

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

January 6, 2021
7:00 p.m.

**This meeting was conducted in accordance with Sub. H.B. 197 and the guidelines set forth
by the Ohio Department of Health**

Call to Order

Environmental Commission members in attendance for the Wednesday, January 6, 2021 virtual meeting were: Chair, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky; Vice-Chair and City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken, Mr. Andor Kiss, and Mr. Steven Elliott. A quorum was present. Also present for the virtual meeting were City of Oxford residents Mr. Ross Olson and Mr. Scott O'Malley, and City of Hamilton resident, Mr. Alfred Hall.

Mr. Elliott moved for approval of the minutes from the December 2, 2020 Commission meeting; Mr. Kiss seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion

A) Food Farm Presentation

Mr. Olson, Mr. O'Malley, and Mr. Hall requested that the Environmental Commission consider alternative uses of public land for community gardens, pollinator gardens, and/or natural habitats. Mr. Hall had previously been with the City of Hamilton's Urban Gardens, and is presently working with the City of Hamilton Department of Neighborhoods for such a development, adjacent to an existing community garden. The City of Hamilton (Hamilton) is requiring that the project is beneficial to the neighborhood, has low to no City-provided maintenance (Hamilton is to provide water only), and includes a natural habitat area for pollinators and other beneficial animals. Mr. Hall presented his current, proposed development plan as an example. The plan included a budget, project work schedule, and a list of work force (volunteers), with their responsibilities. Mr. Hall has a budget estimate of approximately \$5,700 for 9,200 square feet of pollinator gardens and natural habitat areas. In Oxford, Merry Day Park was suggested as a potential location of an initial community/pollinator garden and natural habitat due to the perception of relatively low usage, accessibility with two parking lots, and the proximity of the Family Resource Center and Oxford Community Food Pantry/TOPSS. Mr. Hall stressed that from his experience community support is essential. Past experience indicates that some neighbors considered natural areas as appearing unkempt and neglected. Mr. Hall stated that a concerted effort of public

outreach, awareness, education, and acceptance is necessary for a successful project. Mr. Hall also cautioned to start small, and upon success, then consider expansion. Mr. Kiss expressed concern of the potential loss of green space for neighborhood children. The initial area of the gardens and natural habitat at Merry Day Park was envisioned to be approximately 10,000 square feet, and the need to maintain recreational green space at the Merry Day Park was acknowledged. Mr. O'Malley provided images and details of existing community and pollinator parks and natural areas from Bloomington, Indiana to provide visual examples of what could be accomplished. Mr. Olson inquired if it would be appropriate to involve the City of Oxford's Recreation Board, and was encouraged to reach out to the Recreation Board and Oxford's Parks and Recreation Department. The Commission expressed support of the idea of an alternative use of some public lands as presented. The following Motion was moved by Mr. Ralinovsky, with Mr. Bracken as a second:

Motion:

The Environmental Commission respectfully recommends that the Oxford Recreation Board and City Council considers the alterative land use of a portion of Merry Day Park as community and pollinator gardens and natural habitats. The Commission further suggests that the Recreation Board and City Council allow time for presentations by Mr. Olson, Mr. O'Malley, and Mr. Hall (and potentially others) as part of their consideration.

The Motion was unanimously accepted.

B) IES Community-Scale GHG Inventory PSP Status

Staff provided an update for the Miami University Institute for the Environment and Sustainability graduate student team undertaking a Professional Service Project (PSP) regarding Oxford's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory. The students started their efforts on Monday, January 4, 2021. They have been in contact with ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA (ICLEI), and have gotten access to ICLEI's ClearPath GHG inventory software. ICLEI has offered to assist the PSP team with a ClearPath tutorial and additional assistance as the project progresses, if needed. Oxford's local government operations (LGO) questionnaire forms regarding energy use and emissions in 2019 were provided to the students, who are to review the last LGO GHG inventory PSP (utilizing 2018 numbers) to help determine how best to conduct the 2019 GHG inventory. A virtual meeting with the student team, Environmental Commission representatives, and Ms. Jessica Greene has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. At this meeting, the PSP team is to present a summary of the preliminary LGO inventory. Additionally, the PSP team is to have determined how they will proceed with the community-scale GHG inventory, particularly regarding the level of available details of energy usage and GHG emissions for the Oxford community, whether based upon regional, Butler County-wide, or (hopefully), specific to the community itself (or at least the 45056 zip code).

C) Bee City USA Presentation

Mr. Jason Bracken has requested Ms. Patricia Platt prepare an outline of the Bee City USA (BCUSA) requirements. Ms. Platt, Mr. Bracken, and Mr. Kiss are working on a list of citizens and groups to contact to assist in meeting these requirements. Mr. Bracken indicated that he believes the community, pollinator gardens, and natural habitat idea discussed earlier in the meeting would greatly assist Oxford in satisfying the BCUSA annual requirements.

Other Business

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that the City of Silverton hosted a virtual public meeting regarding the residential solarization project on Monday, January 4, 2021. Ms. Raghu reported approximately 37 individuals were in attendance, with approximately seven from Oxford. During the meeting, PRO Lighting and Solar LLC (PRO Lighting) indicated that with a recent Duke Energy bill, they could estimate the savings per household. With 25 households, PRO Lighting anticipates the price for the acquisition and installation of solar components would be reduced by \$1,000 per household. PRO Lighting indicated that they would like to start these installations in March 2021.

Staff informed the Commission that Oxford's Tree City USA (TCUSA) re-certification application for 2020 had been approved by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and has been forwarded to the Arbor Day Foundation. Oxford was one of 46 communities in southwest Ohio to have been certified as a TCUSA for 2020. In 2019, Ohio had a total of 237 TCUSA communities, the largest number of any of state in the nation. This will be Oxford's 25th consecutive year of qualifying for the TCUSA designation. The annual awards ceremony (if held) is to be in the City of Montgomery, Ohio, in the greater-Cincinnati area.

Staff updated the Commission on the December monthly emission monitoring of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents. This monitoring event continued to obtain measurements from both the top and the side of the vents. Both locations were monitored in an effort to determine a correlating ratio between the two measured values. Continuing the previous observations, the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emission values obtained from the side-mounted sample ports were greater than those from the top-of-casings; the side-mounted sample port allows the monitoring equipment's pressure transducer to experience a greater pressure difference. December's measurements from both the top-of-casing and the side-mounted ports were approximately one-half of their respected monthly averages to date. The monthly average CO₂e values for the top-of-casing measurements were 48.4 metric tonnes (MT); December's CO₂e value was 22.5 MT. The average monthly CO₂e value from the side-mounted ports was 194 MT; the December CO₂e value was 93.6 MT. Review of the emission information suggests that a decrease in the volume and velocity of the emissions are largely responsible for the observed decrease in CO₂e values.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Since the program started in April 2019 and through the end of December (92 weeks), approximately 63,650 pounds (31.8 tons) of food scraps have been collected for composting. This is approximately 692 pounds per week on average, with the program's expense coming to \$0.33 per pound. During 2020, a total of approximately 40,100 pounds (20.1 tons) were collected, with a weekly average of approximately 770 pounds, and a program's expense of \$0.29 per pound. Pricing for 2021 received from the food courier providing the service (GoZERO Services) remained constant at \$228 per week.

Agenda discussion items for the February 2021 Commission meeting were discussed. Staff requested that the Earth Day and Arbor Day Proclamations be included in the February's meeting discussions.

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:00 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is to be a virtual meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. on February 3, 2021.