



MINUTES: Environmental Commission

Date: June 1, 2022

Location: Municipal Building, 15 South College Avenue, first floor conference room

Time of Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Chair, Mr. Jon Ralinovsky; Vice-Chair and City Council Representative, Ms. Chantel Raghu; Planning Commission Representative, Mr. Jason Bracken, and Mr. Justin Fain.

Staff present: David Treleaven, Environmental Specialist, Staff Liaison

Public present: City of Oxford (Oxford) residents Ms. Peggy Branstrator, Ms. Allie Gresham, and Mr. Abdul-Mujib Mumuni, a Miami University Graduate Student who is to assist Oxford with its community-scale greenhouse gas inventory

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Ms. Raghu
2nd: Mr. Bracken
Vote: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Ms. Raghu
2nd: Mr. Fain
Vote: Unanimous

Old Business: None

New Business:

A) Status for the Managed Natural Lawn Area Legislation

Mr. Bracken updated the Commission on the City Council May 17th work session regarding the proposed Managed Natural Lawn Area (MNLA) Ordinance. After discussion, no action was taken, as Oxford's existing codes do not prohibit maintained garden and/or landscaped spaces with vegetation exceeding 10 inches in height. The existing restrictions come into play with neglected and/or non-maintained vegetated areas. There was also concern of the potential increase to staff's workload to oversee residential MNLA's. Mr. Bracken did not dispute either point, but was concerned that there was not a single, concise statement within Oxford's Codified



Ordinances and Codes concerning maintained, taller vegetation (the information is spread out between several Ordinance chapters and/or Code sections). Mr. Bracken believed that the two pages of the proposed MNLA Ordinance provided a clear presentation of what was allowed and expected of a residential property owner to establish a MNLA, while presenting consequences of not maintaining the area. Mr. Bracken and Ms. Raghu indicated that they intended to bring the MNLA Ordinance to a vote of the full City Council at an upcoming meeting, and also intend to invite the MNLA Ordinance authors, Mr. Steven Sullivan, Miami University (MU) Biology Department, and Mr. A. J. Alejandro, MU undergraduate Senior, to make a presentation to the City Council regarding the MNLA Ordinance. Ms. Raghu and Mr. Bracken are to keep the Commission updated to when the MNLA Ordinance is to be brought before City Council, and encouraged Commissioners to attend and show support for the legislation.

B) Pilot Pollinator Gardens/Naturalized Areas at Oxford Community Park

At the May 4th, Environmental Commission meeting, Mr. David Prytherch presented a proposal for a pilot project establishing up to three pollinator gardens at the Oxford Community Park (OCP). The May 4th proposal listed Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Prytherch as citizen volunteer partners in the development of the pollinator gardens. Ms. Branstrator informed the Commissioners that the Audubon Miami Valley (AMV) is in favor of the proposal, and has experience in development, establishment, and maintenance of pollinator gardens, such as the one at the Oxford Community Arts Center. AMV is willing to assist Oxford and the volunteer citizen partners with the pilot pollinator garden project, potentially providing some plant stock and labor, and has appointed Ms. Branstrator as their representative should Oxford choose to proceed with the pilot project. Commissioners indicated that they were in support of recommending Oxford proceed with establishing the proposed three pilot pollinator gardens at the OCP.

The following motion concerning the pilot pollinator gardens was proposed by Mr. Fain and seconded by Ms. Raghu:

Motion:

The Environmental Commissions recommends that the City of Oxford proceed with establishment and maintenance of three pilot pollinator gardens at three separate locations at the Oxford Community Park.

The motion passed unanimously.

C) Potential Revision of Urban Forestry Ordinance

Staff informed the Commission that the results of the Arbor Foundation's (Foundation's) pending audit of Oxford's tree ordinance has not yet been received. The purpose of the



Foundation's audit was to ensure Tree City USA communities meet the Foundation's current standard for a public tree care ordinance. Staff is of the opinion that the Foundation will request Oxford's existing Codified Ordinance pertaining to its urban forest (Chapter 935, entitled: "Trees, Shrubs and Other Plants") be revised. Staff believes the existing Ordinance would only need the addition of a new section, referencing open-source guidance documents for tree care (such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's "Tree Owner's Manual"). Any guidance documents referenced would need to be available (and/or their internet links) on the City's web site. Staff is to prepare a draft of the new section and provide it to the Environmental Commissioners in preparation for the attendance of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Urban Forester, Ms. Wendi Van Buren, at the July 6th Commission meeting to assist the Commission in the revision of Oxford's Codified Ordinance Chapter 935.

Staff informed the Commissioners that Goodwill Industries reported receiving approximately 112,000 pounds (56 tons) of materials during the ShareFest event associated with the end of MU's academic year. Ms. Raghu reported that the Butler County Recycling and Solid Waste District reported approximately 1,920 pounds (0.96 tons) of electronics were dropped-off at their collection event associated with ShareFest.

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents for May. The total estimated carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) for the entire landfill during the month of May was estimated to be approximately 134 metric tons (MT). This was below the 20-month average monthly estimate of approximately 147 MT CO₂e per month. This value is some 63% lower than the USEPA's model estimate for the closed landfill emissions (392 MT) that was used in previous calculations of the inventory of Oxford's greenhouse gas emissions.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. After the most recent weekly collection (164 weeks since April 2019), the total weight of collected food scraps was approximately 121,900 pounds (60.45 tons), averaging 737 pounds per week. For the year 2022, a total of approximately 15,400 pounds (7.7 tons) had been collected in 21 weeks, averaging 732 pounds per week.

Approval of Adjournment:

Motion:	Ms. Raghu
2 nd :	Mr. Ralinovsky
Vote:	Unanimous

Commissioners concluded discussions at 8:20 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on July 6, 2022, in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.

