

OXFORD PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Those members present: William Snavelly, Shana Rosenberg, Carla Blackmar, Corey Watt, Richard Keebler and Jason Bracken.

Those members excused: Richard Daniels

Staff members present: Sam Perry, Zachary Moore, and Benjamin Mazer.

Staff members excused: Chris Conard

Mr. Snavelly called the January Planning Commission meeting to order.

Mr. Snavelly explained that Mr. Daniel's would be completing his term this year and an election for Vice Chair was needed.

Mr. Watt made motion to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss officer appointments. Ms. Rosenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mr. Watt made motion to return from Executive Session. Ms. Rosenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Ms. Rosenberg made motion to elect Mr. Corey Watt as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission, replacing Mr. Richard Daniels. Ms. Blackmar seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Approval of the Minutes of December 11, 2019

Mr. Watt made motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Rosenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor. Mr. Keebler abstained as he was not present.

Public Comments Related to Items Not on the Agenda

There was none.

Reports from Commissions, Boards, Committees & Staff

Staff reported that Census 2020 has begun. A live web news conference took place and information sharing to take place mid-march. Information to be provided by mail, online, and by phone.

Ms. Rosenberg shared that the HAC met with the City Law Director to review goals for 2020.

Mr. Bracken, reported from the Environmental Commission noting their progress on the tree preservation ordinance. Mr. Watt reported on the HAPC having received a submission from Scott Webb for reconsideration for 45 E. High Street.

Mr. Snavelly reported that City Council was working on a couple of items environmental in nature, noting that the circulars thrown in driveways/gutters will now need placed at the door, effective February 7, 2020. Also, Council remanded to the Environmental Commission to look into the proposed ban on Polystyrene.

Items Related to Zoning

PC-2020-01 ZONING MAP AMENDMENT, to establish a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District for 90 parcels located within the boundaries of the North Ridge Subdivision, on Miami Trail, Northridge Drive, Red Cedar Circle, Dufour Lane, Honor Lane and Jacob Drive, City of Oxford, Applicant

Mr. Perry provided a staff report. Several property owners from the Northridge Subdivision were present. Mr. Perry noted this was the 20th overlay. Mr. Perry described the proposed overlay location: in the area of Miami Trail, Northridge Drive Red Cedar Circle Dufour Lane, Honor Lane and Jacob Drive. Mr. Watt inquired about two existing rentals in the requested overlay area and how they would be affected. Mr. Perry explained it would place an additional restriction limiting the number of unrelated occupants in a rented unit, currently four to two.

Mr. Perry noted that there were no other overlays adjacent to it. Signatures were submitted that exceeded the 2/3 minimum requirement.

Public comments:

Mr. Richard Green, 311 Miami Trail posed a question, there are three houses not captured by this zone, and that his belief was that those houses were purchased and were currently rentals and inquired why were they not included. Mr. Snively responded that they don't have the ability to void someone's property rights.

Mr. Keebler made motion to close public hearing. Ms. Rosenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Discussion: Mr. Keebler stated the request clearly met the intent of the code.

Mr. Watt inquired about the required number of parcels for an overlay. Mr. Perry responded 10. Mr. Watt inquired if in the future we can amend an overlay. Mr. Perry responded yes.

Ms. Rosenberg made motion to approve PC-2020-01. Mr. Watt seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission reviewed the Decision Standards:

- A. There is an error on the Official Zoning Map or in the delineations between districts thereon. NO
- B. The proposed amendment will make the map conform more closely to the Comprehensive Plan. YES
- C. There has been a substantial change in area conditions that necessitates the amendment. NO
- D. There is a legitimate need for additional land area in the zoning district that will be expanded. YES

AYE: Ms. Blackmar, Ms. Rosenberg, Mr. Watt, Mr. Keebler, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Snively (6)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Discussion

Tree Preservation Ordinance

Mr. Moore explained the process that took place and provided an overhead of the Tree Preservation language. Mr. Moore noted that this was not before the Planning Commission to discuss or vote on; it was here before the Planning Commission to help staff understand what the Planning Commission would want tweaked before coming before them in February.

Ms. Blackmar stated that this was a highly technical subject, and something the Planning Commission needs to review step by step.

