



MINUTES
OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
COURTHOUSE 118 WEST HIGH STREET, OXFORD, OHIO 45056
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Environmental Commission members in attendance at the Wednesday, September 6th, 2023 meeting were: Jon Ralinovsky, Chair; Jason Bracken, Planning Commission Representative and City Council Member; Peggy Branstrator, and Anna Abey. A quorum was present. Members of the public present were Carla Blackmar Rice, David Prytherch, and Olivia Herron.

Approval of Agenda: Ms. Branstrator

2nd: Mr. Bracken

Vote: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes from the November 1st, 2023 Meeting

Motion: Ms. Branstrator

2nd: Ms. Abey

Vote: Unanimous

Old Business

New Business

1. Presentation on the Regional Climate Action Plan (Andy Meyer, OKI Regional Council of Governments; Bamidele Osamika, Green Umbrella)

Andy Meyer of OKI Regional Council of Governments and Bamidele Osamika of Green Umbrella presented to the commission on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG)

awarded through the EPA. CPRG funding focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and serving disadvantaged communities. CPRG has two phases: planning and implementation.

In phase 1, OKI received 1 million in funding from the EPA to develop a regional climate action plan for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which covers 16 counties in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Major milestones for phase 1 include:

- Priority climate action plan (due March 1)
- Comprehensive climate action plan (due summer 2025)
- Summary report (due summer 2027)

OKI and Green Umbrella are collaborating closely to gather public feedback and coordinate with other regional organizations in the MSA. There will be geographic and topic-based engagement opportunities in the coming months.

Green Umbrella has launched a thrive-together platform for wide community engagement: <https://greenumbrella.org/regional-action-playbook/>. Members of the Oxford community can submit ideas on the platform and vote for other's ideas.

Phase 2 includes implementation awards ranging from 2 to 500 million, with applications due on April 1. Implementation projects must be included in the priority climate action plan submitted in phase 1. The implementation grants are intended for regional and interstate cooperation, and applicants are encouraged to bundle many projects into one application. Example projects include: fleet electrification, carpool/vanpool, energy audits, energy efficiency homes, solar for municipal buildings, streamlined permitting, reducing HFCs release, wastewater treatment facilities, reducing fertilizer, and implementing complete street principles.

OKI will likely take the lead on a regional application for an implementation grant. OKI has established a steering committee for project prioritization for the regional plan and implementation grant application. Reena Murphy, Sustainability Coordinator, will be serving on the committee. OKI will gather project proposals and select priority projects based on the scoring criteria in the EPA's funding notice.

OKI wants the regional plan and application to be expansive enough that each community in the MSA can find something to connect with, whether that be EV charging, renewable energy, or something else.

After the presentation, OKI and Green Umbrella spoke with the commission and attendees about priority projects and sectors for Oxford. Mr. Bracken asked if interconnectivity costs for the closed landfill solar array would be an eligible project. Mr. Meyer confirmed that interconnectivity is an allowable cost. Mr. Bracken also asked if there are any projects related to refrigerants. Mr. Meyer said that he did not know of the details, but he believed Cincinnati has a refrigerants program.

Mr. Ralinovsky inquired about an underpass of Locus Street with complete street principles and bikes lanes. OKI shared that the project is eligible but that it would be hard to estimate the greenhouse gas reductions resulting from the project.

Ms. Blackmar inquired about natural gas leaks and if reducing distribution leaks could be included and how they could be measured. She also asked if there is a thematic tie for the regional implementation grant application. Mr. Meyer said that there is no sector-based theme and they will include a diverse array of projects.

Mr. Prtherych asked how cities can play a role in regional renewable energy production and increasing the resilience of the grid. Mr. Meyer shared that virtual power plants and virtual purchase power agreements are two ways cities can promote renewable energy generation at the regional level.

2. Member Updates:
City Council
Planning Commission
Oxford Parking and Transportation Advisory Board
Climate Action Steering Committee

Mr. Bracken provided an update that they are reviewing the responses to the housing RFP, which includes environmental considerations.

3. Staff Updates

- Fourth Quarter 2023 Environmental Affairs Division Summary: Landfill Emissions, Food Scraps, and Urban Forestry
- Recycle Ohio Grant

Staff provided an update on landfill passive gas vent emissions and the solar flare. For the previous three months, the total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) of the closed landfill's emissions ranged from 43.53 metric tons (MT) to 83.1 MT. Without the operating flare at gas vent GV-23, the total CO₂e values for the landfill would have ranged between 76.17 MT and 117.74 MT. Flaring the emissions from GV-23 is reducing the closed landfill's total emissions' CO₂e value by 25% - 30% since it started in the end of May 2023. The average monthly emissions' CO₂e value over 36 months is 135.21 MT, with the total CO₂e value for 2023 estimated to be 1,117.46 MT. The annual emissions' CO₂e value for 2022 was 1,803.74 MT, and for 2021, it was 1,886.94 MT.

Staff also provided an update on the residential food scrap drop-off. The food scraps collected in 2023 have totaled 15.1 tons, averaging 655 lbs per week. Since April of 2019, the program has diverted 87.9 tons from our landfills, averaging 729 lbs per week.

Staff shared that all four standards for Tree City USA consideration have been successfully completed. During 2023, Oxford planted 44 street and public trees, pruned 9 trees, and removed 23 trees. The planting-to-removal ratio was 1.9. Oxford's expense for trees during 2023 was approximately \$54,790, which is \$2.50 per capita (Tree City USA requires an expenditure of at least \$2 per capita). This will be Oxford's 28th consecutive year as a Tree City USA community.

Lastly, staff notified the committee that the Ohio Recycles grant was submitted to the OEPA.

4. Agenda items for January 3rd 2024 meeting

Exploring a Zero Waste Events Policy

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Bracken

2nd: Ms. Abey

Vote: Unanimous

The next Environmental Commission meeting will be January 3rd, 2024 at 7pm in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.