

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

April 7, 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, April 7, 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, Mr. Steven Elliott, and Mr. Justin Fain. A quorum was present. Also in attendance were Mr. Ross Olson and Ms. Ann Fuehrer.

Mr. Elliott moved for approval of the minutes from the March 3, 2021 Commission meeting; Mr. Bracken seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion

A) Food Farm and Bee City USA Research Status

Mr. Olson made a presentation regarding a proposed pilot demonstration project in the northeastern corner of the Merry Day Park. The property line between Merry Day Park and the property to the north where the Family Resource Center (FRC) and Talawanda Oxford Pantry and Social Services (TOPSS) are situated, is overgrown with invasive honeysuckle, and is also accumulating trash and litter. Mr. Olson wishes to clean up the property line, and suppress and/or remove the honeysuckle as part of a public involvement and public education pilot project with the intent of assisting the interested public and/or clients and customers of the FRC and TOPSS in gaining experience with addressing honeysuckle removal or suppression. The idea is that with this experience, individuals may be inclined to undertake clearing honeysuckle and other unwanted brush from other properties, potentially opening space for food gardens. Ms. Fuehrer, the Director of TOPSS, supports the pilot project. One of TOPSS intentions is to work with its clients to address food insecurity, either by gardening or by education. Ms. Fuehrer sees the pilot project as an educational program to help the public learn methodologies to control or remove honeysuckle on their properties, potentially making room for their own gardens. The following Motion was proposed by Mr. Elliott; Mr. Fain seconded:

Motion:

The Environmental Commission formally endorses a honeysuckle suppression pilot project for creation of a food farm area. The project is in the northeastern portion of Merry Day Park along the property line with the Family Resource Center - Talawanda Oxford Pantry and Social Services property.

The Motion was unanimously accepted. Mr. Olson is scheduled to present this pilot project to Oxford's Recreation Board at their April 15, 2021 meeting.

B) Oxford Comprehensive Plan Input Project

Mr. Ralinovsky informed the Commission that the City of Oxford was beginning the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan (last revised in 2008). Oxford is requesting that Boards and Commissions select a representative to a Steering Committee, prepare a Comprehensive Plan Input Report, and coordinate public input sessions. Ms. Raghu volunteered to represent the Commission on the Steering Committee. Mr. Ralinovsky proposed the following Motion; Mr. Bracken seconded:

Motion:

The Environmental Commission nominated Ms. Chantel Raghu as its representative to the City of Oxford's Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

The Motion was unanimously accepted. The Comprehensive Plan Input Report is due by June 30, 2021. City Staff has located a descriptive list of the Commission's accomplishments from 2012 to early 2017, and is to update the list. The Commissioners intend to utilize Oxford's Codified Ordinance Chapter 135.01 and 135.02 as guides to assist the preparation of the Report's descriptions of the Commission's duties and responsibilities. It was suggested that the public input session(s) should be both in-person and virtual, occurring over the summer.

C) Alternative Stormwater BMPs for Pending Development(s)

Several of the Commissioners indicated they did not recall receiving an email from Staff containing a link to the City of Oxford's Stormwater Management Manual. Staff was requested to re-send the March 5, 2021 email regarding the Stormwater Management Manual and background details regarding its development.

D) "Solarized Oxford" Update

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that a total of nine homes and one church in Oxford had contracted with PRO Lighting and Solar LLC (PRO Lighting) for the installation of roof-mounted solar panels. Ms. Raghu stated that PRO Lighting intends to do the

installation in May 2021. Mr. Bracken suggested that perhaps Oxford should review its potential solar projects with an eye towards potential funding being available through the federal COVID relief bill and the pending infrastructure improvements legislation. Mr. Kiss indicated he would investigate the potential of incorporation of solar and other sustainability features for the potential Amtrak rail platform, and would contact US Senator Sherrod Brown's office regarding potential funding.

Other Business

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that at the April 6th City Council meeting, a developer had requested a variance to the tree protection and preservation legislation that the Environmental Commission had developed and was adopted in 2020 (Oxford's Codified Ordinance Chapter 1148, "Landscaping and Tree Preservation"). City Council had declined to grant the variance.

Staff updated Commissioners on developments with the Miami University Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES) graduate student team undertaking a Professional Service Project (PSP) regarding Oxford's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory. The final presentation of the GHG Inventory PSP is to be virtual, and is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 8:45 AM. Commissioners requested that Staff contact the IES Department and have all of the Commissioners included on the invitation list for the final project. Staff had participated in a virtual workshop for a second PSP, which is investing climate change resiliency for Oxford and Miami University. While the Environmental Commission has not been involved in the development of this PSP, Staff suggested that it could be beneficial for the Commissioners to attend that PSP's virtual final presentation as well. The Commissioners instructed Staff to request that the IES Department include the Commissioners on the invitation list for that presentation as well.

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event for March of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents. For the second consecutive month, monitoring event yielded the lowest estimated carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) monthly value to date. At 23.6 metric tonnes (MT) for the entire landfill, this monthly value was dramatically lower than the previous month's (approximately 92 MT), and more than ten times lower than the maximum CO₂e measurement (approximately 292 MT), recorded in January 2021. These fluctuations in the CO₂e values suggest that the landfill emissions are not particularly steady over time, and that continued monitoring will likely be necessary to determine an accurate estimate of the landfill's CO₂e emissions. Mr. Bracken requested copies of the tabular summaries of the emission monitoring events. The USEPA District 5 office has indicated they would assist him in determining feasibility of installing flares to burn-off the emission's methane content, and determine potential combustion by-products.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Since the program started in April 2019 and through April 5, 2021 (105 weeks), approximately 73,900 pounds (36.95 tons) of food scraps have been collected for composting. This is approximately 700 pounds per week on average, with the program's expense coming to \$0.32 per pound. For

2021, a total of just over 10,250 pounds has been collected in 13 weeks, with a weekly average of just under 790 pounds, and a program's expense of \$0.29 per pound.

Staff informed the Commission that Miami University's National Association for Environmental Professions (NAEP) had likely ruled out in person gatherings for this year's Earth Day observance ("EarthFest") in Uptown Oxford. NAEP was reportedly still investigating the potential for scattered display tables across Miami University's Oxford campus, with a decision anticipated by April 9th if the April 24, 2021 EarthFest event would be in-person, conducted virtually, or be a mixture of the two.

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 7:55 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is to be a virtual meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. on May 5, 2021.