost, and it won't be normalized for temperature due to a lack of technological capability.
- ii. Dave asked if there was a plan to enter data into the datasheets once they are updated. Megan responded they've been doing so for this year, and they hope the updated datasheets would allow for the automatic temperature normalization of new utility usage data as it is entered.

VII. New Business

a. Five Year Anniversary

- i. This month is the 5-year anniversary of the passage of the ordinance that established the Environmental Quality & Sustainability Commission for Monroe County. Julie explained that many different groups worked together to bring the resolution to the Commissioners, which passed easily. Dave mentioned that he is happy that different facets of our community – Indiana University, Monroe County Soil & Water, etc – were brought together for this commission. Julie replied that this is important to the continued discussion our commission holds regarding environmental concerns across our county.

b. Orientation Packets

- i. Dave and Peter have created an Orientation Packet for our newest members to acclimate them to county government and our commission. Peter encouraged all members to read the packet for valuable information regarding our charter document and data on the Thomson Property. Julie voiced appreciation that this is a helpful document to have and that it can be included in the EQUAS site once the Monroe County site is redesigned.

- ii. Bob inquired as to how new information is loaded onto the county website. Julie responded the commissions have to currently have to go a couple staff members. She doesn't know how that will change moving forward, however due to security reasons she believes going through the staff members is the standard-bearer. She also mentioned that the new website design will allow for a more standardized, clean look for the Monroe County website.
- iii. Bob mentioned the idea of publishing relevant community events on the Monroe County website calendar. Julie responded that the master meeting calendar and an events calendar ought to remain separate, but she will look into adding an events calendar to the website. Dave mentioned how the Commission has considered creating a public calendar managed by the Commission that would focus on environmental/sustainability events. Bob asked if there would be legal concerns with the County website including public events. Kristina and Julie agreed that a legal disclaimer could abate any legal concerns. Peter suggested the Commission could have a working group focused on identifying relevant community projects/events for posting on the calendar.

VIII. Reports from Working Groups

a. Thomson Property – Tabled

- i. Dave mentioned that the property west to the Thomson Property is for sale and mentioned that I-69 may increase demand for land in that area.

b. Energy Working Group

i. Energy Conservation Opportunity Project

- 1. Julie and Clark presented a document they've been working on to assemble building maintenance projects completed by the County. The document focuses on 8 buildings that they have worked on since the 2012 Energy Audit. The Audit offered many projects the County could work on and the return-on-investment for those projects. This document will look at these proposed projects, which ones have been completed, which ones need to be completed, and the years those projects have been worked on/completed. The current document is a rough draft and the working group will continue working on it in the future in order to determine what projects should be prioritized in the future. Julie is going to recommend adding additional light projects to the new bond proposal by the Board of Commissioners. Bob brought up local schools' "Lights Out!" campaign and inquired as to whether this can be implemented in the Courthouse. Julie replied that it largely has, but that these behavioral projects are important. Rhonda suggested looking at roof insulation projects after light projects are completed.

IX. Sustainability Tip

a. Arbor Day Ideas

- i. Arbor Day is coming up and local organizations are working to promote tree planting, including giving out free trees to local citizens. On Friday April 29th from 4-7PM at either Bloomingfoods East or West, Sycamore Volunteers will be giving out tree seedlings for local planting. There are many other programs around our community as well.
- ii. Clark mentioned that it's important to make sure that you are planting native species and to avoid those species that are invasive or dangerous to the local ecosystem.

X. Reports from Represented Organizations

a. City of Bloomington

- i. Jacqui sent an update via e-mail. They have submitted their RentRocket.org proposal to MIT's Climate Colab. Public comment is open until May 23rd – everyone should go support our proposal and send any comment to Jacqui.

b. Indiana University

- i. Kristin Brethova presented that yesterday was IU Day and the IU Office of Sustainability has had difficulty connecting with the IU Foundation due to the small size of their office. The Foundation has allowed the Office of Sustainability to have a fundraising effort through the Foundation website – any and all donations are welcomed. The IU Energy Challenge has just ended. On Friday a new rain garden will be planed by the SRSC. Their Internship Symposium will be held on April 29th – those who want to attend should RSVP on the Office of Sustainability website.

c. Monroe County Soil and Water

- i. No representative present.
- ii. Bob asked if the water issues that have been in the newspaper are under control of Monroe County Soil & Water. Julie replied it is not, but is under the City of Bloomington Utilities.

d. Monroe County Government

- i. Julie met with the new County Attorney to discuss board & commission rules/regulations. The Commission should expect receiving a newly standardized outline of rules/regulations, including the extension of terms from one year to two years and the changing of our name from Environmental Quality & Sustainability Commission to the County Environmental Commission.
- ii. Dave asked Megan if “Green Teams” had progressed – due to the Annual Report, it has been pushed to the side at the moment.
- iii. Rhonda asked if it would be acceptable for her to ask questions/investigate options regarding the Thomson Property. Dave responded we used to have a working group when the discussion about that property was more active – he recommended discussing this further outside of the meeting and researching the history of the issue as well.

XI. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM.
- b. Our next meeting will be at 5:30pm, Wednesday May 11, 2016 in the Nat Hill Meeting Room