

A Regular meeting of the Oxford City Council was called to order by Mayor Kevin McKeehan on Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. Those members present were Bob Blackburn, Richard Keebler, Mike Smith, Steve Snyder and Edna Southard. Kate Rousmaniere was excused.

Staff members present: Mr. Doug Elliott, City Manager; Mr. Mike Dreisbach, Service Director; Mr. Bob Holzworth, Police Chief; Mr. Joe Newlin, Finance Director; Mr. Jung-Han Chen, Community Development Director; Mr. Alan Kyger, Economic Development Director; Mr. Steve McHugh, Law Director and Ms. Mary Ann Eaton, Clerk of Council.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Blackburn moved to adjourn to Executive Session in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G) (1) and (2) for the purpose of discussing appointments to Boards and Commissions and property acquisition. Mr. Snyder seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Keebler, Mr. Smith, Mr. Snyder, Ms. Southard, Mr. Blackburn,
Mayor McKeehan (6)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Blackburn moved to return from Executive Session at 7:41 p.m. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor McKeehan requested the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Snyder moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PRESENTATION

MCCULLOUGH-HYDE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Bryan Hehemann, President & C.E.O, McCullough Hyde Memorial Hospital, advised he was representing all of the employees, medical staff, auxiliary, volunteers and Board of Directors in highlighting the 2013 Annual Report to the Oxford City Council. Mr. Hehemann noted the report started out with quality measures the hospital had in 2013 verses years past and state and national measures and patient satisfaction scores. Mr. Hehemann advised the hospital was quite well known for quality and outstanding customer service.

Mr. Hehemann discussed improvements made to facilities and equipment and enhanced community prevention/screening/education programs. Mr. Hehemann encouraged those interested in the community programs to obtain more information on the hospital's website. Mr. Hehemann discussed the hospital's new initiatives to improve employee development, engagement and retention. Mr. Hehemann highlighted the hospital's operational and ancillary volumes and revenues, expenses and the hospital's margin noting it was still positive. Mr. Hehemann advised the hospital had huge support from the auxiliary and volunteers who provided thousands of hours of needed service for the hospital and also gave financial support through the operation of the Daisy Gift Shop. Mr. Hehemann outlined some of the key objectives for 2014 including the growth of the MHMH Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Program and to restructure the onsite medical chemotherapy service. Mr. Hehemann discussed the hospital's efforts to pursue an affiliation with a larger health system and reiterated that the hospital's intention was to maintain the McCullough-Hyde Trust completely separate from any transaction that may occur. Mr. Hehemann advised the hospital was presently in discussions with Tri Health and they hoped to reach a decision later this summer. Mr. Hehemann thanked Council for their time and for the opportunity to speak.

NOTICE TO LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

New (liquor) Permit for Miami University DBA Phillip R. Shriver Center & Armstrong Student Center 701 & 550 E. Spring Street Oxford, Ohio 45056.

Mr. Kyger advised this was a restaurant permit and noted Miami University currently had permits to serve alcohol at the Shriver Center and at the Marcum Inn and the new permit would allow the Armstrong Center the same opportunity to do catering, weddings and other events with alcohol being available.

Mr. Keebler moved to receive the notice without comment. Mr. Blackburn seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Mr. Keebler moved to make the following appointments: to the Civil Service Commission for a term ending in 2017, Karen Martino, to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a term ending in 2017, Jack Cohen, to the Environmental Commission for a term ending in 2018, Wright Gwyn, to the Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission for a term ending in 2018, Bobbe Burke, to the Housing Advisory Commission for a term ending in 2018, Judith Kolbas, to the Recreation Board for a term ending in 2017, Ken Bogard, to the Student Community Relations Commission for a term ending in 2017, Michael Kohus, to the Board of Appeals for Building & Housing, for a term ending in 2018, Corey Watts, to the McCullough Hyde Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees for a term ending in 2019 replacing Mr. Jack Mann, Mr. James Formal. Mr. Snyder seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

PUBLIC HEARING
2015 TAX BUDGET

Mr. Snyder moved to open the Public Hearing regarding the 2015 Tax Budget at 7:51 p.m. Mr. Blackburn seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Mr. Newlin advised the Tax Budget was the beginning of the annual budget process and the Ohio Revised Code required the legislative body to approve a tax budget by July 15th and file it with the Butler County Auditor by July 20th. Mr. Newlin noted the tax budget was intended to show that there was enough property tax revenue to meet general obligation debt. Mr. Newlin advised this tax budget mirrored the 2014 annual budget with a few exceptions. Mr. Newlin discussed the exceptions and offered to answer any questions.

