

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

October 7, 2020
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, October 7, 2020 virtual meeting were: Chair, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky; Vice-Chair and City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken, and Mr. Andor Kiss. Mr. Steven Elliott had previously informed the Commission of his absence at this evening's meeting. A quorum was present. Also present for the virtual meeting was Ms. Suzi Zazycki, Associate Director of the Miami University (MU) Institute for the Environment and Sustainability Department (IES), and IES Graduate Students Ms. Carly Dovale, Mr. Sunmbo Obrunfemi, Mr. Rick Orellana, and Mr. Joe Trivette. Also in attendance was Mr. Matt Kolbinsky of PRO Lighting & Solar LLC.

Mr. Kiss moved for approval of the minutes from the September 2, 2020 monthly Commission meeting; Ms. Raghu seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion

A) IES Community-Scale GHG Inventory PSP Status

Ms. Zazycki presented the IES Graduate Students to the Commission, as they are the Professional Service Project (PSP) Student Team that will be preparing the community-scale greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for Oxford during MU's 2020 - 2021 academic year. This inventory is a requirement for Oxford's participation in the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, which Oxford City Council committed to in September 2019. The calendar year for 2019 was selected as the base year, as the complications and restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic will make data for the 2020 calendar year non-representative of a normal situation. This semester, the students are to educate themselves regarding GHG inventories, prepare an outline of their approach to conducting the inventory, and complete MU's training and get permission to interact with the public, with the intent to undertake the actual inventory when MU's "J" Term starts on January 4, 2021. Oxford is to have the local government operation (LGO) inventory questionnaire submitted to the various Departments and Divisions during early next month (November 2020), so that the LGO component of the community-scale GHG inventory is completed and ready for the PSP team prior to January 2021.

B) Solar Panels for Households: “Solarized Oxford”

Renewable solar energy projects were discussed. Ms. Raghu informed the Commissioners that development of a solar panel “farm” on the surface of the closed landfill was tentatively included in the current Capital Improvement Projects’ funding list, with the intent of initiating development in four to five years. Mr. Bracken re-iterated his desire to have any and all suitable City-owned land to be utilized for solar panel farms, as well as incorporating MU’s open lands, if possible.

Methods to assist the public with installation of roof-mounted solar panels were discussed. Ms. Raghu introduced Mr. Matt Kolbinsky of PRO Light and Solar LLC to provide the Commission with information regarding community “solarization” programs. PRO Light and Solar LLC (PRO Light) is a local company, based out of western greater Cincinnati, and have assisted/are assisting Cincinnati, Silverton, and other regional communities in their solarization projects. To see a price break in the panels and racks (both American-made), Mr. Kolbinsky stated there needs to be at least 25 households commit to the project. PRO Light is currently working with several communities that are interested and/or intending to get involved in assisting their citizens in with obtaining and installing roof-top solar panels. Mr. Kolbinsky estimated that if Oxford was to piggy-back along with the on-going/pending solarization projects, there would only need to be 5 structures in Oxford participating to obtain the volume-based component price reduction. Mr. Bracken requested a table or chart depicting anticipated household expenses and payback estimates for the roof-top solar panels. Mr. Kolbinsky indicated that he would prepare such a summary, but cautioned the information would be generalized, as the actual expense for a structure depends upon factors such as the orientation and pitch of the roof, accessibility to the electrical panel, and if the panel would need to be up-graded to handle the solar system. The solar panels that PRO Light utilizes have a 25 year electrical production warranty, with an expected 40 year life span. The support racks and converters also have a 25 year service warranty. PRO Light works with local contractors and electricians for the installation, and is sponsoring two electrical apprenticeship programs, one in Hamilton County and one in the City of Hamilton. Mr. Kolbinsky believes the City of Hamilton program could easily be incorporated at the Talawanda High School if the school district would be interested. Mr. Kolbinsky offered to conduct a feasibility study for Oxford.

C) City Council, Planning Commission, Parking and Transportation Advisory Board, and/or Climate Action Task Force Activities

Mr. Ralinovsky informed the Commission that the Parking and Transportation Advisory Board has created a working committee that is to review Oxford’s transportation plan, and to investigate incorporating more and/or better connectivity for bicycle lanes and pedestrian access.

Mr. Bracken informed the Commission that at the last Climate Action Steering Committee meeting, City Staff provided a description of the methodology utilized to obtain emissions monitoring from the landfill’s passive vents. Mr. Bracken also stated that in his discussions with Region 5 USEPA, the USEPA recommended utilizing the actual emissions monitoring data for calculating the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) value of the landfill emissions rather than the CO₂e estimate from the USEPA’s electronic greenhouse gas reporting tool

(e-GGRT). The e-GGRT is only a model and is based upon assumptions that may or may not be applicable to Oxford's closed sanitary landfill.

Other Business

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring of the landfill's 23 passive vents. The September event yielded an estimated CO₂e value for the entire landfill (62.2 metric tonnes CO₂e) that was almost twice of either July's or August's value (32 and 39.4 metric tonnes CO₂e, respectively). These values are well below the e-GGRT's monthly average estimated CO₂e value (397 metric tonnes per month). The same six gas vents that have historically been the largest contributors to the CO₂e value continued with that pattern, accounting for 84.5% of the September's monthly estimated CO₂e value. On September 28th, a technician with SCS Engineers (SCS) was on-site to split monitor the emissions from these six vents with Oxford. Sampling ports were drilled into the vent's casings at least three feet below the top of the casing (TOC) to eliminate any effect from wind blowing over the vent's TOC. SCS took their measurements from the sample port, and Oxford continued to utilize the TOC for access. The methane and carbon dioxide concentrations did not vary too much depending upon the location of the monitoring sample. However, the flow velocity was consistently greater utilizing the sample port as compared to the TOC measurements. The SCS technician indicated this was because the pressure transducer in the probe was measuring a near parallel flow at the TOC as compared to a cross-sectional flow from the sample port. Staff is installing sampling ports in all of the 23 vents and will utilize the port for future monthly monitoring events. Flow measurements will also continue to be obtained from the TOC in an effort to determine if a consistent ratio can be identified between the monitoring locations, thus allowing the use of values from the previous monthly monitoring events.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Through the end of September, approximately 50,400 pounds (25.2 tons) of food scraps have been collected for composting since April 2019. This is approximately 645 pounds per week on average, with the program's expense coming to \$0.35 per pound.

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:20 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is to be an online, virtual meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. on November 4, 2020.