

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 5, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Environmental Commission members present at the Wednesday, February 5, 2020 meeting were: Chair, Mr. Wright Gwyn; Vice-Chair, Ms. Madeline Maurer; City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken; Mr. Jon Ralinovsky, and Mr. Andor Kiss. A quorum was present. Mr. Steven Elliott had previously notified the Commission that he would be unable to attend this meeting. Also in attendance were graduate students from the Miami University (MU) Institute for the Environment and Sustainability Department (IES) Ms. Olivia Herron and Mr. Noah Miller.

The minutes from the January 8, 2020 monthly Commission meeting, and the January 23, 2020 special meeting of the Commission were unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion

A) Summary of IES GHG Inventory PSP

Ms. Herron and Mr. Miller are members of the IES Professional Service Project (PSP) graduate student team working on the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for the City of Oxford. Ms. Herron and Mr. Miller made a presentation to the Commission summarizing the entire PSP team's formal presentation of January 24, 2020. GHG sources are broken into three sectors): Sector 1 include GHG emissions from sources that are owned or operated by Oxford; Sector 2 are GHG emissions associated with energy generation for Oxford's local government operations (LGO) activities, and Sector 3 are from sources outside of Oxford's control that are necessary and related to its LGO activities. Oxford's LGO Sector 1 GHG emissions appear to have the largest percentage (44.5%) of the three, but this is not necessarily bad. The Sector 1 GHG emissions are those that Oxford's actions can most directly impact. Emissions from the closed landfill and Oxford's current solid waste generation (includes Rumpke's fuel for trash and recycling collection, transport, and the disposal or processing of the trash and recyclable materials) appear to account for approximately 61% of Oxford's emissions, and are the largest contributors to Sector 1 and 3 GHG emissions. Oxford's Water Treatment and Waste Water Treatment Plant operations account for the largest percentage of Sector 2 emission due to their electrical demands. Commissioners offered constructive advice to improve the clarity of the information provided for the LGO GHG presentation. Commissioners also inquired how the closed landfill's GHG emissions were determined. Staff stated that the value was obtained from the USEPA's e-GGRT (electronic GHG reporting tool), which utilized details about the landfill (such as the duration of use and when closed, volume of wastes

entombed, the maximum depth of wastes, etc.) and provides an estimate of the landfill's carbon dioxide equivalent emissions. Commissioners pondered whether an actual measurement of the volume of emissions from the closed landfill's passive venting system may be appropriate, given the apparent impact of the landfill emissions to Oxford's total LGO GHG emissions. Commissioners also inquired as to the biogases associated with the Waste Water Treatment Plant's operations. Ms. Herron had previously participated in a MU Capstone project looking into the Plant's biogas generation, uses, and potential uses, which included installation of a micro-turbine to generate electricity from the biogases. It was requested that Ms. Herron provide a copy of the Capstone report to the Commission. The LGO GHG inventory is largely completed. Ms. Herron and Mr. Miller indicated that the majority of the upcoming semester's work by the PSP team would research and develop suggested procedures to assist Oxford in conducting a community-wide GHG inventory. Both the LGO and community-wide GHG inventories are required for Oxford's participation and compliance with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

B) City Council and Planning Commission Activities

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that City Council had enacted legislation banning expanded polystyrene foam food containers. The ban will be effective as of December 31, 2021, and will include the hospital and the Talawanda schools in town. The Talawanda elementary school student who had presented to City Council regarding the volume of polystyrene food-related materials they encountered daily at school is scheduled to present at the Talawanda School Board meeting. Ms. Raghu suggested it would be good to have members of the Environmental Commission present at the School Board meeting in support of the student. Oxford's municipal contract for electricity will be from all renewable sources at a lesser expense than the previous contracted rate for electricity from non-renewable sources. Commissioners suggested that perhaps it would be beneficial to have Oxford's energy broker make a presentation to City Council regarding the electrical aggregation program and associated intricacies. The following Motion was made by Mr. Gwyn, and seconded by Mr. Ralinovsky:

Motion:

The Environmental Commission would like an electrical aggregation presentation at an upcoming City Council meeting by a representative of Oxford's energy broker.

The Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Raghu indicated she would prepare the request to the City Manager.

The Planning Commission had considered the draft tree preservation and protection legislation at their January 14, 2020 meeting. Mr. Gwyn was in attendance, and reported that the Planning Commissioners had a thorough discussion regarding the proposed legislation. Mr. Gwyn indicated that the Planning Commission seemed to have largely agreed with the Environmental Commission's concerns with the draft text as prepared by the Community Development Department. The Planning Commission requested that

Community Development Department staff revise the existing draft tree protection legislative text to incorporate (as best they could) requirements such as a minimum replacement ratio for any tree of ten inches diameter at breast height (DBH) or greater that was removed anywhere on the site during development, stipulating a minimum survival period for newly planted trees, inclusion of a site survey of trees 10 inches or greater DBH, inclusion of a tree fund option, etc. Mr. Gwyn reminded the Commissioners that the tree ordinance was to be discussed further at the next Planning Commission meeting during the evening on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at the Courthouse.

C) Zero Waste Resolution Request

In an email dated January 22, 2020, on behalf of the City Council, Councilor David Prytherch requested that the Environmental Commission consider a Zero Waste Resolution during the January 23, 2020 special meeting the Commission had to consider the ban on expanded polystyrene foam (EPF) food containers. Given the relatively short notice, the decision was made to postpone consideration of a proposed Zero Waste Resolution until the Commission's February 5, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting. During discussion of the proposed Zero Waste Resolution, Commissioners expressed concern that it appeared the proposed Resolution had not been sent to the Commission by the City Council for consideration and action, but by a Councilor. The Commission tabled the Resolution with no action taken, with the suggestion that perhaps this was a topic the Climate Action Task Force may wish to consider.

D) Earth Day and Arbor Day Proclamations

The Earth Day Proclamation for 2020 was unanimously approved as presented. Staff informed the Commissioners that this year's Earth Day observation ("EarthFest") would occur on Saturday, April 18, 2020 in the Uptown Memorial Park. Staff has reserved a spot for the Environmental Commission at the event and intends to be present to distribute literature, take requests for changes in recycling services, and be present to answer questions from the public. The Arbor Day Proclamation for 2020 was unanimously approved as presented. Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, (the 24th this year). Oxford intends to plant a celebratory tree (a Burr Oak) at the Oxford Community Park. Staff was instructed to forward both the Earth and Arbor Day Proclamations to City Council for their consideration.

E) Officer Elections

The Commissioners held Officer Elections. Mr. Jon Ralinovsky was elected as Chair, and Mr. Wright Gwyn was elected as Vice-Chair. Both elections were unanimous.

Other Business

The community action group #Take3Oxford has informed the Oxford that #Take3Oxford had selected the City as its winner of this year's #Take3Oxford "Oscar" for "Best Trash Pickup / Prevention Group Effort" for the its recent and on-going efforts as evidenced by the City's food

scrap composting program, innovations like the water re-fill station at the community picnic, the use of compostable materials at the community picnic, and the provision of compost collectors at local school and community events. A brief recognition ceremony is scheduled at approximately 12:45 p.m. on Saturday, February 8, at the MOON Co-Op Chili Lunch, held at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church (25 East Walnut Street). Ms. Raghu indicated she would attend the ceremony on behalf of the Environmental Commission.

Oxford Assistant City Manager, Ms. Jessica Greene, had requested that the Commission appoint a representative to the Climate Action Task Force. The Task Force is tentatively scheduled to meet quarterly, starting at the end of March 2020. Commissioners inquired if the time of day for the meetings had been established and requested Staff find out when the meetings would be scheduled (if it had been determined yet).

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:25 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on March 4, 2020 in the Municipal Building's First Floor Conference Room.