Mayor McKeehan inquired if there were any comments/questions from the public or from Council and there were none.

Mr. Keebler moved to close the public hearing at 7:54 p.m. Mr. Snyder seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Vincent Hand, 511 E. Chestnut Street, read the following into the record: ‘Good evening Mayor, City Councilors and staff. My name is Vincent Hand, and I for 30 years have lived at 511 East Chestnut Street. During most of that time, I have commuted by bicycle to various locations on the Miami Campus and to other locations in town.

Within the last ten days, more than 400 Oxford residents have put their name on a petition urging City Council to accept the recommendations in the Bike and Pedestrian Safety Improvement Plan, and put *dedicated* bike lanes on both sides of Spring Street. These names were gathered by many different people and at several local businesses, and represent a variety of neighborhoods and types of residents.

I myself asked a number of people, mostly strangers, to add their names. Only a few turned me down. Many of those who signed responded immediately, “of course!” or “It’s about time!”.

And it is about time. This is not something new. It’s been discussed and studied for at least 20 years in Oxford. As you know, and as Kate Rousmaniere detailed at your last meeting, Dave Prytherch’s Planning Commission and others have worked on this intently over the last couple of years, including multiple public meetings, work sessions, and revisions to the plan.

It’s not new, and it’s also not novel. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) published the *fourth* edition of its Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities in 2012. It describes best practices and recommendations for bike lanes and facilities, based on the experience of many cities and towns throughout the United States.

Four blocks of dedicated bike lanes on Spring Street is just one of the first steps in a detailed long-term plan for how to proceed to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. And you have already approved that plan and incorporated it into the City Comprehensive Plan. How can we be debating a straightforward step, worked on by so many people, and supported by so many more? Is it any wonder that people like Wright Gwyn, who spoke to you at the last meeting, are frustrated?

Mr. Dreisbach, the City Service Director, presented a clear choice at your last meeting. It comes down to whether or not to replace 41 parking spots with dedicated bike lanes on both sides of Spring Street.

There is another kind of choice that will be expressed by your decision. Will you honor the dedication, hard work and planning of so many people over the last several years? Will you honor the request of more than 400 people whose names I am handing over to the Clerk tonight?

Please approve dedicated bike lanes on Spring Street.'

Mr. Hand thanked Council for their time and attention.

Ms. Helene Alishio, 50 Josie Lane, advised when she first came to Oxford in 1987 she was asked to sign a petition to get bike lanes in Oxford. Ms. Alishio noted it made a lot sense to her after living here for a number of years that biking was a healthy alternative to driving and it saved money. Ms. Alishio advised she regretted that she never felt it was safe to encourage her children to bicycle to the High School even though they lived close by. Ms. Alishio noted she was part of the bicycle movement and attended the meetings at the LCNB building and she thought putting bike lanes in Oxford on Spring Street was happening and partly because of that she was commuting to work everyday including through some of the snowstorms we've had. Ms. Alishio stated 1987 was when she first heard about a group of good citizens working to get bike lanes into Oxford and now it was 2014. Ms. Alishio inquired if not now, then when.

Mr. Steve Gordon, 5289 Hillcrest Drive, noted he was a resident of Oxford Township and worked at 401 E. Spring Street at the McGuffey Museum. Mr. Gordon advised he would hand over his comments to the Clerk of Council. Mr. Gordon noted he came here tonight in support of dedicated bike lanes on Spring Street.

Ms. Linda Marchant, 2 Beechpoint Drive, noted she would like to echo Ms. Alishio's comments. Ms. Marchant advised she came to Oxford in 1989 and had lived in cities with bike lanes. Ms. Marchant noted bike lanes were part of the culture of the 20th century and we were in the 21st century without that kind of amenity in Oxford. Ms. Marchant advised she felt that damaged visitor's perception of who we were and it sent a very negative message to people who wanted to embrace that lifestyle. Ms. Marchant stated more profoundly she was concerned about the safety of children, citizens and students noting Miami University was adding bike lanes and if the City got on board with that decision it would be a 'win-win' decision and a 'win-win' perception for the City and the university to cooperate. Ms. Marchant advised she was puzzled as to why this was being revisited and noted sharrows were the wrong way to go in this situation. Ms. Marchant advised these were public streets and the citizens had a right to use them safely. Ms. Marchant urged Council to adopt the bike lanes and thanked them for their attention.

