

A regular meeting of the Oxford City Council was called to order by Mayor Kate Rousmaniere on Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. Those members present were Steve Dana, Glenn Ellerbe, David Prytherch, Chantel Raghu, Mike Smith and Edna Southard

Staff members present: Mr. Doug Elliott, City Manager; Mr. Mike Dreisbach, Service Director; Mr. John Jones, Police Chief; Mr. Joe Newlin, Finance Director; Ms. Jessica Greene, Assistant City Manager, Human Resources Director; Mr. Sam Perry, Community Development Director; Mr. Alan Kyger, Economic Development Director; Mr. John Detherage, Fire Chief; Mr. Chris Conard, Acting Law Director and Ms. Mary Ann Eaton, Clerk of Council.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Dana moved to adjourn to Executive Session immediately in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1) for the purpose of discussing Appointments to Boards and Commissions and the appointment of a public official. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Smith, Ms. Southard, Mr. Dana
Mayor Rousmaniere (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

ADJOURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Southard moved to adjourn from Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Dana seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Rousmaniere requested the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Dana moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC HEARING **2020 TAX BUDGET**

Ms. Southard moved to enter into a Public Hearing regarding the 2020 Tax Budget at 7:32 p.m. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Newlin advised Council was required by the Ohio Revised Code to adopt a Tax Budget by July 15, 2019 noting it was due to the County Auditor by July 20, 2019.

Mr. Newlin noted this was the preliminary budget for 2020 and the detailed line item budget analysis would occur over the next three months and be presented to Council. Mr. Newlin referred to pages 38-46 and discussed the 2020 General Fund Tax Budget compared to the 2019 amended budget year to date.

Mr. Newlin addressed questions from Council members.

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

Mr. Dana moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:40 p.m. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Mr. Dana moved to appoint Christopher Allison and Mike Schnipper to the Board of Zoning Appeals, Kathy McMahon-Klosterman to the Civil Rights Commission, Nicola Rodrigues to the Housing Advisory Commission, Brian Martin to the Personnel Appeals Board, Deirdre DeLong, Patrick Meade and Aimin Wang to the Police Community Relations Commission and Kevin Ackley to the Recreation Board. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mayor Rousmaniere advised there were still vacancies on the Board of Appeals, Civil Rights Commission, Environmental Commission, Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission, Police Community Relations Commission and the Student Community Relations Commission. Mayor Rousmaniere noted interested parties could apply online and encouraged those interested to contact Council if they had questions or needed additional information.

Mr. Prytherch thanked all of the volunteers who serve on the various Boards and Commissions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

Minutes of the June 4, 2019 City Council Meeting. (Mary Ann Eaton, Clerk of Council)

REPORTS

Report regarding the June 5, 2019 Environmental Commission Meeting. (Mike Dreisbach, Service Director)

Mr. Ellerbe moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Dana seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

ORDINANCES
FIRST READING

ORDINANCE
NEW CHAPTER 1111

An Ordinance Adopting Oxford Codified Ordinance Chapter 1111 Entitled Tree Preservation And Protection. (Doug Elliott, City Manager) **(Tabled until 6/18/19)**

Mr. Dana moved to remove Item 6.A.1. from the table. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Perry advised Council directed the Environmental Commission to draft regulations that would strive to preserve trees in a more formal way. Mr. Perry noted through the Environmental Commission's work with the former Community Development Director and the Planning Commission the regulations came to City Council in March of this year. Mr. Perry advised the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed regulations in May 2018 as a recommendation for a change to the zoning law that would create 2 new chapters in the zoning code. Mr. Perry noted that was since revised to 1 Chapter that contains the content to guide property owners on what the restrictions would be for tree removal for developments or for private properties. Mr. Perry advised that version was presented to Council in March 2019 as a Planning Commission recommendation and noted it was tabled based on feedback from himself and the City Manager regarding their concerns with the proposed language. Mr. Perry noted he has been working with the Chair of the Environmental Commission who has been working with the commission on reviewing some of the staff suggestions. Mr. Perry advised because the legislation came to Council as a recommendation from the Planning Commission and the fact there will likely be some significant changes to the legislation staff felt it would be best to close the loop of the Planning Commission recommendation in order for a new amendment to be proposed. Mr. Perry noted for that to happen this recommendation must be denied. Mr. Perry advised that does not mean there will be no Tree Preservation Ordinance it just means in order for a new one to begin and go through the Planning Commission for review this proposal needs to be denied. Mr. Perry noted he and the Environmental Commission Chair were working well together and advised he expected there will be some compromises to a point there will be new regulations that staff and the Environmental Commission can recommend, something that can be enforced and regulated that is feasible from an impact standpoint on development.

Mayor Rousmaniere advised the recommendation is to deny what is before Council so a new application can be made.

