



OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021

**Roll Call. Mike Smith, Mayor William Snavelly, Vice-Mayor David Prytherch
Jason Bracken Chantel Raghu Glenn Ellerbe Edna Southard**

A virtual meeting of the Oxford City Council was called to order by Mayor, Mike Smith on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Members attending were William Snavelly, Jason Bracken, Glenn Ellerbe, David Prytherch, Chantel Raghu and Edna Southard.

Staff members participating were Doug Elliott, City Manager, Jessica Greene, Assistant City Manager, Mike Dreisbach, Service Director, Joe Newlin, Finance Director, John Jones, Police Chief, John Detherage, Fire Chief, Casey Wooddell, Parks and Recreation Director, Andrew Wilson, Technical Assistant, Chris Conard, Law Director and Mary Ann Eaton, Clerk of Council.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Snavelly moved to adjourn to Executive Session immediately pursuant to Section 121.22(G)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code for the purpose of discussing appointments to Boards and Commissions. Mr. Ellerbe seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Snavelly, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Ms. Southard
Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Snavelly moved to adjourn from Executive Session at 7:27 p.m. Mr. Bracken seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Bracken, Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly, Ms. Southard
Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Approval of Agenda.

Mr. Prytherch moved to approve the Agenda. Mr. Snavelly seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Bracken, Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly,
Ms. Southard, Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Public Participation.

Proclamation – "TSD Employee Appreciation Week" pg5

Proclamation

Mayor Smith read the Proclamation declaring the week of May 10, 2021 through May 14, 2021 as "Talawanda School District Employee Appreciation Week".

Mr. Jonathan James, thanked Mayor Smith and members of Council noting this Proclamation as stated is an effort her hopes many members of the community will be made aware of in an effort to show appreciation and gratitude to the 500 plus people who serve, teach, help, support and invest in the lives of our children and community families. Mr. James advised the past year and the past few months have been incredibly challenging as we have all navigated the realities of a global pandemic. Mr. James noted members of the Oxford Rotary and the Oxford Kiwanis Club have worked together in an effort to bring forth this Proclamation tonight. Mr. James advised next week they would join together to travel to each school building to provide a personalized gift of appreciation as well as a gift certificate to Spring Street Treats for each employee of the Talawanda School District. Mr. James noted the group was very appreciative of Dr. Ed Theroux and Holli Morrish of the Talawanda School District, Mary Ann Eaton for all of her efforts to help this effort of the Proclamation and the many members and board members of both Kiwanis and Rotary who have made this a reality.

Ms. Holli Morrish, advised the School District was grateful for the recognition noting it was awesome to have the Proclamation for next week to recognize all of Talawanda's staff for their very hard work during Covid-19 as it was a difficult year. Ms. Morrish advised she felt everyone had risen to the occasion and she was terribly appreciative and grateful that the employees are being recognized for that.

Mayor Smith thanked Ms. Morrish for her comments.

SCRC 2020-21 – End of Year Presentation – Emily McClary.

Ms. Emily McClary, Associated Student Government, Secretary for Off Campus Affairs, provided a PowerPoint and reported to Council on the activities of the Student Community Relations Commission during the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. McClary noted Conner Manley would replace her as the SCRC representative for the 2021-22 school year and advised he was excited to work with everyone.

Mr. Snavelly congratulated Ms. McClary on a successful year and wished her good luck.

Mayor Smith noted it was a tough year and he appreciated all of the work of the commission.

Appointments to Boards & Commissions.

Mayor Smith advised Council was working on filling positions on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and noted Council had tough decisions to make as there were many good applications to choose from. Mayor Smith encouraged those who were not selected to be on the committee to come to the meetings and make a contribution.

Ms. Southard moved to nominate J.C. Rupel for the CIC, Carla Blackmar for OPTAB, Craig Bennett for the Recreation Board, Matt Arbuckle for the CRC, Chantel Raghu for the Environmental Commission, Chris Skoglund for the HAPC, Sherry Lind for the HAC, Shana Rosenberg for the Planning Commission, Steve Sullivan for PACO, Emily McClary for the SCRC, Mark Boardman for the Climate Action Steering Committee, Kim Daggy for Enjoy Oxford, Betsy Hope for the Oxford Community Foundation Needs Awareness Committee, Kelli Riggs for the Oxford Chamber of Commerce, Mike Everett for McCullough Hyde Memorial Hospital, Ed Theroux for the Talawanda School District, Amy Macechko for the Coalition for a Healthy Community, Randi Thomas, Miami University, Scott Walter, Miami University, Kate Rousmaniere, Oxford Township, Egan Kraan for the PCR&RC, David Prytherch and Mike Smith for City Council, youth representatives Michelle Miao, William Salzarulo, and Harrison Cradduck, and Connie McCarthy, Steve Dana and William Hazleton for citizens at large. Ms. Southard thanked everyone for their willingness to serve. Mr. Snavelly seconded. the nominations were approved by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly, Ms. Southard,
Mr. Bracken, Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Public Comments.