Ms. Amelie Davis, 6120 Stephenson Road, advised she and her husband moved here about a year ago and they were shocked by the lack of bicycle infrastructure in Oxford. Ms. Davis noted in Chicago she commuted to and from work 6 miles everyday on dedicated bike lanes and she felt safe there. Ms. Davis advised since moving here she tried to go from Shideler Hall to the municipal pool, the municipal tennis courts or to the Uptown area and it was neither safe or pleasant to bike around Oxford because of the lack of dedicated bike lanes or bike paths. Ms. Davis noted she had been on sharrows and they were scary to ride on and it was a terrible experience. Ms. Davis urged Council to keep up what they promised and what citizens were told would happen in Oxford and put dedicated bike lanes on Spring Street.

Ms. Kim Medley, 6625 Contreras Road, advised she had lived here 23 years and was a 23 year bicycle commuter through town usually coming in on High Street and going home on Spring Street. Ms. Medley added that there would be more bikers and fewer drivers if there were safe bike lanes in Oxford and she felt this was a start to what would be a positive initiative. Ms. Medley noted when she thought about the history over time she thought about a tragic accident on highway 27 going out of town that resulted in significant road improvements and a much safer environment and it would be even safer with bike lanes. Ms. Medley advised she also thought about a tragic pedestrian accident on Patterson Avenue and Spring Street that led to initiatives by the university to establish clearly defined pedestrian crosswalks. Ms. Medley noted she thought that was followed through by the City installing brick pedestrian crosswalks that went into the City and made it a better place to live. Ms. Medley advised she felt bike lanes would be a contribution to a safer environment and a better community.

Mr. Chris Adryan, 517 Windingbrook Drive, advised he moved to Oxford in 1976 as a freshman at Miami with a bike. Mr. Adryan noted he had been riding for 40 years and loved to bike in the country because he didn't feel safe biking in town. Mr. Adryan described the bike lanes in Davis, California and noted it was amazing the culture that builds around safe bike lanes. Mr. Adryan advised in Davis the bike lanes were used 24 hours a day with kids going to school, grandparents going to the grocery store and students going to campus and it was unbelievable how many different types of people used bike lanes when they felt safe. Mr. Adryan noted he thought bike lanes on Spring Street was a good move and he would like to see bike lanes from the Shriver Center to the Oxford Community Park at some point which would be very positive.

Karen Dawisha, 478 White Oak Drive, advised she moved to Oxford in 2000 and people were fond of telling jokes about Kentucky, Tennessee or Indiana. Ms. Dawisha encouraged people to visit Knoxville or Indianapolis and noted they were way ahead of us. Ms. Dawisha noted she was sure all of us had children who visited or came from other cities and wanted to bike and enjoy the streets they grew up on and it was not possible. Ms. Dawisha advised her children commuted by bike everyday in D.C. where you could bike from the White House to the Capitol on set aside lanes. Ms. Dawisha noted we were talking about implementing a plan that had been agreed upon and asked Council if they were embarrassed that all of these people were here to ask for 4 blocks of bike lanes that had already been approved. Ms. Dawisha advised she always had a lot of faith in City Council and when she read the history of the bike lane project and a move to stop it she didn't understand. Ms. Dawisha noted her hope that people who signed the petition would have their voices heard as this was a public issue and these were public streets.

Mr. Gary Janssen, 6 Robin Court, thanked Council for hearing the views of the citizens. Mr. Janssen noted he had lived in Oxford for 21 years and he biked to work everyday of the year if the weather allowed. Mr. Janssen advised he was familiar with the routes and their deficiencies and values. Mr. Janssen noted he used Spring Street everyday and would continue to use Spring Street whether there were bike lanes or not. Mr. Janssen advised he was on Miami's Campus Planning Committee and he was aware of the movements at the university level to encourage biking, to provide more space for bikes and protection for bicyclists. Mr. Janssen noted he saw this as an opportunity to link the City with the campus and provide a route for people to access the campus and the City. Mr. Janssen advised he felt if bike lanes were in place they would be used. Mr. Janssen noted he worked with students who had bikes but did not use them because they were afraid to which wasn't a very welcoming environment for students. Mr. Janssen encouraged Council to approve the bike lanes to allow more people to use bikes and move away from the carbon footprint.

