

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 3, 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, February 3, 2021 virtual meeting were: Chair, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky; Vice-Chair and City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken, Mr. Steven Elliott, and Mr. Justin Fain. A quorum was present. Also present for the virtual meeting were City of Oxford resident Mr. Ross Olson, and City of Hamilton resident, Mr. Alfred Hall.

Mr. Elliott moved for approval of the minutes from the January 6, 2021 Commission meeting; Mr. Bracken seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Mr. Bracken introduced the Environmental Commission's most recent member, Mr. Fain, to the Commissioners.

Discussion

A) Food Farm and Bee City USA Updates

Mr. Olsen and Mr. Hall provided an update for the potential development of a community garden and pollinator garden as an alternative use for a portion of Merry Day Park. City Council had instructed the Oxford Recreation Board (ORB) to consider the proposed development of the gardens. Mr. Olson was to make a presentation to the ORB during their next meeting, scheduled for Thursday, February 11th. Related to the potential gardens development, it was announced that Ms. Patricia Platt intended to step down as the lead coordinator for investigating Oxford's potential participation in Bee City USA (BCUSA). Mr. Fain and Mr. Olson have joined Commissioners Mr. Bracken and Mr. Andor Kiss in the evaluation of the BCUSA requirements, compiling a list of citizens and groups to contact to assist in meeting these requirements, and the determining potential for Oxford's participation in the BCUSA program.

B) Earth Day and Arbor Day Proclamations

The Earth Day Proclamation for 2021 was unanimously approved as presented. Staff informed the Commissioners that this year's Earth Day observation ("EarthFest") was

scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 2021 in the Uptown Memorial Park (if public gatherings have been permitted by the State by that date). Staff has reserved a spot for the Environmental Commission at the Uptown event to distribute literature, take requests for changes in recycling services, and be present to answer questions from the public. Regardless if the COVID restrictions are still in place, the organizers of EarthFest (Miami University's chapter of the National Association for Environmental Professionals) are intending to incorporate a virtual component to EarthFest. The Arbor Day Proclamation for 2021 was unanimously approved as presented. Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, (the 30th this year). Oxford typically plants a celebratory tree in recognition of the event. For the last two years, the planting has been Burr Oak trees at the Oxford Community Park. Staff was instructed to forward both the Earth and Arbor Day Proclamations to City Council for their consideration.

C) "Solarized Oxford" Update

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that between the Cities of Silverton and Oxford, approximately 40 residents, one business and one fire house had contacted PRO Lighting and Solar LLC (PRO Lighting) for a cost estimate to install roof-mounted solar panels. Ms. Raghu indicated that Oxford locations made up approximately a quarter of that total. Ms. Raghu stated that the cost estimate for the installation of roof-mounted solar panels and the associated equipment for her residence totaled approximately \$11,000. The initial installations are tentatively planned to start in early March, and there is still the opportunity to participate. It is envisioned that there will be additional opportunities for the foreseeable future to have PRO Lighting provide a cost estimates and conduct subsequent installations.

D) City Council, Planning Commission, Oxford Parking and Transportation Advisory Board, and Climate Action Steering Committee Activities

Ms. Raghu reported that at a recent City Council meeting, the proposed South Forest Edge residential development (located east of Lake Forest Drive) was presented. Ms. Raghu noted that the tree preservation and protection legislation that the Commission had worked on last year was applicable to this project. Ms. Raghu was pleased the Commission's effort was resulting in replacement trees being planted for trees that were removed during development activities.

Other Business

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 had presented a preliminary status report at a meeting earlier in the day. The GHG inventory for Oxford's local government operations (LGO) had largely been completed. However, there were several pieces of data that require additional clarification to determine the final values that will be used in the inventory. The estimated LGO GHG emissions, utilizing 2019 values, was approximately 8,180 metric tonnes (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). The previous LGO GHG inventory (using 2018 values) had a total value of approximately

13,345 MT CO₂e. The difference in the total CO₂e values were largely due to the solid waste calculations. The volume of trash and fuel usage provided for the 2018 GHG inventory was for the entire City of Oxford; in the 2019 GHG inventory, only the trash and the associated transportation fuel for the collection and disposal of trash generated by City facilities were included. Also, in the earlier LGO GHG inventory, the emissions from Oxford's closed sanitary landfill were determined by a model from the USEPA. For the 2019 GHG inventory, the closed landfill's emissions estimate was based upon the monthly monitoring conducted by City Staff at the landfill's 23 passive gas vents. Based upon the most recent GHG inventory, it appears that the operation of both the water and waste water treatment plants account for approximately half of Oxford's 8,180 MT CO₂e, with the solid waste component contributing approximately a quarter of the total CO₂e amount. The PSP team intends to continue to review the requirements for a community-scale GHG inventory, and evaluate available data and/or methods to collect this data. The PSP team is to provide an update of their findings and recommendations for the community-scale data acquisition in a meeting in early March with Oxford's Climate Action Steering Committee. The Commissioners requested that Staff forward a copy of the PSP team's PowerPoint slide presentation from the preliminary status report meeting.

Staff informed the Commission that due to the forecasted emergence of the 17-year cicada during the upcoming spring-summer, Oxford intended to limit the planting of any new or replacement public trees during this spring's season. Typically, Oxford plants most of the new and replacement public trees during the fall planting season, so the anticipated reduction in spring plantings is not envisioned to affect the relative total number of public trees planted this year.

Staff updated the Commission on the January 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. This will likely be the last time both locations are monitored. Evaluation of four months of data could not identify a correlating ratio between the two measured values for each vent. The only consistent trend was that the CO₂e emission values obtained from the side-mounted sample ports were greater than those from the top-of-casings. January's monitoring values were the highest observed to date. The average side-port monitoring values over the last four months is approximately 193.3 MT CO₂e per month. At this rate, the annual CO₂e emissions would be 2,320 MT CO₂e. This estimated annual emission volume is still less than the USEPA's model estimate of approximately 4,700 MT CO₂e

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 January (96 weeks), approximately 66,460 pounds (33.2 tons) of food scraps have been collected for composting. This is approximately 692 pounds per week on average, with the program's 2019 – 2021 expense to date coming to \$0.33 per pound. In January 2021, a total of approximately 2,800 pounds were collected, with a weekly average of approximately 700 pounds, and a program's expense of \$0.33 per pound.

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 March 3, 2021.