There were no comments from the public.

Consent Agenda.

Report regarding the April 13, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting. (Sam Perry, Community Development Director) pg6

Report

Report regarding the April 14, 2021 Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission Meeting. (Sam Perry, Community Development Director) pg7

Report

Report regarding the April 21, 2021 Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting. (Sam Perry, Community Development Director) pg8

Report

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Capital Electric Line Builders to supply and install the necessary equipment to replace a damaged traffic signal support pole and mast arm at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Locust Street in the City of Oxford, Ohio, at a cost not to exceed \$29,670.00. (Mike Dreisbach, Service Director) pg9

Staff Report/Resolution

Mr. Snavelly moved to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Southard seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly, Ms. Southard, Mr. Bracken,
Mr. Ellerbe, Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Resolutions.

A Resolution of Council calling upon the Ohio Legislature to reject voter suppression laws proposed by State Representative Bill Seitz to limit ballot boxes to one per county and to shorten early voting. (Chantel Raghu, Councilor) pg12

Staff Report/Resolution

Ms. Raghu advised she provided a substitute Resolution for the one appearing in the agenda noting the Representative's name was removed and the proposal was still morphing to shorten the number of early voting days.

Ms. Raghu moved to substitute the current Resolution into this evening's agenda. Mr. Snavelly seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly, Ms. Southard, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Ellerbe
Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

The following e-comments were received prior to the meeting:

Comments submitted on Friday, April 30, 2021 - 9:25am:

- **Name:** Kelsey Snyder
- **Address:** 624 Brookview Ct
- **Email Address:**
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Voter suppression laws
- **Comments:**

I've long been proud to say that while Ohioans may differ in our politics, we have agreed upon the need for accessibility of the vote. One of the best ways we have achieved this is through our responsible early voting possibilities. To infringe on what has been the standard my entire life would be an insult to all that Ohio has grown to stand for. Comments submitted on Friday, April 30, 2021 - 10:11am:

- **Name:** Mary Bausano
- **Address:** 114 HILLTOP RD
- **Email Address:** bausanmo@miamioh.edu
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Voter suppression law resolution
- **Comments:**

I add my voice to the many who support the resolution to urge state legislators to reject ANY law aimed at voter suppression. We should all be making it easier to vote, not harder.

- **Position:** Support

Comments submitted on Friday, April 30, 2021 - 11:32am:

- **Name:** Brandon Humphrey
- **Address:** 609 Ogden Ct
- **Email Address:** bhumphrey1993@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** 5.1. A Resolution of Council calling upon the Ohio Legislature to reject voter suppression laws . . .
- **Comments:**

I write in support of this resolution. I couldn't have laid out my arguments better than the preamble of this resolution does. These voter suppression laws are dangerous and cynical, and

they MUST be opposed. This should not be a partisan issue! Please use the collective voice of City Council to amplify the voices of the Oxford community. Your constituents -- be they the liberal voters whose voices these laws are intended to silence or the older adults who are largely collateral damage -- will thank you. Thank you for your time, and a special thanks to Councilor Raghu for introducing this resolution.

- **Position:** Support

Comments submitted on Friday, April 30, 2021 - 5:26pm:

- **Name:** Marsha and Terry Williamson
- **Address:** 614 David Dr.
- **Email Address:** marshawilliamson@msn.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Resolution to reject voter suppression
- **Comments:**

We support Chantel Raghu's proposal that state legislators reject policies designed to suppress or limit voting. Voting should be made more accessible to all citizens (not suppressed) in order for our democracy to survive.

