

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

January 8, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Environmental Commission members present at the Wednesday, January 8, 2020 meeting were: Chair, Mr. Wright Gwyn; Vice-Chair, Ms. Madeline Maurer; City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken, and Mr. Jon Ralinovsky. A quorum was present. Mr. Steven Elliott and Mr. Andor Kiss had previously notified the Commission that they would be unable to attend this meeting. Also in attendance were Oxford's City Planner, Mr. Zachary Moore, and Ms. Carla Blackmar.

The minutes from the December 4, 2019 Commission meeting was unanimously approved as presented.

Public Remarks

Ms. Blackmar informed the Commission that she was in attendance to assist her with the pending review of the draft tree preservation and protection ordinance text by Oxford's Planning Commission. Ms. Blackmar stated that she believes that the draft text prepared by Oxford's Community Development Department was well constructed, and would allow for the maximum number of trees to be preserved and/or planted during property development. However, Ms. Blackmar also indicated that there were issues she had wished were expanded upon and/or addressed.

A) Draft Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance

Mr. Zachary Moore was in attendance at the Commission meeting to present the Community Development Department's incorporation of the Environmental Commission's draft tree preservation and protection text into Oxford's Codified Planning and Zoning Code. Prior to the meeting, Mr. Moore had provided draft copies of the Planning and Zoning Code and the newly developed Chapter 1148 (Landscaping and Tree Preservation) for the Commissioners' review. Mr. Gwyn observed that several of what he considered key components of the Environmental Commission's preservation and protection draft ordinance were not included in the proposed legislation by the Community Development Department. For example, Mr. Gwyn was concerned at a specific ratio of replacement plantings for any large diameter trees that were removed were not present in the Community Development Department's proposed text. Mr. Moore agreed and he understood the Commission's concern. Mr. Moore indicated that the proposed tree protection and preservation legislation by the Community Development Department was created to address as many of the Environmental Commission's concerns regarding tree preservation and protection as practical, with an eye upon the

available staffing in the Community Development Department for review, inspection, and possible enforcement.

Mr. Moore presented and discussed some examples of current and pending developments (the credit union on Lynn Avenue, and the South Farm subdivision off of Kehr Road, respectively) as examples of how existing procedures and the proposed legislation would serve to protect and preserve existing trees and stipulate the planting of new trees.

Commissioners expressed concern regarding the potential for City Staff to make decisions regarding some development plans without the direct involvement of the Planning Commission and/or City Council. Mr. Moore indicated that inclusion of the Commission and/or Council in all development plan decisions would be time consuming for all parties involved, and that developers were often compliant with the Community Development Department's suggestions, requests, and/or stipulations in order not to slow the approval and/or development process. If there are disagreements between the developer and the Department that could not be resolved, then the Planning Commission (and ultimately, potentially the City Council) would be involved in the review and approval processes.

Mr. Moore explained the pending timeline for the proposed legislation. The Planning Commission had instructed that initial review of the proposed tree preservation and protection legislation was to be included as a discussion item in their public meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2020. Mr. Moore stated that both of the Community Development Department's proposed text and the Environmental Commission's previously prepared Tree Ordinance Recommendations would be provided to the Planning Commission. The tentative plan is then for the Planning Commission (at their February 11, 2020 meeting) to make a formal recommendation to City Council on the code text amendments incorporating the tree preservation and protection language into the Planning and Zoning Code.

In subsequent discussion, the Environmental Commission indicated their disappointment that the proposed text to be submitted to the Planning Commission for review and discussion would not include several perceived key components of the draft tree preservation and protection ordinance initially prepared by the Environmental Commission. A Motion was proposed by Mr. Ralinovsky; Ms. Raghu seconded the Motion.

Motion:

The Environmental Commission acknowledges the effort made by the Community Development Department to incorporate the Environmental Commission's recommended tree preservation and protection requirements and guidelines into the City's existing codes. However, the Environmental Commission cannot support the Community Development's draft as presently written, without the incorporation of the following concepts that were included in the Environmental Commission's tree preservation and protection recommendations, but are not present in the draft text:

*A replacement ratio for every tree with a ten-inch or greater diameter at breast height (DBH);
A minimum survival period for re-planted trees and a requirement to re-plant if new trees are not thriving;
A tree survey of the development that accurately identifies trees of ten-inches or greater DBH that are present on the property to be developed;
A tree fund that is fully utilized; and
A greater participation of the Planning Commission in landscaping plan reviews and approvals.*

The Motion passed unanimously.

B) City Council Activities

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that City Council had the second reading on legislation restricting the distribution of unsolicited advertisement distributions to properties in Oxford. City Council passed the restrictions, which require the advertisements to be placed at/in designated locations on a property, rather than dropped on the ground in the proximity of the front of the property. Also, City Council had tabled discussion of the potential expanded polystyrene foam container ban, and had requested that the Environmental Commission review and make a recommendation on the potential ban.

Other Business

A summary of the residential food scraps drop-off program was provided. During the April-December 2019 time period (39 weeks of collections), approximately 22,800 pounds (11.4 tons) of food scraps were collected by the residential drop-off program, averaging approximately 585 pounds per week. The residential food scraps drop-off program is scheduled to continue in 2020.

Staff informed the Commission that the Professional Service Project (PSP) graduate student team from the Miami University Institute for the Environment and Sustainability Department (IES) was scheduled to make a formal presentation on Friday, January 24, 2020. The PSP presentation is intended to outline their work on completing the Oxford government operations' greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, and their recommendations of how to best prepare a community-wide GHG inventory. These GHG inventories are a requirement of Oxford's participation in the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. The IES PSP presentation will be at 9:00 a.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room at the Oxford Police Department, 101 East High Street.

Mr. Gwyn informed the Commission that in an email dated January 8, 2020, City Councilor David Prytherch had solicited the Environmental Commission's input and recommendations pertaining to the potential expanded polystyrene foam container ban. Ms. Raghu indicated that the City Council would like to finalize any actions on the expanded polystyrene foam ban legislation during their February 5, 2020 meeting. The

Environmental Commission appointed Ms. Maurer, Mr. Bracken, and Mr. Ralinovsky to a sub-committee to investigate and research questions from City Council (as provided in Mr. Prytherch's email). The Commission concluded to hold a second meeting in January 2020 specifically on the potential expanded polystyrene foam container ban in order to have the Commission's input available for the February 5th City Council meeting. The meeting is planned for the evening of Thursday, January 23, 2020. Staff was requested to reserve the First Floor Conference Room in the Municipal Building (15 South College Avenue) for the meeting. Staff indicated that the Agenda for the meeting is to be publically released by Thursday, January 16, 2020.

Ms. Maurer reminded the Commissioners of an upcoming stakeholders meeting regarding watershed planning for the Acton Lake-Four Mile Creek watershed on January 22, 2020. The meeting is the second public meeting regarding an Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's 9-Element Non-point Source Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS Plan) requirement for the watershed, and is being sponsored by the Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District. The meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. at Oxford's Lane Library (441 South Locust Street) and will involve participants breaking into small groups to discuss potential project ideas.

Officer elections for the 2020 Commission's Chair and Vice-Chair positions were postponed due to the absences of two of the seven Commissioners.

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 9:25 p.m. The next Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on January 23, 2020, in the Municipal Building's First Floor Conference Room to discuss the potential expanded polystyrene foam container ban. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on February 5, 2020 in the Municipal Building's First Floor Conference Room.