

MINUTES: Environmental Commission

Date: October 5, 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; Mr. Steve Elliott, Mr. Justin Fain, Ms. Heather Barrett, and Ms. Peggy Branstrator.

Staff present: David Treleaven, Environmental Specialist, Staff Liaison

Public present: City of Oxford (Oxford) Climate and Sustainability Intern, Ms. Reena Murphy, and Miami University students Ms. Lai Tang and Ms. Florence Xu

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Mr. Elliott
2nd: Ms. Barrett
Vote: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes for the September 7, 2022 Meeting

Motion: Ms. Barrett
2nd: Ms. Branstrator
Vote: Unanimous

Old Business: None

New Business:

A) IES Professional Service Project: Project Description for the Investigation into Apartment Complex Recycling

Ms. Zazycki, Associate Director of MU's Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES) had previously informed the Commission that a team of six (6) IES students had been selected to undertake the professional service project (PSP) investigating options for increasing recycling volume and/or establishing recycling programs for local multi-family housing. During the month of October, the student team would be crafting a draft project plan defining the problem(s) to be addressed and an outline of how they intend to tackle the project. Ms. Zazycki indicated that at least some of the student team would be present at the Commission's November 2nd meeting to introduce themselves and provide an update on their project plan to ensure it will address the Commission's concerns for the PSP.

B) Recycling Options for Fridays' Red Brick Rally Events

During the September Commission meeting, the suggestion was made to have the Commission investigate and establish a recycling and food scrap collection program to be incorporated into Oxford's Red Brick Rally events during the summer of 2023. Staff informed the Commission that past efforts of recycling and food scrap collections at public events indicated the necessity of having folks at the drop-off locations to assist in shepherding people into disposing the appropriate materials in the various containers. In general, the past efforts are well received, but guidance is needed to prevent gross cross-contamination of the recyclable and compostable materials. With the Red Brick Rally events occurring during the summer, availability of Miami University and Talawanda school's environmental student groups to assist the public in segregation of wastes would likely be limited. Several of the Commissioners indicated they would be willing to staff the recyclable and food scraps collection stations, and would be willing to make an effort to recruit additional volunteers for the effort. Staff is to gather additional information pertaining to the set-up of the Red Brick rally events, and additional discussions will continue during the November Commission meeting.

Other Business:

At last night's Oxford City Council meeting, the first reading of the Managed Natural Lawn Area Ordinance occurred. The proposed amendment to Oxford's Codified Ordinance Chapter 935 (Trees, Shrubs and Other Plants) appeared to have been relatively well received by the City Councilors and the public. Subsequently, Mr. Sam Perry, Director of Oxford's Community Development Department, provided an outline of proposed procedures to establish the program. Mr. Perry suggested an annual application process for the public to request inclusion in a Naturalized Lawn Program, and proposed that the Environmental Commission would be responsible for the review of the applications. The Commission would subsequently provide its recommendations to City Council for inclusions of properties in the program for the upcoming growing season. The current Commissioners indicated that they would be willing and able to undertake the proposed review and recommendation process.

Last week, Staff had provided samples of Oxford's ground leaf mulch and twice-ground yard waste mulch to Ms. Branstrator so that she could determine the viable weed seed load in each type of mulch prior to their potential use in the naturalized vegetation pilot projects at the Oxford Community Park (OCP). As of the October 5th Commission meeting, nothing had yet sprouted from Ms. Branstrator's test plots, but too much time had elapsed since the start of the tests. Ms. Branstrator indicated that she would encourage Oxford to utilize different methods of initial preparation for the pollinator garden on a traffic island by the southern soccer fields at the OCP, and the grassland prairie installation on an island in the multi-use trail near the access point with Hunter Woods Drive. City Councilor David Prytherch intends to utilize an herbicide to clear existing vegetation from the grassland prairie plantings. Ms. Branstrator would like the pollinator garden plot to be initially prepared by stripping the existing grass sod to expose the



underlying soil. The intention of the different preparation processes is to see if there is a difference in their effectiveness and relative amounts of effort.

Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents for August. September's monitoring event was the 24th event, and in the two years of observations, the monthly total estimated carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) for the entire landfill continues to be highly variable. September's estimated total CO₂e was 205 metric tons (MT), the fourth highest value in the two year period. The 24-month average CO₂e value is 154 MT. Staff informed the Commission that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) had indicated they would require Oxford to obtain a "Rule 13" authorization for the installation of the solar gas flare pilot project at the landfill due to the potential of surface excavation to establish a concrete ground mount for the flare to sit upon. The Rule 13 authorization alerts the Ohio EPA of the potential of excavation activities on the landfill's vegetative cap and outlines procedures to be undertaken if landfilled solid wastes are encountered.

Staff provided a summary of the on-going residential food scraps drop-off program. Through September 22nd (181 weeks since April 2019) the total weight of collected food scraps was approximately 135,600 pounds (67.8 tons), averaging 749 pounds per week. For the year 2022, a total of approximately 30,050 pounds (15 tons) had been collected in 38 weeks, averaging 791 pounds per week.

Ms. Branstrator informed the Commissioners of an upcoming presentation by Dr. Jonathon Levy on Sunday, October 23rd from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., entitled "Climate Change: What Will it Mean for Southwest Ohio and Who Will be Affected". Dr. Levy is the Director of the IES Department and the presentation will be at the Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community Church, located at 3870 Millville Oxford Road. There is the opportunity to participate in the presentation utilizing Zoom. Reservations will be required for both in-person and Zoom attendance.

Approval of Adjournment:

Motion:	Mr. Elliott
2 nd :	Ms. Barrett
Vote:	Unanimous

Commissioners concluded discussions at 7:40 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on November 2, 2022, in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.

