MINUTES
OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MUNICIPAL BUILDING 15 SOUTH COLLEGE AVE. OXFORD, OHIO 45056
FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Environmental Commission members present: Jon Ralinovsky, Chair; Chantel Raghu, Vice-Chair and City Council Representative; Heather Barrett; Peggy Branstrator; Anna Abey; Jim Vinch
Staff Liason present: Reena Murphy

A quorum was present.

Motion to approve the agenda: Ms. Barrett
2nd: Ms. Abey
Vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes

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

1. Minutes from the April 3rd 2024, Environmental Commission Meeting

Old Business

1. 2025 Research Areas and Priorities

The commission discussed the 2025 research areas and priorities created by City Council. Staff asked the commission to prioritize the topics to inform 2025 projects and budgeting. After a thorough discussion, there was a motion to identify top 4 priorities.
Motion to recommend energy planning, tree canopy protection and expansion, food waste diversion, and green infrastructure as 2025 priorities: Mr. Ralinovsky
2nd: Ms. Barrett

Vote: Unanimous approval

The discussion around prioritization included an explanation of green infrastructure and how it supports storm-water management. Mr. Vinch also pointed out that green infrastructure beautifies the community, can be used to provide pedestrian safety, and is a visible way to show the community how sustainability initiatives are collectively beneficial. There was also discussion of establishing a stormwater revenue source to support the green infrastructure projects.

The commission discussed the feasibility of curbside compost collection for 2025. Staff shared that the challenges to implementation in 2024 still remain.

Ms. Raghu discussed other ways to eliminate food waste and food going to the landfill. She suggested exploring an ordinance that required diversion methods for businesses with high amounts of weekly waste.

For energy planning, the commission recommends to start by focusing on solarizing municipal operations and community resilience.

Lastly, the commission requested the two tree related items be combined into one, as expanding our tree canopy should include conservation of mature areas.

New Business

1. Waste and Recycling Bid

The commission reviewed the previous solid waste and recycling bid. The commission requested that curbside food scrap composting stay listed in the RFP. The Commission understands that it may not be feasible but would like to keep it included to show demand for a curbside program.

They also requested it include recycling pricing that differentiates between mixed recycling and single item recycling. For example, a business that only recycles cardboard would pay a lower rate than one with mixed recycling.

The commission also discussed pay-as-you-throw pricing models but understands staff concerns with dumping at this time.

2. Zero Waste Events:

- Eclipse Wrap Up
- New Waste Station(s)

- Upcoming Events

Staff shared the final report from Zero Waste Events Production LLC. The commission then had a brief discussion about balancing greenhouse gas reductions and the social value of leading by example for zero waste events.

Staff shared two models of waste stations for the commission to provide feedback on. The commission recommended not including the Hefty ReNew program in the waste station stream. They shared that the program would be too labor intensive, as it requires clean items. Additionally, the commission did not want to share the message disposing of items through the ReNew program was comparable to recycling and composting. The commission also provided feedback on signage, preferring the signs say landfill (not trash) and compost (not organics).

Lastly staff shared the dates of upcoming events that may need the waste station.

3. Member Updates:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- OPTAB
- OCASC

City Council and Planning Commission did not have updates to share. Mr. Ralinovsky shared that OPTAB is discussing ways to support a complete sidewalk network, such as retrofitting sidewalks in subdivisions. Ms. Branstrator provided an update after the OCASC and EC workshop. She shared that the two boards will not be merging, but there will be an annual joint meeting for goal setting based on the budget cycle.

4. Staff Updates

Staff provided updates on the educational campaign drafting and asked for two volunteers to be a mini focus group for the content. Ms. Branstrator and Ms. Abey volunteered.

Staff shared that the Service Department installed a solar array on the maintenance facility at the Oxford Cemetery. The facility is the first to be solarized for city operations.

Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Abey
2nd: Ms. Raghu
Vote: Unanimous approval