Mr. Perry noted he expected a new proposal would go to the Planning Commission from the Environmental Commission in August or September and to Council in October or November.

Mr. Prytherch inquired if remanding the proposed regulations to the Planning Commission was a procedural option in this case. Mr. Perry advised he felt it would be very similar and noted he would be fine with either one.

Mr. Elliott and Mr. Conard felt remanding or denying was a distinction without much of a difference.

Mayor Rousmaniere reiterated there was a revised version of Tree Preservation regulations in process with the Environmental Commission and Mr. Perry working together on new language to be proposed.

Mayor Rousmaniere inquired if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

Ms. Southard noted Council wanted to preserve and protect the environment but not make it impossible to enforce the regulations and not make it impossible for economic development to happen. Ms. Southard advised those things needed to be balanced and noted she was very happy to know the Tree Preservation Ordinance was being actively worked on. Ms. Southard thanked Mr. Perry and the Environmental Commission for their good work.

Mr. Prytherch advised if Council ultimately voted the current language down it was not because they were voting against a Tree Preservation ordinance. Mr. Prytherch noted it was Council's way of encouraging further work on the language.

ORDINANCE

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 3493. Supplemental Budget Ordinance Number 6 To Make Supplemental Appropriations For Fiscal Year 2019. (Joe Newlin, Finance Director)

Mr. Newlin advised the current budget contained a software purchase for the Community Development Department noting the preferred proposal was \$12,500 more than what was budgeted. Mr. Newlin noted the proposed contract for the software will include a 2% contingency and therefore a \$15,000 appropriation was needed from the Capital Equipment Fund to enter into the proposed contract. Mr. Newlin advised Mr. Perry will address the details of the software when a Resolution is brought forth at the next meeting.

Mayor Rousmaniere inquired if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

Mr. Dana inquired what the software was for. Mr. Perry advised the Community Development Department processes approximately 5,000 rental and building permits per year which are done on paper. Mr. Perry noted the department was looking to modernize that process so the applicant, property owner, City staff and various reviewers can save paper and time and know the status of a permit at any given time.

Mr. Ellerbe inquired if the software allows a full paperless process and Mr. Perry advised yes. Mr. Perry noted he would provide detailed information at the next meeting when a Resolution will be brought forth.

ORDINANCE
SECOND READING
YEAR 2020 TAX BUDGET

An Ordinance No. 3531 Authorizing The Tax Budget For The Year 2020 And Directing That The Same Be Transmitted To The Butler County Auditor. (Joe Newlin, Finance Director)

Mr. Newlin referred to the Public Hearing this evening regarding the Tax Budget noting he had nothing further to add and offered to answer any questions.

Mayor Rousmaniere inquired if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

Mr. Prytherch asked Mr. Elliott or Mr. Newlin to talk about the general health of the budget for the laymen who may be listening. Mr. Elliott advised he felt the Tax Budget process was somewhat archaic noting it dealt with the City's property tax and the City's property values. Mr. Elliott advised when staff works on the actual budget Council will have much better information. Mr. Elliott noted by submitting a Tax Budget the City was doing what it was required to do under state statute. Mr. Elliott advised the State wanted to make certain the municipalities were within their property tax limits and that there is sufficient revenue to pay any debts. Mr. Elliott reiterated that staff would be working on the 2020 budget in much greater detail to present to Council in October. Mr. Newlin note he would provide a mid-year report at the end of June to show the status of the General Fund and the Fire/EMS Fund.

Mr. Prytherch noted last year some Councilors discussed having a Work Session early in the budgeting process before the numbers were worked out to consider Council priorities that might have an impact on the budget. Mr. Elliott advised if Councilors had ideas for the budget they could be presented as a group. Mr. Elliott noted the Charter requires the City Manager to prepare and present a budget to City Council and advised usually one Work Session is held although additional Work Sessions could be scheduled. Mr. Elliott noted staff needed to complete their work first and advised Department Heads had to present their cases. Mr. Elliott noted those numbers are put together, decisions are made and then a proposed budget is presented to Council. Mr. Elliott advised the existing services consume most of the budget. Mr. Elliott noted Council has talked about initiating new programs individually and suggested as a group they meet and discuss what they would like to see in the budget and what the costs and impacts would be.

Mayor Rousmaniere noted Council had a Work Session last month to discuss their strategic priorities from their Strategic Planning session in January and did not get through all of them. Mayor Rousmaniere asked Council if they wanted to do that again.

Mr. Prytherch noted last year Council had ideas and ended up talking about them after the budget was set. Mr. Prytherch advised he felt it was better to have that conversation at the beginning of the budgeting process rather than at the end. Mr. Prytherch noted he did not necessarily have anything to propose although he felt Council should look at their priorities, what might have a budget implication and how it would get worked into the budget while the numbers are coming together.

