



MINUTES
OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 15 SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE, FIRST FLOOR
CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2023 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Environmental Commission members in attendance at the Wednesday, June 7, 2023 meeting were: Chair, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken; Mr. Steven Elliott, Mr. Justin Fain, Ms. Heather Barrett, and Ms. Peggy Branstrator. A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Minutes from May 3, 2023 meeting

Motion: Mr. Fain
2nd: Mr. Elliott
Vote: Unanimous

New Business

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

The final report from the Miami University Institute for the Environment and Sustainability professional service project (PSP) entitled "Recommendations for the City of Oxford: Commercial Household Recycling Access" was received and distributed to the Commissioners on May 15, 2023. The PSP was intended to provide an evaluation of the current availability of recycling for households residing in commercial apartment units. It also conducted case studies of successful commercial household recycling programs from other communities to identify necessary components that Oxford should consider incorporating into any recycling program it

may undertake. As the report is 70 pages long, not all of the Commissioners had read the entire report. However, the Commissioners agreed that the four recommendations presented in the report's Executive Summary should be considered. These recommendations were: 1) Implementation of a community-wide recycling education initiative involving commercial household units; 2) Working with the Butler County Recycling and Solid Waste District to evaluate if the two existing public recycling stations in Oxford are sufficient to assist recycling by commercial household units and if additional station location(s) would be appropriate; 3) Prepare and have City Council pass an ordinance mandating the availability of on-site recycling for the tenants of commercial housing units; and 4) Prepare a program to conduct recycling and waste audits of commercial housing units to track the progress and potential successes or failures of the commercial housing recycling program. The Commissioners were requested to read the entire report. An outline of how to undertake these four recommendations would be discussed in earnest during the next Commission meeting.

2. Electrical Aggregation Contract Renewal

Staff informed the Commissioners that the City Manager had contacted Affordable Gas & Electric (AGE - Oxford's electrical aggregation consultant) regarding the Environmental Commission's interest in utilizing an Ohio electrical supplier with 100% local renewable energy during the next contract period (starting in 2024). AGE indicated that there is a scarcity in Ohio and regionally for electricity generated by renewable energy sources. However, Energy Harbor and Constellation do offer carbon-free energy credits with electricity generated from their nuclear power plants. In discussion, the Commissioners indicated they were not necessarily opposed to electricity generated by nuclear power, as it did not involve fossil fuels.

3. 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 under Ohio-owned lands, including State forests and parks, 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. Mr. Bracken indicated he was very certain that City Council would be in favor of the Environmental Commission making a formal Motion to City Council regarding House Bill 507.

4. Citizen's Climate Pledge

Ms. Branstrator had previously requested that the Commission consider the United Nation's Climate Neutral Now Program (the Program). 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 and/or families to consider to create an Individual Climate Pledge. Ms. Branstrator continued to revise her pledge based upon Commissioners' comments during the May commission meeting. Ms. Branstrator indicated that Assistant City Manager Ms. Jessica Greene believes the pledge can also be utilized within the ongoing public education program regarding managed naturalized lawn areas and species biodiversity.

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

Old Business

1. Pilot Pollinator Garden and Prairie Naturalized Areas at Oxford Community Park

Ms. Branstrator informed the Commissioners that the pilot pollinator garden and naturalized/prairie grass plots at the Oxford Community Park (OCP) had been planted. The prairie grasses had been planted the end of last week, with City Councilor Mr. David Prytherch watering the plot over the weekend. Ms. Branstrator expressed her appreciation of Mr. Steve Ohl, the OCP Supervisor, for his assistance with the pilot plots. Ms. Branstrator noted that weeds (mainly crabgrass) were beginning to populate in the pollinator garden. Mr. Ralinovsky volunteered to weed the pollinator garden, likely on June 8, 2023.

2. Recycling Options for Oxford Public Events

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. The next event is scheduled for Friday, June 9th (the Red Brick event associated with Miami University's Alumni Weekend) in the Uptown Parks. Mr. Ralinovsky indicated that he was available to help shepherd people through the segregated disposal of trash and recyclable items, and food wastes. Staff will arrange to have recycling and food waste totes delivered by Streets and Maintenance Department to the event, along with an additional disposable cardboard trash box.

3. Urban Forestry Updates

Staff informed the Commissioners that five additional public trees were planted during May. Three of these were Memorial trees (two at the OCP and a White Oak in honor of Mr. Joe Newlin in the Uptown Memorial Park). Water bags have started to be placed on recently planted public trees.

4. Monthly Monitoring of Closed Landfill Passive Gas Vent Emissions and Gas Flare Update

Staff informed the Commissioners that the solar powered landfill gas flare was constructed and had been ignited on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. The flame is burning without color and appears to burn constantly to date. The monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill's 23 passive gas

vents in May was the 32nd monthly event. The estimated total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) for May was approximately 112 metric tons (MT). The monthly total CO₂e values average is approximately 144 MT. In the nine days that the vent flare was in operation, it prevented 8.13 MT (approximately 9 U.S. tons) of CO₂e emissions from gas vent GV-23. Mr. Bracken asked for a copy of the emissions monitoring summary table for the June monitoring event (the first month with the gas vent flare in continuous operation).

Since April, 2019, the residential food scrap drop-off program has collected approximately 160,150 pounds (approximately 80 tons) of material, averaging approximately 738 pounds per week. Thus far in 2023, approximately 14,500 pounds (7.26 tons) of food scraps have been collected, averaging approximately 660 pounds per week. Staff informed the Commissioners that the draft of the Request for Proposals for residential curbside food scraps collection would be completed shortly.

5. Agenda Items for Wednesday, July 5, 2023 Meeting

Adjournment

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

Commissioners concluded discussions at 7:45 p.m. The Commissioners unanimously decided to cancel the July 5, 2023 Environmental Commission meeting due to its proximity to the Fourth of July holiday. The next monthly Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on August 2, 2023, in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.