Comments submitted on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 - 12:51pm:

- **Name:** Sandra Drewes
- **Address:** 477 White Oak Drive
- **Email Address:** drewess@miamioh.edu
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Resolution of Council Regarding Voting Rights
- **Comments:**

I am writing in strong support of the Resolution of Council regarding protection of voting rights in the State of Ohio. I thank Chantel Raghu for bringing forth concern for the attempt of the Ohio Legislature to reduce days to vote and limit the number of ballot boxes to one per county. As OUR governmental body in Oxford, I hope the members of City Council will join Ms Raghu in formally opposing any effort now or in the future that limits or restricts the voting rights for the people of Oxford.

- **Position:** Support

Ms. Amy Shaiman, 11 Heather Ridge Court, advised she was speaking on behalf of herself and her family. Ms. Shaiman thanked Councilor Raghu for bringing the proposed Resolution forward and spoke in favor of it.

Ms. Jenny Fisher, League of Women Voters, read the following into the record on behalf of the league: "Our league has been actively advocating for voter rights in our community since 1954. Last spring we were pressing the Butler County Board of Elections on accountability for 318 mail-in ballots that were unable to be counted during the primary election. These ballots were mailed on time but misplaced by the United States Postal Service. In accordance with Ohio law these ballots were not counted and the identities of these voters were never released. We need to continue to advocate for support and funding of the Postal Service but the reliability and the consistency that they have demonstrated for decades may continue to be impacted by the lack of resources and political pressure. It is unwise of the Ohio State Legislature to lock-in any policies that may hurt Ohio voters in the future, especially in regard to voting. In the summer and fall of 2020 we were advocating for an official Butler County Board of Elections drop box to be installed in our community. As you know our city is a 45 minute drive to our Board of Elections. If an official drop box was installed inside of our library or inside of our City Hall could this benefit our community? Would this be safe at night? There was a lot of discussions on ballot drop boxes in 2020 but they are not a new concept. There are communities in this country that currently rely on them for the implementation of their elections. We see no reasons that Ohio should be limited to one drop box per county and there are so many secure drop box solutions that have been implemented across the country. Ohio can benefit from these solutions. Each year elections are securely implemented in our

community and locally we have an adequate number of polling locations. Here in Oxford, we have short wait times. The State and the Board of Elections are under a lot of stress to get enough poll workers to successfully implement elections. Poll workers are asked to work very long hours, 15 hours in one day for not much pay. As an organization that encourages poll workers to give their time to support our local elections, to support a democracy, we witness a staffing crunch that the Board of Elections continues to battle. Solutions that allow voters to cast ballots in advance of election day can ease some of the strain. According to the Ohio Secretary of State, 59% of the ballots cast in the November 2020 election were cast prior to election day. We want to give a thank-you to Council member Raghu for introducing this Resolution to our state legislature and our league supports advocacy for more drop boxes as well as convenient early voting hours.

Ms. Kathy Brinkman, 404 Emerald Woods Drive, thanked Councilor Raghu for introducing the proposed Resolution and spoke in favor of it. Ms. Brinkman also provided her perspective on proposed election law modernization and reform bills and advised she was against the reduction of early voting days and limiting ballot drop boxes to one per county.

Ms. Raghu advised the goals of voting should always be 100% voter turnout noting even though we had a lot more people than we ever had vote during the past election it by no means was the highest voter turnout. Ms. Raghu stated she felt we should always look at what evidence there is to encourage voter turnout. Ms. Raghu advised the things being proposed are very clearly meant to suppress the votes. Ms. Raghu noted her hope with the proposed Resolution this evening and with other cities joining in too that collectively Council can use their voice to try to stop this before it gets included.

Mr. Snavelly advised he supported the proposed Resolution 100% and thanked Ms. Raghu for bringing it forward. Mr. Snavelly noted friendly amendments as follows: in the first paragraph "antithesis" should be "antithetical". In the second paragraph "poling" should be "polling", "casted" should be "cast" and the word "that" should be stricken. In the third paragraph "increase" should be "increases". Mr. Snavelly noted he felt movements to try to restrict what it means to be a democracy in the U.S. is maddening and citizens should not put up with it.

Ms. Southard thanked Ms. Raghu for bringing the proposed Resolution forward and noted her hope with people working together change could come about. Ms. Southard advised the League of Women voters has long been active in helping people get out to vote on a non-partisan basis. Ms. Southard noted during the last election the Senior Center provided vans to transport people to the polls although she felt even that was not enough as the goal was to have as many people as possible vote and everyone's vote should count in this democracy and in this country.

