

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF OXFORD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

December 4, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Environmental Commission members present at the Wednesday, December 4, 2019 meeting were: Chair, Mr. Wright Gwyn; Vice-Chair, Ms. Madeline Maurer; City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Ms. Carla Blackmar, Mr. Andor Kiss, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky, and Mr. Steven Elliott. A quorum was present. Also in attendance were City Councilor Mr. Jason Bracken, and graduate students from the Miami University (MU) Institute for the Environment and Sustainability Department (IES) Mr. Emmanuel Aina, Ms. Olivia Herron, Ms. Maggie Kinney, Mr. Noah Miller, Mr. Cecil Okotah, and Mr. Sam Squillante.

The minutes from the November 6, 2019 Commission meeting was unanimously approved as presented.

A) Municipal Operations Green House Gas Inventory PSP

Mr. Squillante updated the Commission on his independent study project of preparing the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory data forms and questionnaires for Oxford's local government operations (LGO), and compiling the provided data. This semester, Mr. Squillante has been working with Ms. Jessica Greene, Oxford's Assistant City Manager, and Staff to fine-tune the standard GHG inventory questionnaire forms from the ClearPath software (a web-based GHG inventory tool that complies with the protocols of the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). Mr. Squillante indicated that the vast majority of the data forms and questionnaires from the various Oxford municipal operations and facilities had been submitted by the December 2nd deadline, and all had been submitted by December 4, 2019. Mr. Squillante is in the process of entering the provided information into ClearPath. Mr. Squillante indicated he expected to be done with data entry by December 13, 2019, and intends to then instruct the IES Professional Service Project (PSP) student team members completing the LGO GHG inventory in the use of the ClearPath software. Mr. Squillante will also revise the inventory data forms and questionnaires based upon comments submitted by the City staff completing the inventory forms (mostly changing terminology to better reflect Oxford's specific procedures and operations).

IES graduate students, Mr. Aina, Ms. Herron, Ms. Kinney, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Okotah were present to update the Commission on their activities as the student PSP team working to complete the LGO GHG inventory for Oxford. The PSP student team is comprised of six members. Two of the team members will work on the ClearPath

software program to complete the LGO GHG inventory itself, while the other four members are to prepare a guidance handbook for how to best conduct a community-wide GHG inventory. Both the LGO and community-wide GHG inventories are a requirement for participation in the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, (which Oxford City Council committed to in September 2019) and need to be completed by September 2021, and every two to three years afterwards. The PSP student team is to complete these efforts by May 2020. The PSP student team had prepared a formal proposal describing the project (entitled “Furthering the City of Oxford’s Efforts to Measure Greenhouse Gas Emissions, in accordance with the Global Covenant of Mayors Commitment”), which had been distributed to the Commissioners prior to the evening’s meeting.

Ms. Greene updated the Commission regarding on-going activities associated with compliance to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (the Covenant). The Climate Action Task Force (Task Force) appears to be expanding to include the involvement of MU administration. Ms. Greene stated that the current intention was to have the Task Force composed of City departmental representatives, several City Councilors, members of the public, and MU representation. At least twice annually, meetings specifically regarding climate action(s) would occur between MU and Oxford, involving MU’s President and/or Chief Financial Officer and Oxford’s Mayor and/or City Manager. Commissioners suggested that the Task Force be expanded to include several board and/or commission members, as well as an individual/group specifically to provide public education and outreach. It was also suggested to include representation by Oxford’s commercial interests, such as the Chamber of Commerce, rental property managers/owners, and/or businesses, etc.

