



MINUTES
OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
COURTHOUSE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Ms. Barrett
2nd: Mr. Fain
Vote: Unanimous

1. Approval of Agenda

Date: March 1, 2023
Location: Municipal Building, 15 South College Avenue, first floor conference room

Time of Meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Members present: Chair, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky; Vice-Chair and City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Mr. Justin Fain, Ms. Heather Barrett, and Ms. Peggy Branstrator. A quorum was present. Mr. Steven Elliott had previously informed the Commission that he would not attend the March meeting.

Staff present: David Treleaven, Environmental Specialist, Staff Liaison

Public present: City of Oxford (Oxford) Assistant City Manager, Ms. Jessica Greene, and from the Miami University Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES), Ms. Madalyn Warnimont and Mr. Jared Nally.

Motion: Ms. Barrett
2nd: Mr. Fain
Vote: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Ms. Barrett
2nd: Mr. Fain
Vote: Unanimous

1. Approval of February 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion – To Adopt
(Voice Vote) 1st 2nd
AYE #
NAY #
ABS #

Old Business

1. Pilot Pollinator Gardens/Naturalized Areas at Oxford Community Park
Recycling Options for Oxford Public Events
Tree City USA Award Ceremony
Monthly Monitoring of Landfill Passive Gas Vent Emissions
Residential Food Scrap Drop-Off Program Summaries
Agenda Items for April 5, 2023 meeting

The annual local Tree City USA awards ceremony will be held in Fairfield, Ohio on Thursday, April 20, 2023. Staff invited Commissioners to attend, as the ceremony is relatively close this year. Staff set a Friday, March 3rd committal deadline as a check request to cover the registration fee needs to be submitted at that point (payment is due to Fairfield by March 20th).

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents. February's monitoring was the 29th monthly event; the estimated total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) was approximately 178 metric tons (MT), which was higher than the estimated monthly average of 151 MT. Over the two years plus of observations, the monthly total estimated CO₂e for the entire landfill continues to be highly variable.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Through the end of February 2023, (203 weeks since the program's start in April 2019), the total weight of collected food scraps was approximately 151,500 pounds (75.75 tons), averaging 746 pounds per week. For the year 2023, January's collected weight was approximately 5,900 pounds (2.95 tons), averaging 736 pounds per week.

New Business

1.
 1. IES Professional Service Project: Investigation into Apartment Complex Recycling
 2. Managed Natural Lawn Area Legislation Status

3. Climate Neutral Initiative

4. Climate Action Steering Committee

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

1. IES Professional Service Project: Investigation into Apartment Complex Recycling

Ms. Warnimont and Mr. Nally provided the Commission with updates regarding the IES professional service project (PSP) entitled “Recycling Program Recommendations for Commercial Housing Properties in the City of Oxford.” The IES PSP student team had conducted site visits at commercial residential properties that had previously identified as potentially having “shared” access to recycling – adjoining commercial residential properties with the same owner and at least one recycling charge on their utility billing account. At several of the locations, there did not seem to be a recycling opportunity for the tenants. The student team will adjust their estimate of 4,642 commercial residential units (out of 6,170) having on-site or “shared” access to recycling to reflect the findings of their site inspections. The student team has scheduled interviews with some property managers regarding their experiences and/or opinions regarding tenant recycling. The tenant recycling survey questionnaire sent to property managers has one week left for responses. Thus far, only seven questionnaires have been returned. The responses from these seven surveys indicate that the negatives regarding offering tenant recycling include the “lost” space in parking lot space(s) for the recycling containers, contamination or co-mingling of trash with recyclables, and the costs, both of recycling itself and the result of contamination. The student team’s case study reviews are largely focused on communities that have enacted some sort of recycling program for commercial residential units. Common threads with these programs include on-going public education efforts, and “re-branding” of recycling activities and efforts. The final presentation by the IES PSP student team is scheduled for the morning of Monday, April 17, 2023, tentatively in Miami University’s Sheilder Hall.

B) Managed Natural Lawn Area Legislation

Ms. Jessica Greene was in attendance at the March Commission meeting to present City staff’s potential options to address enactment of a managed natural lawn area (MNLA) program. Ms. Greene stressed that Oxford wishes to encourage its citizens to create MNLA, but were not of the opinion that a formal ordinance legislation was the best approach. Of concern with the formal ordinance was potential enforcement issues with city staff ability to properly identify native, non-invasive, noxious, and/or invasive plant species, the proposed ordinances’ requirement of a planting plan, and the potential staff time that may be required to properly enforce and ensure compliance. Ms. Greene presented three potential solutions for MNLA in the community. The first involves a formal, professional public education program regarding creating a MNLA within

Oxford's existing codes and ordinances, with revision of the codes and ordinances intended to streamline locating details pertaining to a MNLA. Ms. Greene indicated that this was City staff's preferred approach. The second solution was a mixture of the first solution and the proposed ordinance which would involve revising existing codes and ordinances with repeals and inclusion of concepts and text from the proposed ordinance. The professional, formal, and organized public education program would also be included. The third solution was for the existing proposed MNLA ordinance previously endorsed by the Commission proceed to City Council for consideration. After a brief discussion, Commissioners opted for the second solution for addressing. Commissioners suggested inclusion of additional text (beyond what Ms. Greene had initially presented), with concepts and definitions from the proposed MNLA ordinance. Ms. Greene is to incorporate these suggestions into the list of repeal and replacement text, and distribute this draft to the Commissioners for their review and comments. The Environmental Commission is to act upon the final text with a motion at their April 5, 2023 meeting. Assuming the Commission's acceptance of the final MNLA text, it will be provided to City Council at their April 18, 2023 meeting.

C) Climate Action Steering Committee

Ms. Greene presented a draft of the Climate Action Steering Committee's community climate action plan (CCAP). The CCAP calls for a mixture of mitigation actions to reduce Oxford's emissions and adaption actions intended to address predicted effects of climate change. After going through a PowerPoint slide presentation of the CCAP, Ms. Greene indicated a copy of the presentation would be provided to the Commissioners for their more detailed review. Ms. Greene requested that comments and/or suggestions be provided. A city-wide presentation of the CCAP is tentatively scheduled in April 2023.

D) 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. After additional research, Ms. Branstrator does not believe the Program (or any of the current UN climate-related programs) would be appropriate for the commission to recommend. Ms. Branstrator subsequently utilized other climate and/or carbon pledges that she believed would be a better approach for individuals to consider, and presented a draft individual pledge listing individual/family actions one is willing to undertake to contribute to a more sustainable community. Ms. Branstrator noted that most of the various climate and carbon pledges she reviewed had a requirement to determine one's personal/family's carbon footprint. However, there did not seem to be a reference to any specific method for determining one's personal carbon footprint. Ms. Branstrator indicated she would continue to research appropriate carbon footprint calculating methodology and/or formulas.

Adjournment

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

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:25 p.m. The next monthly Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on April 5, 2023, in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.

1. Adjournment