



MINUTES OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Municipal Building 15 South College Ave. Oxford, Ohio 45056 First Floor Conference Room

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

1st Ms. Barrett 2nd Ms. Branstrator

AYE # 4

NAY # 0

ABS # 1

Approval of Minutes

1. 2023-04-05 Environmental Commission Minutes

Approval of Minutes for the April 5, 2023 Meeting

1st Ms. Barrett 2nd Ms. Branstrator

AYE # 4

NAY # 0

ABS # 1

Old Business

New Business

1.
 1. IES Professional Service Project: Investigation into Apartment Complex Recycling
 2. Electrical Aggregation Contract Renewal

3. Citizen's Climate Pledge

4. Ohio House Bill 507

5. City Council, Planning Commission, and Oxford Parking and Transportation Advisory Board Activities

A) IES Professional Service Project: Investigation into Apartment Complex Recycling

Mr. Nally provided a status update on the IES professional service project (PSP) entitled "Recycling Program Recommendations for Commercial Housing Properties in the City of Oxford." The PSP student team had made its final presentation regarding the project on April 17, 2023. Mr. Ralinovsky and Mr. Treleaven were in attendance at the presentation. Mr. Nally indicated that the PSP team was still finishing the final report detailing the PSP. At the latest, the Environmental Commission should receive the final report by May 15, 2023. Mr. Nally indicated that a municipal ordinance mandating apartment complex recycling appeared to be the primary mechanism that needed to be in place, based upon the case studies conducted by the PSP team. Education was a major component for the case study communities with successful apartment recycling programs, as were periodic waste audits, and public services by the communities to assist the property management. In addition to a mandating ordinance, the PSP is recommending Oxford increase public education and combine its public education with MU's on-campus recycling education, to create a continuity of the educational messages the students are receiving regarding recycling while on-campus.

B) Electrical Aggregation Contract Renewal

Oxford's existing electrical aggregation contract expires at the end of 2023. The contract (currently with Energy Harbor) allows citizens to purchase electricity from green, renewable sources, or opt out of the electrical aggregation program, and receive electricity generated from convention methods. Commissioners were curious if there were other criteria other than pricing that were considered when Oxford selects a provider of renewable electricity. Mr. Ralinovsky indicated that he would contact the City Manager, Mr. Doug Elliott, and offer the Commission's assistance in the aggregation selection process, as well as inquire about the selection criteria utilized. Ms. Raghu indicated she would first contact Mr. Elliott as a member of City Council, and alert him to the Environmental Commission's questions and offer of assistance.

C) United Nation's Climate Neutral Initiative

Ms. Branstrator had previously requested that the Commission consider the United Nation's Climate Neutral Now Program (the Program). Specifically, Ms. Branstrator was interested in the Program's component that allows individuals to voluntarily participate in personal efforts to assist in the development of a more sustainable world. Following additional research, Ms. Branstrator did not believe the Program (or any of the current UN climate-related programs) would be appropriate for the commission to recommend. Ms. Branstrator had subsequently utilized other climate and/or carbon pledges that she believed would be a better approach for

individuals to consider to create an Individual Climate Pledge. Most recently, Ms. Branstrator revised her pledge based upon Commissioners' comments at the April Commission meeting. Ms. Branstrator believes the pledge can also be utilized to help educate the public with relatively simple efforts that could help reduce an individual's or family's carbon footprint. It was suggested that perhaps the Climate Action Steering Committee be brought into the discussion of utilizing the pledge into a public education program.

D) Ohio House Bill 507

During this year's EarthFest celebrating Earth Day on Saturday, April 22, 2023, Staff was approached by a citizen who asked that the Environmental Commission consider action(s) associated with Ohio House Bill 507, which was signed into law this past January. House Bill 507 initially concerned agricultural issues, but had amendments added to it, one of which regarded extraction of oil and natural gas from Ohio-owned lands. In 2011, the Ohio General Assembly initially established the policy of leasing mineral rights from Ohio-owned lands. However, rules guiding this process have never been written. The leasing requirement contained within House Bill 507 was reportedly an effort to force the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Oil and Gas Management Commission to finalize rules governing the leasing of these mineral rights. The citizen's concern was apparently related to the potential of fracking to recover the oil and gas reserves. Ms. Branstrator informed the Commission that several environmental groups were presently suing Ohio to prevent any extraction activities. Ms. Raghu indicated she would discuss this with other City Councilors to determine if they wished the Environmental Commission to make a formal Motion to City Council regarding House Bill 507.

Staff provided updates regarding the pilot pollinator garden and naturalized/prairie grass plots at the Oxford Community Park (OCP). Mr. Steve Ohl, the OCP Supervisor, had informed Staff that there are some grasses growing through the mulch at the prairie grass plot which would be sprayed with an herbicide later this week. Ms. Branstrator stated that the year-old plants were tentatively scheduled for delivery on May 15th, and that she has started other plants for the plots. Ms. Branstrator indicated the tentative planting schedule would be the week of May 15th, after the year-old plants had been delivered and after the end of the on-going soccer tournament at the OCP.

At past meetings, Commissioners had indicated that they would like to present the opportunity for the collection of food scraps and recyclables at public events. Staff presented a list of six scheduled, upcoming public events (through October 2023) where food trucks were anticipated. Ms. Raghu indicated she could assist in guiding the public in appropriate disposal at three of the events, and Ms. Branstrator and Ms. Barrett at one event each. Commissioners are also working on coordinating volunteers (presently, predominately from local Boy and Girl Scouts troops) to help provide public guidance for recycling and food scrap collection efforts. Given the recent (and historic) volume of food scraps at the residential drop-off program, Staff estimates that two of the six food scrap totes could be provided at these events without impacting available volume capacity for the residential food scraps drop-off. Commissioners discussed the preparation of some sort of a collection table or cabinet to hold trash, recycling, and food scrap containers. Ms. Raghu indicated she would contact Mr. John Buchholz, Oxford's Community Outreach Specialist, to get his input on such a feature and potential sources to obtain at least one.

Staff informed the Commissioners that the annual local Tree City USA awards ceremony was held in Fairfield, Ohio on Thursday, April 20, 2023. This was Oxford's 27th consecutive year as a Tree City USA community. The Memorial Tree Program's recognition ceremony occurred Friday, April 28, 2023 at the OCP. This past year, three trees (Swamp White Oak, Japanese Silk Lilac Tree, and Donald Wyman Crabapple) were planted in the OCP as part of the Memorial Tree Program. There was a good turnout for the event. Also on Friday, April 28th, the Arbor Day celebratory tree planting of a Burr Oak by the OCP Gazebo occurred.

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents. April's monitoring was the 31st monthly event. The estimated total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) for April was approximately 75 metric tons (MT). This was the fifth lowest monthly total observed during the 31 monthly monitoring events. In the last four months, the monthly CO₂e have been markedly lower than the average monthly emissions on three occasions. The monthly total CO₂e values average is currently approximately 144 MT, down by 4 MT in the last month alone. The estimated total CO₂e emissions for 2023 are projected to be approximately half of the average annual emissions (954 MT for 2023 versus an annual average of 1,887 MT since 2020).

Since April, 2019, the residential food scrap drop-off program has collected approximately 156,666 pounds (78.3 tons) of material, averaging approximately 740 pounds per week. Thus far in 2023, approximately 11,000 pounds (5.5 tons) of food scraps have been collected, averaging approximately 650 pounds per week.

Adjournment

Approval of Adjournment:

Motion:	Ms. Barrett
2 nd :	Ms. Raghu
Vote:	Unanimous

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:10 p.m. The next monthly Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on June 7, 2023, in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.