Ms. Raghu noted the Work Session last month was not about budget proposals for next year it was to review where Council was with their priorities and what has been accomplished over the last six months.

Mr. Dana noted he felt it was hard to think of proposals that do not have some budget implications. Mr. Prytherch advised he felt the budget should be guided by Council's priorities.

Mr. Elliott reminded everyone there were things we do not have control over such as at some point next year the City will have to take over the Oxford Cemetery which will add additional cost to the budget. Mr. Elliott noted there would be increased operating costs for the new aquatic center since it is a larger center. Mr. Elliott advised he felt Council needed to have a discussion because he did not want them to be disappointed in the budgeting process.

Mayor Rousmaniere suggested scheduling a Work Session in early August drawing on Council's recommendations that came out of the strategic planning session (the six priorities) from January.

Mr. Smith moved to adopt Ordinance No. 3531. Ms. Southard seconded. The Ordinance was adopted by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Smith, Ms. Southard, Mr. Dana, Mr. Ellerbe
Mayor Rousmaniere (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Elliott advised the July 2, 2019 Council Meeting has been cancelled noting the annual Freedom Fest will be held that evening including a parade. Mr. Elliott advised the next Council Meeting will be July 16, 2019.

Mr. Elliott referred to the grand opening of the Oxford Aquatic Center last Saturday noting a nice crowd attended the event. Mr. Elliott advised there were some issues with the competition pool that should be corrected tomorrow. Mr. Elliott noted it was a beautiful facility and it will serve the community well for many years to come. Mr. Elliott advised he felt the new aquatic center and the Oxford Area Trail adds to the quality of life for the entire community.

Mr. Elliott advised he, Mayor Rousmaniere, Mr. Kyger and Mr. Moore met with the owner of the former book store at 110 E. High Street to discuss some planning concepts for the building. Mr. Elliott noted more information will be provided at a later date.

Ms. Greene advised the City now has a second Farmers Market that will operate on Tuesday evenings in the TJ Maxx parking lot so produce and other items can be purchased on Saturday mornings and on Tuesday evenings. Mr. Dana noted the Tuesday market begins at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Perry updated everyone on the redevelopment project for 45 E. High Street.

Mr. Kyger advised he felt the new Aquatic Center would be great for the town noting he was sorry to miss the Grand Opening on Saturday.

Ms. Raghu noted Council's highest priority established at their Strategic Planning session was the environment and to a lot of Councilors climate change was very obvious as far as the signs behind it. Ms. Raghu advised she felt it could be a cerebral thing to try to understand when you do not feel physically hot all of the time and you still have a winter. Ms. Raghu noted to look at some of the proposals that were presented a few meetings ago and also to touch on the petition Ms. Dutton submitted and publically commented on divesting from fossil fuels. Ms. Raghu referred to Cleveland in the 1970's when the Cuyahoga River was on fire noting it was a dumping ground and their Mayor said it was being treated like a sewer with the industries dumping chemicals into the river. Ms. Raghu advised this event got national and probably international attention and they cleaned it up. Ms. Raghu noted if we look at the State of Ohio and the laws we have when it comes to fracking and fossil fuels it is a lot more lax than our neighboring states such as Pennsylvania. Ms. Raghu advised fracking is when water is pumped in to retrieve all of the petroleum that is preserved within the porous shale and that water depending on what state you are in has to be recycled or you have to have a disposal well which is where the water is inserted into the ground. Ms. Raghu noted millions and millions of gallons of polluted water is being dumped back into the ground. Ms. Raghu advised the State of Ohio allows disposal wells noting the east side of Ohio is dotted with disposal wells because people from the State of Pennsylvania and the State of Ohio are fracking there. Ms. Raghu noted Representative Davison says there is no science to back-up that fossil fuels are hurting us. Ms. Raghu advised if we look at the controversy behind climate change depending who you are if you look at water everyone can agree you need water. Ms. Raghu noted when you look at what our representatives are doing and what we are allowing the fossil fuel industry to do it is pretty obvious what needs to happen. Ms. Raghu referred to the petition from Ms. Dutton to divest from fossil fuels and noted the City of Oxford was investing a significant chunk of 1.5 million dollars into big banks that are the driving force behind fossil fuels. Ms. Raghu advised we need to make a dramatic change before 2050 if we are going to do anything about it noting she looked at it as a Council member as what do I have control over, what have people asked me to do and what did I run on. Ms. Raghu reiterated that the environment was Council's number one priority this year and noted the Paris Climate Agreement says we need to divest, we need to clean up our source of investments. Ms. Raghu stated let's take control of that, let's do what we promised the people in Oxford and let's do what the world has agreed on. Ms. Raghu encouraged the City to divest from fossil fuels especially as the budget was being looked at and especially when it may not even affect the bottom line. Ms. Raghu noted she was sure everyone had heard that by 2050 there would be more plastics in the ocean than there are fish. Ms. Raghu advised that plastic comes from petroleum and to look at what we have control over the City can say we are not going to spend taxpayer money from Oxford on plastic. Ms. Raghu noted she looked forward to the next time Council talks about these proposals.