Mr. Sameer Al-Abdul, 215 Foxfire Drive, advised he worked at Hughes Hall and took Spring Street to work everyday. Mr. Al-Abdul noted he moved here over 5 months ago to start a job at Miami and since there was no transit in the summer he took his bike because he didn't own a car. Mr. Al-Abdul advised he had been fortunate to live in cities that had transit or bike paths and this was the first city he had come to without bike paths. Mr. Al-Abdul noted he made do biking for the most part as cars tended to give him a wide berth. Mr. Al-Abdul advised he didn't ride close to parked cars because you never knew when someone would open their driver's side door and knock you to the pavement. Mr. Al-Abdul noted cars gave him a wide berth for the most part because they were kind drivers and asked Council to show the same kindness to bicyclists by approving dedicated bike lanes on Spring Street.

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

Minutes of the June 3, 2014 City Council Meeting. (Mary Ann Eaton, Clerk of Council)

REPORTS

Report regarding the June 4, 2014 Historic & Architectural Preservation Commission Meeting. (Jung-Han Chen, Community Development Director.

Report regarding the June 4, 2014 Environmental Commission Meeting. (Mike Dreisbach, Service Director)

Ms. Southard moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Blackburn seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

RESOLUTION
RITA PROGRAM

A Resolution No. 4838 authorizing the City of Oxford to participate in the Regional Income Tax Agency's ("RITA") subpoena program for the collection of delinquent local income taxes. (Joe Newlin, Finance Director)

Mr. Newlin advised the City participated in this program last in 2009 and RITA would send letters to active taxpayers that had not filed returns asking them to please file. Mr. Newlin noted that was a good way to get a lot of response but if no response was received in a certain time period an administrative subpoena would be issued requesting the taxpayer to come to City Hall where representatives from RITA would assist them in filling out the return. Mr. Newlin advised RITA would also assist taxpayers who needed an exemption. Mr. Newlin noted there was no cost to the City for RITA to send the letters but the cost of each subpoena was \$8.00. Mr. Newlin advised his experience was that RITA did a really good job of working with taxpayers and it was not a way for the City to collect penalties and interest, it was more to get the income tax paid that was due. Mr. Newlin noted this showed the City was doing its due diligence to make sure people that owed taxes were paying taxes and reporting in a timely fashion.

Mr. Keebler noted people were afraid of the word subpoena but it seemed like a reasonable program. Mr. Keebler inquired if the program could be cancelled in the future if Council felt it wasn't worth it. Mr. Newlin advised that was why it had not been done since 2009 and noted the City entered into the agreement with RITA in 2007 and there weren't many non-compliance issues. Mr. Newlin advised RITA was able to cross reference IRS files and they had a good idea of who was not reporting taxes. Mr. Newlin noted usually the letter was all that was needed. Mayor McKeehan noted it seemed like a good program.

Mr. Snyder moved to adopt Resolution No. 4838. Mr. Keebler seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

ORDINANCE – SECOND READING
2015 TAX BUDGET

An Ordinance No. 3275 Authorizing The Tax Budget For The Year 2015 And Directing That The Same Be Transmitted To The Butler County Auditor. (Joe Newlin, Finance Director)

Mr. Newlin advised he had nothing to add as this was the second reading and a Public Hearing took place earlier this evening.

Mayor McKeehan inquired if there were any questions or comments from the public or from Council and there were none.

Mr. Snyder moved to adopt Ordinance No. 3275. Mr. Keebler seconded. The Ordinance was adopted by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Snyder, Ms. Southard, Mr. Blackburn, Mr. Keebler, Mr. Smith, Mayor McKeehan (6)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Elliott updated Council and the public on the municipal aggregation program noting staff had met with three energy brokers and planned to meet with one more before selecting a firm. Mr. Elliott advised he met with Prue Dana and another representative from the Oxford League of Women Voters to discuss how to get information distributed to the public. Mr. Elliott noted this would be an issue on the ballot in November and he hoped Oxford voters would support the program.

Mr. Elliott advised he intended to place two Resolutions on the July 1st agenda, one dealing with the bike lane proposal on Spring Street and one dealing with a three way stop at Spring and Maple Streets. Mr. Elliott noted a couple of people said that Council already adopted the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvement Plan and noted it was clear when this was discussed at the March meeting that the bike lane portion would be revisited. Mr. Elliott advised former City Managers may have initiated something like this on their own but Spring Street was a major thoroughfare and he wanted direction from Council. Mr. Elliott noted a decision was needed so we could move forward with the paving program.