Items reviewed:

1. Reviewed current landscaping requirements in the zoning code
2. Reviewed deficiencies in the current zoning code
3. Solution to deficiency defining requirements, allowing flexibility, protecting existing trees, standardize tree planting, maintaining heavily wooded areas; subjective development, preservation
4. Add new decision making criteria
5. Proposed site tree planting standards. The Planning Commission discussed the timeline of planting front yard trees in a subdivision. Discussion regarding about paying into the City tree fund.
6. Preservation of wooded areas including a tree protection survey. Mr. Moore referred to the tree survey detail included in the agenda. Mr. Watt inquired if there was a definition of heavily wooded area. Mr. Perry responded not in the code, but can be resolved by a Forester
9. Exemptions

Mr. Moore reviewed examples of current lots in Oxford and putting this into place versus existing lots. Mr. Moore displayed a hypothetical subdivision plan and how the tree preservation language would work, going through all of the steps.

Mr. Moore reviewed the Environmental Commission recommendations and addressed their individual recommendations one by one:

1. Replacement/replanting plan
2. Replanting maintenance plan
3. A more accurate tree survey identifying mature trees that are to be removed or preserved.
4. A tree fund that is fully utilized
5. A greater participation by the Planning Commission in landscape plan review and approval
6. The Planning Commission will serve as the approving authority for landscape plan review. A majority vote is required to approve
7. Applicants are given the ability to elect the Planning Commission approve their plan

Mr. Wright Gwyn, Chair, Environmental Commission, explained their mission/objective. Mr. Gwyn stated the Environmental Commission had researched other community's practices.

Mr. Gwyn reviewed with the Planning Commission:

The removal/replanting of trees, explaining the Environmental Commission's choice for 10" tree replacement. Mr. Gwyn stated that a mature tree should be replaced and that there is a need for minimal standards, not just giving credit. There are no guidelines to replant and sees no plan to protect an older tree.

What is a wooded area? Mr. Gwyn feels that needs to be defined.

Maintenance plan? Mr. Gwyn inquired why plant trees if you aren't going to have any guidelines for their upkeep. Should be some type of defined timeline (time in perpetuity?). The Environmental Commission agrees to this.

Mr. Snively praised all the work the Environmental Commission has done.

Next steps:

Mr. Watt referred to South Farm (hypothetically) and that he looked at quality over quantity. Mr. Watt stated that he would love to see that encouragement inspire people to commit to a quality product. Mr. Watt stated he wanted to see encouragement for native species. Would like to see some incentives. Mr. Watt wants to see a balance between preserving and replacement.

Mr. Gwyn spoke stating that there are a list of conditions for the existing sickly trees not having to be replaced; however, there needs to be some sort of provision. There has to be a disincentive to cutting

down big trees.

Mr. Snavely would like to see something on preserving/replacement incentives to preserving mature trees.

Ms. Blackmar inquired if it was possible to come up with a list of valuable trees.

Mr. Perry explained his feelings about legislating the caliber of trees and that we are not going to be able to predict every situation.

Mr. Bracken concurred with Mr. Gwyn.

Mr. Snavely asked to take a straw poll for some kind of preservation/replacement for mature trees outside of the building area. Mr. Gwyn reviewed the original recommendations sent to the Planning Commission. Mr. Keebler inquired about those trees located in the area of the structure, within parking, ROW, etc., and outside of that provision those trees dying or a hazard that can be taken out with no problem. Discussion followed. The Planning Commission concurred that those trees healthy 10" or greater, have to be replaced. Mr. Gwyn responded that for every 2" at breast height replaced with 5 caliper inches, either on that lot or put toward the tree fund, as there needs to be some kind of standard/cost.

Mr. Moore noted that you want to make sure for mature trees we are incentivize their protection or replanting those trees. If we do replanting requirements on top of tree planting requirements we would advocate for all trees' locations being treated equal. Mr. Keebler noted that it was important that we don't make it too expensive to develop the lot.

We all want the incentive to not unnecessarily take down trees. The Planning Commission asked that Staff play around with incentivizing to save the larger trees.

Adjournment

Mr. Keebler made motion to adjourn meeting, Ms. Rosenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.