



MINUTES: Environmental Commission

Date: April 6, 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, Mr. Justin Fain, and Ms. Heather Barrett

Staff present: David Treleaven, Environmental Specialist, Staff Liaison

Public present: City of Oxford (Oxford) residents Mr. Antonio Alejandro, Ms. Peggy Branstrator, Ms. Betty Pu, and Oxford Climate and Sustainability Intern, Ms. Reena Murphy

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

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

Old Business: None

New Business:

A) Pollinator Gardens: Review of Proposed Municipal Code

Mr. Alejandro presented the final draft text for legislation permitting managed natural lawn areas to be established on private properties. Mr. Alejandro had incorporated comments and insights provided by Commissioners and Staff during their reviews of previous drafts. Mr. Alejandro had also made the text more concise, reducing its length from four pages to two pages. The following Motion concerning the managed natural lawn area was proposed:



Motion:

The Environmental Commissions approves of the Managed Natural Lawn Area legislation as presented, and requests that Oxford's Planning Commission, Community Development Department, and/or City Council consider the proposed legislation to be incorporated into the City of Oxford's codes and/or property maintenance guidance documents.

The Motion passed unanimously.

Staff was instructed to provide the text of the legislation to the Community Development Department with the intention of having them introduce it to the Planning Commission.

On a side note, Mr. Ralinovsky and Mr. Fain informed the Commission that they had met with one of Mr. David Prytherch's Miami University's Geography classes regarding potential development of natural areas on City properties. There is to be an additional shareholders meeting potentially with the Geography students and the Oxford Service Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and perhaps the Environmental Commission, but the shareholders meeting has not yet been scheduled.

B) Potential Revision of Urban Forestry Ordinance

Staff informed the Commission that the findings of the Arbor Foundation's (Foundation's) audit of Oxford's tree ordinance had not yet been received. The purpose of the Foundation's audit was to ensure Tree City USA (TCUSA) communities meet the Foundation's current standard for a public tree care ordinance. Review of the Foundation's listed criteria suggests that Oxford will need to revise its tree ordinance to include clear guidance on planting, maintaining, and/or removing public trees. Staff had been previously instructed to contact the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's Urban Forester for Oxford, Ms. Wendi Van Buren, to seek guidance on how to revise the existing codified tree ordinance (Chapter 935, entitled: "Trees, Shrubs and Other Plants") to satisfy the Foundation's requirements for future TCUSA awards (next re-certification submittal is December 2, 2022). Ms. Van Buren had offered to meet with the Commission to aid in the ordinance revision. The Commissioners agreed that having Ms. Van Buren at an upcoming Commission meeting should be helpful, and instructed Staff work with Ms. Van Buren to schedule her for an upcoming Commission meeting.

Other Business:

Ms. Raghu updated the Commission on the City Council retreat. Environmental issues were deemed to be in the top three concerns and interests of City Council. Increasing recycling with the uptown businesses is an area of concern, as well as increasing the number of apartment complexes that offer recycling to their tenants. Mr. Ralinovsky had recently encountered a write-up of a University of North Carolina capstone project that had investigated increasing recycling at apartment complexes by their campus. The capstone report concluded that it was a



difficult task. It was suggested that further investigation and/or a pilot project of expanded recycling at a complex could possibly be performed by Miami University's Institute for the Environment and Sustainability Department (IES) as a Professional Service Project (PSP) with the Environmental Commission as the client. Staff informed the Commission that the IES had undertaken expanding recycling at the Candlewood Apartments (now Oxford West Apartments) numerous years ago, with assistance by the Butler County Recycling and Solid Waste Management District. Mr. Ralinovsky stated he would contact IES and request the expansion of apartment complex recycling be considered for an upcoming PSP.

At the March 17, 2022 Climate Action Steering Committee (CASC) meeting, it was concluded it would be beneficial to have information about Oxford's CASC and its goals available during EarthFest. Mr. Prytherch had noted that there was good information on the Oxford web site (including a recent post on Oxford's climate commitments), and believed this information could be readily be converted into a public information handout with climate-related content. It is anticipated that Ms. Murphy, Oxford's climate and sustainability intern, would work with Mr. Prytherch to create an informational handout. The CASC hand-out would be provided to the Environmental Commission for inclusion with its education materials that will be made available to the public during this year's Earth Day "EarthFest" event, scheduled for Saturday, April 16, 2022 in the Memorial Park, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Staff is intending to be in attendance representing the Commission at the EarthFest event.

Staff informed the Commission that this year's TCUSA Awards Program would be held in Springdale, Ohio on Friday, April 22, 2022. City Staff intends to be in attendance, representing Oxford. Oxford's annual Arbor Day event will be on Friday, April 29, 2022 at the Oxford Community Park (OCP) following the annual Memorial Tree Dedication Ceremony which starts at noon. A Burr Oak is to be planted as the 2022 Arbor Day tree by the gazebo located in the northeastern portion of the OCP.

The Comprehensive Plan update and revision's public input and participation "Lollapalooza" has been scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Monday, April 18, 2022 at the Oxford Bible Fellowship at 800 South Maple Street. Registration is required, but can be made up to the last minute, and is accessible on Oxford's internet home page. Several Commissioners requested that Staff issue an email reminder to the Environmental Commission prior to the event.

Staff updated the commission on Miami University's efforts to be certified as an Arbor Foundation "Tree Campus Higher Education" college. The certification requires a Tree Campus Advisory Committee, and one member should be from the associated community's tree authority (the Environmental Commission). Presently, Staff is representing the commission on the advisory committee. Miami University intends to re-establish its "Tree Walks" on the Oxford Campus. An inventory of the existing and missing trees from the original Tree Walks has been made, with Miami University's Physical Facilities Department pledging to plant the missing trees and maintain the Tree Walks in the future.



Staff updated the Commission on the monthly emission monitoring event of the landfill's 23 passive gas vents for February. The total estimated carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) for the entire landfill during the month of March was estimated to be approximately 165 metric tons (MT). This is above the 18-month average 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. In 156 weeks (since April 2019), approximately 114,930 pounds (57.5 tons) of food scraps have been collected for composting, averaging 737 pounds per week. For the year 2022, a total of approximately 9,420 pounds (4.7 tons) had been collected in four weeks, averaging 725 pounds per week.

Approval of Adjournment:

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

Commissioners concluded discussions at 7:50 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on May 4, 2022, in the Municipal Building's first floor conference room.