Mr. Prytherch thanked Ms. Raghu for bringing the proposed Resolution forward and thanked the League of Women voters for their support. Mr. Prytherch noted he felt a person should not have to own a car to participate in our democracy. Mr. Prytherch advised the polling places in Oxford are not particularly accessible to where the majority of voters in town live. Mr. Prytherch advised he felt democracy works better when more people participate.

Mr. Ellerbe referred to voting laws and noted he heard a lot of people say there are not any systemic issues in America yet for whatever reason a lot of laws are being proposed and he was not sure why. Mr. Ellerbe advised the State of Utah has ideal voting laws noting they changed their voting laws this year as a result of the past election. Mr. Ellerbe advised he agrees with the proposed Resolution and noted his hope it carried enough weight to deal with the bill in the Ohio Legislature.

Mayor Smith agreed with all of Council's comments and noted his hope the proposed Resolution will carry some weight in Columbus as he expected better from the State of Ohio.

Mr. Prytherch moved to adopt Resolution No. 7293. Ms. Raghu seconded. The Resolution was adopted by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Snavelly, Ms. Southard, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu
Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Ordinances.

First Reading.

An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 3579 By Prohibiting Mass Gatherings Indoors Of More Than Ten (10) Non-Household Members Within The City Of Oxford, Ohio, To Limit The Spread Of COVID-19, And Declaring An Emergency. (Doug Elliott, City Manager) pg15

Staff Report/Ordinance

Mr. Elliott advised presently the City's mass gathering Ordinance restricts both indoor and outdoor gatherings to ten guests noting the Ordinance before Council proposes to exclude outdoor gatherings. Mr. Elliott noted the risk of Covid-19 spreading outdoors is considerably less than indoor gatherings. Mr. Elliott advised the Ohio Department of Health has rescinded the State Order for outdoor gatherings and he believed the City should follow the lead of the Ohio Department of Health and the CDC. Mr. Elliott noted social distancing is still recommended and face coverings are required in certain situations. Mr. Elliott recommended Council's adoption of the proposed Ordinance.

Ms. Patricia Talbot, 212 Wilber Avenue, thanked Council for making Oxford a safe and welcoming home for those who call Oxford home. Ms. Talbot advised she and her husband were Miami University alumni as well as her 4 children noting her 4th child to graduate from Miami will officially graduate May 14th from the nursing school. Ms. Talbot advised Oxford is home to so many students and alumni and she was grateful to the City for welcoming her family to the Oxford community over the years. Ms. Talbot noted her hope all could celebrate graduation weekend together outside with no restrictions to celebrate the students and our home, Oxford.

Mr. Prytherch noted he was a advocate of the mass gathering Ordinance adopted last August and advised he was proud of what the City has done with the mass gathering Ordinance and that it was enforced. Mr. Prytherch noted he felt the ordinance helped to keep the Oxford and Miami community safe and it helped Miami have a relatively safe semester. Mr. Prytherch advised with the rates of vaccination and what we have learned about the risks he felt it was a wise move to exclude outdoor gatherings.

Mr. Bracken noted he agreed that outdoors was much safer although he was concerned there was not much to stop people from starting outdoors and then going indoors. Mr. Bracken advised he did not feel the Ordinance should be amended until the students leave Oxford.

Ms. Southard advised she felt the only reason this is even possible is because it is springtime and people can be distanced outside. Ms. Southard noted her hope people will take the recommendation for social distancing and wearing face coverings seriously.

Ms. Raghu inquired if any public comments (e-comments) were received by the City. Mr. Elliott advised there was one from Ms. Talbot.

Mr. Snavely advised he wanted to incentivize people to be outside instead of hiding inside noting he would likely support the proposed amendment.

Mr. Bracken advised he understood both sides and noted he just wanted to keep everyone safe.

Mayor Smith advised he thought long and hard about the amendment and he agreed with Mr. Snavely that Council should incentivize people to gather outdoors. Mayor Smith noted all but one of Miami's commencements would take place outdoors and would be very spread out. Mayor Smith advised the infection rate among Miami students was very low with the last

numbers being less than 1%. Mayor Smith noted he was willing to support the proposed amendment.