Mr. Snyder inquired what the Resolution would be recommending for the bike lanes. Mr. Elliott advised he would recommend a painted bike lane on the north side of Spring Street from Campus Avenue to Main Street. Mr. Elliott noted he saw the merits of eliminating parking but he also saw that a lot of apartments rented by college students wouldn't have adequate parking so it was a trade-off. Ms. Southard inquired how it worked when members of Council were not present. Mr. Elliott advised 2 members would not be in attendance on July 1st and Ms. Rousmaniere made her case at the last meeting and she feels very strongly that parking should be eliminated and dedicated bike lanes should be installed on both sides of the street. Mr. Snyder noted for the record that he would not be in attendance on July 1st but if he were he would vote against the Resolution Mr. Elliott described. Mr. Keebler noted Council had the opportunity to amend the Resolution at the July 1st meeting and Council members that won't be present on July 1st should let the others know exactly what they would like to see. Mr. Snyder suggested dedicated bike lanes from Campus to Main on both sides of Spring Street and the elimination of parking on those two blocks. Mr. Snyder noted Council and staff would have to figure out what to do from Main Street to College Avenue because that area of Spring Street was not wide enough. Mr. Keebler advised he had a number of comments pro and con but he would wait until the issue of bike lanes was an agenda item to discuss them.

Mr. Dreisbach updated Council and the public with regard to the pending closure on Chestnut Street for the installation of new water and sewer conduits under the railroad tracks. Mr. Dreisbach advised there was a delay in getting a permit from CSX and that permit became available yesterday. Mr. Dreisbach noted as quickly as the contractor could mobilize Chestnut Street would be closed at the railroad crossing and a detour would be posted for 4-5 weeks.

Mr. Dreisbach advised this project was necessary due to the redevelopment of the former Wal-Mart site which would result in increased demand on the city utilities. Mr. Snyder inquired if Mr. Dreisbach knew when the project would get started. Mr. Dreisbach advised he hoped by Monday.

Mr. Vincent Hand, 511 E. Chestnut Street, inquired what happened if Council voted down the City Manager's Resolution regarding bike lanes. Mr. McHugh advised an amendment could be introduced and the Resolution could be modified on the floor or it could fail and a new Resolution could be introduced at some point in time. Mayor McKeehan advised he felt the Resolution would be accepted as presented or amended.

Chief Holzworth reminded everyone that we were days away from the best Law Camp in the United States. Chief Holzworth noted this was the 20th anniversary of law camp and it would be a special one.

Mr. Newlin advised the 2014 CAFR was online as it had been released by the State Auditor's Office. Mayor McKeehan inquired what CAFR stood for. Mr. Newlin advised it was the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Mr. Kyger advised he attended the International Town/Gown Association conference in Clemson, South Carolina and noted it was a great conference. Mr. Kyger advised he attended different sessions not only on economic development issues but also on drinking and drinking behavior. Mr. Kyger noted St. Cloud State took their at risk high drinkers from 60% to 30% in a period of 4-5 years and he would follow up on that at a later date. Mr. Kyger thanked Council for the opportunity to attend the conference.

Mr. Keebler asked Mr. McHugh to research the following: Can the City have local ordinances that require the use of bicycle lanes where they are present and prohibit bicycles from using roadway travel? Mr. Keebler advised he would like to have the answer by the next Council meeting.

Ms. Southard noted it was summer in Oxford and a lot was going on. Ms. Southard advised Miami had beautiful nature areas for hiking as did Hueston Woods.

Ms. Southard advised Race Across America was a large group of bicyclists from all across the country and participants would be coming through Oxford this week. Ms. Southard noted Oxford was a destination for Race Across America and she hoped it continued to be. Ms. Southard stated that Oxford should be welcoming for walkers, bikers and visitors of all kinds.

Mr. Blackburn noted this would be Alumni Weekend and the town would be very busy. Mr. Blackburn noted Talawanda was holding its class of 1964 50th reunion. Mr. Blackburn advised the Porsches were coming back to Oxford on June 28th and the Visitors Bureau needed volunteers to help guide cars in and park. Mr. Blackburn encouraged those interested to call the Visitors Bureau at 523-8687. Mr. Blackburn noted the Lions Club would be cooking for Law Camp for the 17th year on June 29th.

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Mayor McKeehan advised the Alumni event in the uptown park on Friday was open to the public.

ADJOURN

Mr. Snyder moved to adjourn at 8:36 p.m. Mr. Keebler seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.