



MINUTES

OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

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

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Commission members present: Jon Ralinovsky, Chair; Jason Bracken, Planning Commission Representative and City Council Member; Justin Fain; Peggy Branstrator; Anna Abey. Members of the public present: Wright Gwyn; Bamidele Osamika. Staff Liason present: Reena Murphy

Motion approve the agenda with the addition of Butler County Solid Waste Management District Solid Waste Plan Review: Mr. Fain

2nd: Mr. Bracken

Vote: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the January 3rd, 2024 Minutes

Motion: Ms. Brandstrator

2nd: Mr. Fain

Vote: Unanimous

Old Business

New Business

1. Tree Ordinance (Wright Gwyn)

Mr. Gwyn provided a packet of information and shared context for the creation of the Tree Ordinance. He shared that the intent of the ordinance is to preserve mature and landmark trees by encouraging developers to work around mature and landmark trees. Mr. Gwyn noted that some trees can be removed if they're exempted. Exemptions include dead/dying, damaged,

invasive, diseased, and/or unsafe trees, as well as trees being removed to place permanent infrastructure like piping. He further explained that non-exempt trees can be removed but they must be replaced on site or a payment must be made to a public tree fund to support public tree planting else where in the community.

Mr. Gwyn expressed concerns that the ordinance is not being enforced. He requested that the Commission request information from the development sites to ensure they are in compliance with it.

Mr. Gwyn mentioned that the enforcement of this ordinance is through Community Development Director, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Mr. Bracken shared that the Planning Commission has discussed the ordinance frequently among themselves and with developers. Mr. Bracken noted many developers elect to replace trees.

Mr. Gwyn expressed concern about the tree survey waiver granted to the Marriott Hotel Development by the Planning Commission. Mr. Bracken shared that the survey was waived as it was cost and time prohibitive to the project. He also explained that many of the trees on the property were on the perimeter, which will likely be unaffected by the construction. The Planning Commission waived the initial inventory, but the development project is not exempt from the tree replacement policy.

The commission then discussed cluster development and green space, which support development while preserving as much natural habitat as possible. Mr. Bracken discussed the opportunity for mandatory buffer zones for water bodies, which allow for habitat connection, greenspace protection, and erosion prevention.

Mr. Gwyn requested that the Environmental Commission discuss the tree ordinance with Planning Commission and City Council.

2. 2024 Waste Station Opportunities

Staff provided a tentative list of waste station opportunities for the first half of 2024. The Commission discussed the best way to recruit volunteers and organizations to reach out to.

3. Zero waste events

Mr. Ralinovski and Ms. Raghu have found guidelines from other cities. They plan on sharing a draft policy for the commission to review next month.

4. Updates from members:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Parking and Transportation Board
- Climate Action Steering Committee

Mr. Bracken shared that the regional planning organization, OKI is working on securing federal funding for the region for climate action through the Inflation Reduction Act and Climate Pollution Reduction Grant funding opportunity.

Mr. Ralinovski shared that OPATB is working on a bike and pedestrian safety plan in 2024.

Mr. Branstator shared that OCASC did not meet. She also shared her efforts for reducing waste at senior center events.

5. Staff Updates

Staff shared updates regarding funding opportunities. Staff also shared the updated Butler County Solid Waste Plan for comment.

The Commission discussed their gratitude for the Butler County Recycling and Solid Waste office for their efforts to increase waste diversion and for their support of municipal programming. The Commission noted that given Butler County's recycling rates are lower than most counties in Ohio, they support the scheduled increase in generation fees. Furthermore, the Commission would support a higher generation fee and/or an earlier implementation of the fee, to further support waste diversion in the County. The commission also discussed measures to discourage landfilling, such as pay as you throw trash fees, and encourage the county to explore additional measures to further increase waste diversion.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Bracken

2nd: Ms. Branstator

Vote: Unanimous

The Commission adjourned at 7:50pm. The next meeting will be on March 6th at 7pm.