



MINUTES
OXFORD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
COLLEGE AT ELM FIRST FLOOR, 20 S Elm St, Oxford, OH 45056
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025 AT 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Environmental Commission members present were Jon Ralinovsky, Chair, Chantel Raghu, Vice-Chair and City Council Representative, Peggy Branstrator, Anna Abey, and Jim Vinch. A quorum was present.

Members of the public in attendance were David Gorchov and SOPEC staff members, Phil Leppla, Deputy Director and General Council, and Jennifer O'Donnell, Regional Director for Southwest Ohio.

Motion to approve the agenda: Mrs. Branstrator

Second: Mr. Vinch

Vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the March 5th Meeting Minutes

Motion: Mrs. Branstrator

2nd: Mr. Vinch

Vote: Unanimous approval

Old Business

New Business

1. Public Hearing on the City of Oxford Electric Aggregation Program Plan of Operation and Governance

Motion to open a public hearing: Mr. Ralinovsky

2nd: Ms. Branstrator

Vote: Unanimous approval

Sustainable Ohio Energy Council (SOPEC) staff members provided an overview of their organization, their aggregation program, and other membership benefits.

SOPEC is a council of governments and membership is free to the City. SOPEC provides an alternative to private brokers for aggregation pricing. Membership would provide Oxford with annual community grants, opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities for federal grant applications, legal assistance for energy projects, and a vote on the council of governments. SOPEC provided examples of cities using community grants for a new energy-efficient pool motor, to fund an environmental fellowship, and to support the purchase of an electric bus. For collaborative grant applications with other municipalities, SOPEC was awarded \$12.5 million for Electric Vehicle infrastructure under the Dept. of Transportation's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant. The funding will be used to install charging stations in ~16 communities connecting Dayton to Athens.

SOPEC membership would also require Oxford to utilize their aggregation program and aggregate with AEP energy. SOPEC and AEP Energy's Government Aggregation Master Retail Electric Supply Agreement requires AEP Energy to provide SOPEC with three market representative price quotes when providing new pricing for member communities to ensure transparency and competitiveness. SOPEC shared that they have negotiated full transparency from AEP Energy on price components.

SOPEC also provides an optional public pricing program for city electric usage and any non-profits within Oxford.

Furthermore, SOPEC and Oxford share a long term goal to support renewable energy generation in the state and region to strengthen the resilience of our regional grid.

The commission asked questions regarding the rate and the fee structure of SOPEC. SOPEC shared that the energy rates depend on when a community "locks in" their energy rate. Additionally, there is no fee to the city to join SOPEC. SOPEC does charge a 0.002\$/kWh administrative fee (~\$1.78 per month per account), which is incorporated into the rate.

The commission also asked SOPEC their capacity for technical assistance to the city, especially with purchase power agreements. SOPEC shared they have 19 staff members and the capacity to assist cities. Additionally, the commission asked if Oxford would be in competition with other cities for SOPEC community grants. SOPEC shared that the community grant funding is not competitive and that grant applications for federal awards would be collaborative based on interested communities.

Motion to close the public hearing: Mr. Ralinovsky

2nd: Mr. Vinch

Vote: Unanimous

The commission then discussed SOPEC membership for Oxford. The commission understood the benefits to SOPEC membership but had remaining questions regarding the community grants, confirming rates are competitive with private brokers, and clarification on technical assistance opportunities with purchase power agreements, and staff opinion. The commission decided to table the vote to recommend to council to Tuesday, May 13th.

2. Member Updates

- City Council
- OPTAB
- Planning Commission
- OCASC

No updates from City Council, Planning, or OCASC. Mr. Ralinovsky shared the OPTAB updates that Phase 5 of OATS is going out to bid and there is a 150k grant through BCRTA for bike and pedestrian safety to transit stops. The City's Bike and Pedestrian Safety Survey currently in circulation is part of the grant.

3. Staff Updates

Staff shared a memo from the Environmental Affairs Division. Highlights include:

- Methane flare at landfill is still operating well
- GV-8 was struck by lightening
- 3 trees removed and replaced in 2025 YTD
- Oxford was certified as a Tree City USA for the 29th consecutive year
- Food scraps are averaging 602 lbs per week from Jan-May 2025

Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Raghu

2nd: Mr. Vinch

Vote: Unanimous approval

The commission concluded at 9pm.