

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

December 2, 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, December 2, 2020 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. Steven Elliott. A quorum was present. Also present for the virtual meeting were Ms. Suzi Zazycki, Associate Director of the Miami University (MU) Institute for the Environment and Sustainability Department (IES), and Oxford resident, Ms. Patricia Platt.

Mr. Elliott moved for approval of the minutes from the November 4, 2020 Commission meeting; Mr. Bracken seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion

A) IES Community-Scale GHG Inventory PSP Status

Ms. Zazycki provided a summary of activities by the IES graduate student team undertaking the Professional Service Project (PSP) to prepare the community-scale greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for the City of Oxford (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 (the Covenant), which Oxford City Council committed to in September 2019. Ms. Zazycki had previously provided a draft Proposal prepared by the student team for the PSP (entitled: "Plans to Conduct CY2019 Government Operations and Community-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories for the City of Oxford, Ohio"). Their Proposal identified the problem(s) and goal(s), and presented their methodology to complete the PSP. Commissioners' review of the Proposal yielded minor edit requests. Discussion indicated that the Commissioners believed the project outline as presented in the Proposal was in line with the Covenant's requirements. Ms. Zazycki allowed that there was some question to how Oxford-specific the existing and available GHG-related data would be. Oxford personnel are to complete GHG inventory questionnaires regarding internal energy and materials usage, waste generation, fuel and motor vehicle miles traveled, etc. for the local government operations (LGO) during December. The student team will start on the GHG inventories in earnest on January 4, 2021, utilizing the LGO data to help familiarize themselves with the ClearPath software designated for GHG inventories, while investigating and accumulating GHG data for the community at large. During the week of January 18 - 22, 2021, the PSP team is to meet with the Environmental Commission (or Commission

representatives) to provide the findings of the LGO GHG inventory, summarize what community-scale data was found/is available, and outline their intentions regarding the PSP for the rest of the academic semester.

B) Bee City USA Presentation

Ms. Patricia Platt made a presentation to the Commission regarding Bee City USA to encourage the Commission to support the City of Oxford's participation in the program. The Bee City USA (BCUSA) program is currently being managed by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, an international nonprofit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Ms. Platt explained that participation in the BCUSA requires an initial application (including a City resolution and designation of a specific responsible committee) with a \$200 fee, several annual and on-going activities, and an annual summary report and renewal application with an annual fee submittal. Ms. Platt described Oxford's historic association with bee keeping, the on-going interest, dedication and participation in bee keeping by residents and a MU club, and the known and potential benefits associated with the protection of bees and other pollinators. The Environmental Commissioners indicated that they thought the BCUSA program should be considered for the community, and mentioned other organizations (the MU bee keeping club and the local Audubon Society's chapter) had indicated a willingness to participate. A question was raised regarding Oxford's past investigation into participating in the BCUSA program. During the 2016 - 2017 time period, the Oxford Visitors Bureau had hosted meetings to investigate BCUSA. At that time, the City felt that it did not have adequate and available staffing to properly undertake and maintain the on-going responsibilities associated with BCUSA. Subsequently, the Three Valley Conservation Trust had stated their willingness to be the sponsoring organization. Ms. Platt indicated that a key, motivating individual in the previous BCUSA effort had reportedly moved away from the Oxford community, and until Ms. Platt's interest and concern, nobody had championed the idea. Staff indicated that the City's personnel situation had not changed since the earlier efforts, and Oxford still would not have the personnel to properly undertake and maintain a BCUSA program. Ms. Platt and the Commissioners thought that a more grass-root, broad-based and collaborative approach with several organizations participating would a better approach, and would serve to further the community's commitment to, and awareness of, the BCUSA program while demonstrating wide communal support of the BCUSA program. Having multiple organizations on board and participating would increase the available workforce to establish and maintain pollinator habitats, while also reducing the possibility of having the loss of a single individual ceasing all efforts as had apparently previously happened. Mr. Bracken and Mr. Kiss volunteered to work with Ms. Platt in an effort to establish this collaborative approach to establishing the broad-based approach to Oxford's participation in the BCUSA program.

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

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that the City Council had endorsed the Resolution proposed by the Environmental Commission of having PRO Lighting and Energy, LLC conduct a complimentary energy audit of City facilities.

Mr. Ralinovsky informed the Commission that the Oxford Parking and Transportation Advisory Board was investigating permit parking on Acorn Circle, had completed a study of parking in the Uptown area (and are advising the extension of the hours requiring use of parking meters), and a sub-committee was investigating connectivity between the Oxford Area Trail system and the Uptown area.

Other Business

Staff informed the Commission that the Tree City USA re-certification application for 2020 had been submitted, with Oxford apparently meeting all of the criteria for the Tree City USA designation. During 2020, Oxford had an expenditure of \$3.78 per capita on its urban forest (the requirement is for at least \$2 per capita), planted 89 public trees with 71 trees receiving maintenance pruning. A total of 80 trees were removed, but 54 of these were dead Ash trees in the Oxford Community Park wooded areas, with 26 street or Park trees removed. This will be Oxford's 25th consecutive year of qualifying for the Tree City USA designation.

Staff updated the Commission on the November monthly emission monitoring of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents. This monitoring event continued to obtain measurements from both the top of vent casings as had been done in the past, and from the recently installed sample ports on the sides of the vent casings. As anticipated, the emission flow values obtained from the sample ports were greater than those from the top-of-casings (the sample ports allowed the monitoring equipment's pressure transducer to experience a greater pressure difference). As with October's event, the measured methane and carbon dioxide concentration's of the emissions as measured at each location were more similar. An issue with the rental velocity/flow meter's power supply prevented monitoring of all 23 vents. Emission values from 16 vents were obtained. The October emission values for the other seven vents were repeated to provide values for the November event. Estimated total monthly carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) values from the sample port measurements were approximately 3.7 times greater than those determined utilizing the top-of-casing values (approximately the same as observed in October), with an estimated monthly CO₂e of 207 metric tons measured from the sample ports versus 56 metric tons from the top-of-casing. Both values were below the estimated monthly average of 397 metric tonnes obtained from the USEPA's model for the closed landfill's emissions. Staff intends to continue obtaining both measurements in an effort to determine a relative factor for comparing the two CO₂e values, in an effort to be able to utilize the previous month's data that was obtained utilizing the top-of-casing measurements.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Through the end of November, approximately 58,320 pounds (29.2 tons) of food scraps have been collected for composting since April 2019. This is approximately 678 pounds per week on average, with the program's expense coming to \$0.33 per pound. Ms. Raghu inquired about the volume of pumpkins present at the drop-off containers following Halloween. Staff noted a fair number were received, and where possible, "clean" pumpkins were removed from the food scrap containers and transported to the City Class IV yard waste compost to free-up available capacity in the containers for food scraps. Ms. Raghu suggested establishing a separate container(s) next year after Halloween solely for the disposal of pumpkins.

Agenda discussion items for the December Commission meeting were discussed. Ms. Raghu requested that time be set aside for a discussion of the creation of a “Food Forest” at least one of the City-owned parks.

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:00 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Commission meeting is to be an online, virtual meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. on January 6, 2020.