B) City Council Activities

Ms. Raghu informed the Commission that during the December 3, 2019 City Council meeting, legislation pertaining to a ban on expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam plastic food containers was formally presented, a motion proposed, and received a second. The EPS ban legislation is due for its first reading at the next City Council meeting on December 17, 2019. As City Council is considering legislation pertaining to a potential EPS ban legislation, no action on the potential EPS ban legislation was undertaken by the Environmental Commission. Ms. Raghu also alerted the Commission that potential involvement of the Environmental Commission regarding limitations to unsolicited distribution of curbside newspaper-type advertisements is likely during early 2020. A study of water softening at Oxford’s Water Treatment Plant was approved by Council. It was noted that the potential availability of softened tap water could potentially reduce the use of single-use plastic water bottles. Mr. Bracken inquired what would be necessary to formally allow a second City Council representative (with voting rights) to be appointed to the Environmental Commission. The City of Oxford’s Codified Ordinance creating the Environmental Commission specifically states that one member of the Commission would be a City Councilor; the Codified Ordinance would have to be revised by City Council to expand City Council representation. Ms. Blackmar suggested that as Mr. Bracken is also a City Council representative to the Planning Commission, that if he was

to assume her role as the Planning Commission's representative to the Environmental Commission, that would potentially permit his direct involvement with the Environmental Commission without requiring City Council's revision of a Codified Ordinance. Ms. Blackmar indicated she would investigate if this option was possible.

C) Oxford Parking and Transportation Board Meeting Summary

Mr. Ralinovsky informed the Commission that the newly re-established Oxford Parking and Transportation Advisory Board had met for the first time and had selected officers. Given the pending topics of discussion, the initially proposed quarter-annual Board meetings have been changed to monthly meetings for the time being.

D) Proposed Expanded Polystyrene Ban Legislation

Commissioners discussed the pending ban of EPS containers associated with food services. Ms. Raghu stated that under the current Rules of Council, involvement of the Environmental Commission was not necessary for the proposed EPS ban legislation to advance in City Council. While the concept of an EPS food container ban received general support, concern existed regarding the potential impact(s) to businesses and the potential for unintended consequences. It was suggested that some of the national restaurants that have already encountered EPS containers bans elsewhere in the nation could be contacted and alternate container options and their sources be compiled. This information could then be provided to the food services in Oxford to potentially reducing commercial resistance to the ban and assist the businesses in transitioning to alternate containers.

E) Four-Mile Creek Watershed Strategic Plan Meeting Summary

Ms. Maurer updated the Commissioners on a recent, initial stakeholders meeting regarding watershed planning for the Acton Lake-Four Mile Creek watershed as part of an Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's (OEPA's) 9-Element Non-point Source Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS Plan) requirement for the watershed. Ms. Maurer hosted the meeting in her capacity as an Urban Specialist with the Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District. The majority of watersheds in Butler County are classified as impaired for aquatic life use and for recreation. The OEPA NPS-IS plan is a written document that summarizes the causes and sources of impairments, establishes critical areas in the watershed, identifies quantifiable objectives to address that causations and sources of impairments, and determines projects to meet those objectives. The first stakeholder meeting was Monday, December 2, 2019, and was intended to get input from landowners, agencies, organizations and other stakeholders. Ms. Maurer informed the Commission that a second IES PSP student team has taken on the Acton Lake-Four Mile Creek watershed NPS-IS plan as its service project. The next stakeholder's NPS-IS meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2020 at Oxford's Lane Public Library.

Other Business

A summary of the residential food scraps drop-off program was provided. Through November 27th (34 weeks of collections), approximately 18,920 pounds (over 9.4 tons) of food scraps have been collected by the residential drop-off program, averaging approximately 555 pounds per week. The food courier company (GoZERO Services) that currently provides collection services indicated that there would be no change in the weekly fees (\$228 for servicing six waste wheeler carts) for 2020.

Staff updated the Commissioners on the draft Tree Preservation and Protection ordinance. Community Development personnel are incorporating the Commission's recommendations into the existing text of the codified ordinance's Planning and Zoning Code. Mr. Wright reminded Staff to provide a copy of the Ordinance draft that is to go to the Planning Commission to the Environmental Commissioners.

Staff informed Commissioners that the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA re-certification application for 2019 had been completed. Oxford satisfied the requirements for the Tree City USA designation. This will be Oxford's 24th consecutive year as a Tree City USA community.

Adjournment

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:55 p.m. As the first Wednesday of January occurs on the New Year's Day holiday of January 1, 2020, the next Environmental Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on January 8, 2020, in the Municipal Building's First Floor Conference Room.