

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF OXFORD**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**May 5, 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, May 5, 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. Justin Fain. A quorum was present. Mr. Steven Elliott had previously notified the Commission that he would not be in attendance. Also in attendance were Ms. Shana Rosenberg.

Mr. Fain moved for approval of the minutes from the April 7, 2021 Commission meeting; Ms. Raghu seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

**Discussion**

A) Ms. Shana Rosenberg: “Thread Up Oxford” Textile Recycling

Ms. Rosenberg made a presentation regarding a newly formed, local action group “Thread Up Oxford” that encourages textile recycling and re-use. Ms. Rosenberg explained the need for such an organization, noting that the volume of discarded clothing has doubled in the past 20 years from 7 million tons to 14 million tons landfilled annually, with cloth composing almost 6% of the solid waste stream. Thread Up Oxford is recently formed, starting in February 2021 with a clothing swap and rapidly evolving into textile recycling and re-use, with approximately 2,700 pounds of materials collected during their first recycling drive that ended in mid-April 2021. Along with recycling, re-use, and distribution of clothing and textiles, Thread Up Oxford conducts public outreach and education working to affect a cultural change with attitudes towards clothing. Thread Up Oxford is coordinating with Goodwill Industries and the Family Resource Center for distribution of clothing. They are exploring establishing clothing repair and mending workshops with the local Farmers Market and Lane Library to assist in the education of the public. In her research, Ms. Rosenberg has found other textile recycling and re-use companies (Smartwool Second Cut Project that recycles socks into clothing items, and UltraTouch and Blue Jeans Go Green that both re-use denim for insulation materials). Thread Up Oxford has also contacted animal shelters and veterinary offices offering towels. Thread Up Oxford is presently looking for location(s) to serve as a public drop-off, with the vicinity of the residential food scraps drop-off containers being considered as a possibility. A second possibility suggested was by the County’s public recycling

dumpsters, located along Wells Mill Drive and Miami University's Ditmer parking lot. It was suggested that Ms. Rosenberg contact the Butler County Recycling and Solid Waste District (the District), as they operate the public recycling drop-off locations, and the diversion of cloth from landfills would be part of the District's mandate.

B) Oxford Comprehensive Plan Input Project

The Commission's participation with the Comprehensive Plan Input Project was discussed. There is a June 30th deadline for a summary of the Commission's duties and responsibilities, and to submit questions that the Commissioners would like to be considered for a community survey regarding the revision of Oxford's Comprehensive Plan. Staff was instructed to prepare a summary of the Environmental Commission's duties and purpose, utilizing the information in Oxford's Codified Ordinance Chapter 135 (which created the Commission) as guidance. Commissioners were requested to consider questions to be possibly included in a community survey for the Comprehensive Plan revision, with review, comments, and possible revisions to both, to occur during the upcoming Commission meeting on June 2nd

C) Stormwater BMPs/Riparian Buffers for Pending Development

Best management practices (BMPs) for storm water management was discussed. Commissioners have indicated concern in the past that there appears to be an over-reliance by developers to use detention basins to address stormwater run-off in the community. Other storm water BMPs that are available (as presented in Oxford's Stormwater Management Manual and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources "Rainwater and Land Development") do not appear to be considered. Staff updated the Commission with research into riparian buffer (also known as stream setback) areas. Discussion with the Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District (BCSWCD) indicated that their recommendation for the width of undistributed, natural vegetation (ideally, wooded) areas along waterways is 75 feet on either side, although there is no regulations or legislation mandating that distance. The BCSWCD stated that they are not aware of any regulations or legislation anywhere in Butler County requiring riparian buffers. In discussions with Oxford's City Planner, Mr. Zack Moore, Mr. Moore indicated that the Warren County Zoning Code addresses the establishment of stream setbacks. The setbacks are determined by the watershed's drainage area, with consideration for the 100-year floodplains and possible wetlands. Staff was instructed to prepare a summary of how Warren County determines the widths of riparian buffers. Mr. Bracken indicated that while the riparian setbacks were important for water quality, and for wildlife habitat and migration corridors, he would like the Commission to encourage the use of other BMPs for stormwater control that weren't detention basins, and/or how to encourage the incorporation of retention basins that would be required to be developed into viable wetland habitats.

D) “Solarized Oxford” Update

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission she had no additional, updated information regarding PRO Lighting and Solar LLC’s installation of roof-mounted solar panels on a total of nine homes and one church in Oxford. The installations are tentatively scheduled to commence during May 2021.

**Other Business**

Staff updated Commissioners with summaries of the final presentations from Miami University’s (MU’s) Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES) graduate student teams undertaking a Professional Service Project (PSP) regarding Oxford’s greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, and investigating the Climate Resiliency Assessment for MU and Oxford. The GHG Inventory PSP indicates that during 2019, Oxford’s local government operations emitted approximately 7,500 metric tonnes (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). The treatment of water and waste water were the largest component, making up 45% of the total emissions, with solid waste contributing 31%, buildings at 10%, and the vehicle fleet and the street illumination and traffic control lights both contributing 6% of the total. Oxford’s community-scale GHG inventory of a typical municipality’s four largest contributors (commercial energy, residential energy, transportation, and solid waste) for 2109 was approximately 233,000 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e. The commercial energy sector was the largest contributor (at 60% of the total) and included MU in the calculations. The final presentation for the Resiliency Assessment PSP indicated that results from a workshop of 19 individuals representing MU and Oxford considered the top climate hazards for the university and community to be (in order of importance) heat emergencies, drought, flooding, and the increasing severity of storms (in both the summer and winter). While the climate action organizations that MU and Oxford belong to are different, the reporting and procedural requirements are similar. The PSP recommends that MU and Oxford continue to work in partnership to complete their respective resiliency assessments, but offered two options to complete the assessment. The first was to continue to utilize the 19 individuals that participated in the initial workshop with the second being expansion of the number of participants. The advantage to utilizing the original group would be efficiency and knowledge of the process, with a potential drawback of having a limited number of inputs and views. The advantage of increasing the number of participants would be possibly adding expertise and viewpoints, but would likely require additional time to get everyone up to speed. The final reports from both PSPs are due by Friday, May 14, 2021.

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill’s 23 passive gas vents for April. This time around, the total CO<sub>2</sub>e monthly value was slightly above the average value for the past seven months. At 177.7 MT for the entire landfill, this monthly value was the closest to the seven month average (152.2 MT) since the first monthly event in October 2020 (173.9 MT). The fluctuations in the CO<sub>2</sub>e values continues to 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. Mr. Bracken indicated that the USEPA District 5 office had recently provided him with estimations of the by-products from flaring the closed landfill’s emissions and a cost estimate for the flare(s). However, this information was only recently received, and Mr. Bracken has not yet had the

opportunity to examine it. Given the time frame, it is likely that the USEPA's review did not have the February and March 2021 monthly monitoring event which had the two lowest total CO<sub>2</sub>e values to date.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Since the program started in April 2019 and through May 3, 2021 (109 weeks), approximately 77,100 pounds (38.5 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 13,450 pounds has been collected in 17 weeks, with a weekly average of just over 790 pounds, and a program's expense of \$0.29 per pound.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:05 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is to be a virtual meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. on June 2, 2021.