Mr. Prytherch advised an Oxford Climate Action Work Shop was taking place Thursday noting Council created the Community Climate Action Task Force and advised so far a steering committee has been meeting that includes staff and members from Boards and Commissions. Mr. Prytherch noted the work shop was open to the public and everyone was invite to attend from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the Seminary building.

Mr. Prytherch advised at the beginning of the meeting there would be an overview of climate issues, what cities are doing and what some of the best practices are particularly since a lot of the conservation is about should Oxford make a formal commitment towards neutrality. Mr. Prytherch noted there would be break-out groups to talk about emissions that come from things such as buildings, transportation and waste and they will discuss some of the things we have done where we have had success and where we could do better. Mr. Prytherch advised part of this initiative was to widen the circle of conversation noting Oxford was doing a lot of the right things already noting it was clear we are moving towards a world in which we are going to have to be quite explicit noting 2050 is not really that far away. Mr. Prytherch advised if one looks at the weather in Oxford this year it is exactly what the climate model has predicted would happen. Mr. Prytherch noted his hope the information gained during Thursday's meeting the task force can take on and help make an informed decision as to what the City should make in terms of commitments.

Mayor Rousmaniere inquired if a report would be done after the meeting so people who could not attend can know what happened and Mr. Prytherch advised yes.

Mr. Ellerbe noted before the next Council meeting July 4th will have passed and reminded Oxford citizens to make sure they take extra precautions when dealing with any fireworks they might acquire. Mr. Ellerbe advised in light of recent events he wanted to reiterate that these are explosive devices and they can do serious harm if people are not careful with them.

Mr. Dana thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for their hard work in managing a fantastic aquatic center noting the new center was more spectacular than he could ever have imagined.

Mr. Dana referred to a bill which was beyond a third reading in the General Assembly that would render it impossible for municipalities to put a tax on plastic, Styrofoam and the like. Mr. Dana advised this was an erosion of the powers of Home Rule. Mr. Dana noted Council had every right to react to the proposed bill.

Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Dreisbach for managing the aquatic center project noting he knew it was very time consuming.

Mr. Smith advised the Contreras Road culvert replacement project was nearing completion noting the contractor was doing a fabulous job.

Ms. Southard thanked Mr. Dreisbach, the Service Department, Casey Wooddell and the Parks and Recreation Department for their work towards getting the new aquatic center opened noting she felt it was a tremendous addition to the City.

Ms. Southard clarified that the Tuesday Farmers Market was not a "second" Farmers Market noting there was only one Farmers Market in Oxford that added an additional day because they are so successful.

Ms. Southard advised the Freedom Festival on July 2 involves a parade Uptown at 6:30 p.m. with a concert to follow in the Uptown Park. Ms. Southard noted fireworks would take place on July 3rd at the Oxford Community Park.

Ms. Southard encouraged everyone to enjoy the beauty of the City and of the Community Park noting it was becoming more and more beautiful.

Mr. Prytherch inquired when the remodeling project at the Police Department would be complete. Mr. Elliott advised a final inspection would take place tomorrow. Chief Jones advised a grand opening would be scheduled later this summer and noted it could be tied in with the Community Picnic in August.

Mr. Elliott noted he appreciated the kind comments for Mike Dreisbach and his staff and advised the City was just completing 3 major construction projects, City Hall, the Police Station and the aquatic center. Mr. Elliott advised behind all 3 projects Mr. Dreisbach and his involvement really made a difference noting the City did not hire a construction manager and saved quite a bit of money. Mr. Elliott advised Mr. Dreisbach deserves credit for leading those 3 projects along with his staff. Mr. Elliott also recognized Casey Wooddell for his involvement with the aquatic center project and Geoff Robinson for his involvement with the Police Station project. Mr. Elliott thanked Council for their support of those projects noting the three facilities will serve the City well for many years to come.

Mayor Rousmaniere advised the Ohio Department of Health has funding for people who live in pre 1978 housing, are Medicaid eligible with children under 19 years old and/or pregnant women for lead abatement. Mayor Rousmaniere noted she would give the information to Mr. Perry.

Mayor Rousmaniere advised Race Across America participants are coming through Oxford noting the bicyclists are riding as fast as they can from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. Mayor Rousmaniere noted the bicyclists can stop for a short break at the welcoming tent for them in the TJ Maxx parking lot if they choose to. Mayor Rousmaniere encouraged everyone to stop by the welcome center to greet the bicyclists.

ADJOURN

Mr. Dana moved to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0.