Mr. Prytherch moved to adopt Ordinance No. 3620. Mr. Ellerbe seconded. The Ordinance was adopted by the following roll call:

AYE: Ms. Southard, Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly
Mayor Smith (6)

NAY: Mr. Bracken (1)

ABS: None (0)

An Ordinance Repealing Ordinance No. 3573 Adopted July 14, 2020 Requiring Face Coverings In Any Public Space Within The City Of Oxford, Ohio, To Limit The Spread Of COVID-19 And Declaring An Emergency. (Doug Elliott, City Manager) pg25

Staff Report/Ordinance

The following e-comments were received prior to the meeting:

I understand that council is considering dropping the mask requirement immediately. While I am supportive of a return to normalcy, it seems hasty to drop the restriction while Miami students are still in residency. There will be an influx of people for graduation weekend and this is an opportunity to spread the virus. Why not wait until after the students are gone and then remove the restriction? The masks are a reminder that the virus is still around and it would be easier and safer to continue the use of masks. Betty Rogers
Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 11:28am:

- **Name:** Deborah Lyons
- **Address:** 326 West Withrow St. Apt. 1
- **Email Address:** basilissa1@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Mon, 05/03/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Lifting the Mask Requirement -- Terrible Idea!
- **Comments:**

Lifting the mask requirement right before the influx of thousands of visitors for Miami graduation seems to me the height of folly. While not all will follow the requirement, and I do not support aggressive policing measures to insure that they do, the mere lifting of the rule will signal -- especially to new graduates in a festive mood -- that they no longer need to take precautions. Although it happens rarely, even the fully vaccinated can still get fairly sick with Covid -- as a colleague of mine recently discovered. Butler County is still listed as at high risk so this is no time to be pouring more fuel on the fire!

- **Position:** Oppose

Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 11:54am:

- **Name:** Carole Katz
- **Address:** 214 W. Withrow Street
- **Email Address:** ckatz@one.net
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Repeal of Ordinance No. 3573 (face coverings)
- **Comments:**

I welcome the City's review of the COVID situation, BUT I do not support repealing face mask ordinance, especially since thousands of people will be coming in to Oxford in a few weeks for Miami's spring graduation. The completed vaccination rate in Butler County as of yesterday was 33%, not even close to what's needed to provide any kind of community immunity, and while we've dropped to a lower level on the COVID threat scale, other areas of Ohio (where many graduation guests will come from) have not. We know enough about COVID transmission now to understand that masks greatly reduce the risk. And while it's true that being outdoors is

safer than being in confined spaces, Miami's graduation presents a particular risk, with so many people coming together in crowded circumstances.

The CDC says, "Masks work best when everyone wears one." They also advise people to check for local mask mandates, and to follow those if they exist. This seems pretty straightforward. I understand that it may be inconvenient and frustrating for residents and out-of-town guests to have to continue to wear masks, but for the safety of our townspeople, I strongly urge you to keep this ordinance in place until we achieve a stronger level of protection against the virus in our community. I for one do not want to have to spend another year in isolation because some people don't like wearing masks and so cause spread of COVID variants through Oxford.

If you haven't seen it yet, please check out this NY Times article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/03/health/covid-herd-immunity-vaccine.html>. I think it speaks to the concept of maintaining as much protection as possible, by increasing vaccination rates AND by wearing masks.

I urge you not to give in to pressure to repeal the face mask ordinance. Please keep Oxford as protected as possible.

Thank you.

- **Position:** Opposed

Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 12:00pm:

- **Name:** Nicole Thesz
- **Address:** 16 Fox Run Circle
- **Email Address:** theszn@miamioh.edu
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Removing Mask Mandate
- **Comments:**

I have heard that the city council is considering removing the mask mandate uptown, and am very concerned about the public health effects of this, not to mention the message this measure would send. As it is, students are not complying very well, but to reward this behavior (especially before graduation parties) will have the effect of making students think that such mandates are unnecessary or optional. This may have negative effects on behavior in the fall, too. Moreover, the fact that guests will be visiting from out of town and out of state simply multiplies the risk of covid cases and variants spreading in Oxford. Thank you for your consideration.

- **Position:** Oppose

Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 12:44pm:

- **Name:** Brandon Ney
- **Address:** 319 west withrow street
- **Email Address:** brandon.ney@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Mask mandate
- **Comments:**

I can't imagine the motivation for removing the mask mandate before exactly the kind of public event a mask mandate is intended to protect the public during. Graduation weekend, even last year's, exhibits a population swell in Oxford of people from all over the world. These people are likely going to have a hard enough time wearing a mask for their own protection, much less for the public health. Repealing the mask mandate before graduation weekend is to publicly condone a slow-motion super spreader event in Oxford. Ya like variants? Cause this is how you get variants.

- **Position:** Neutral

Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 1:03pm:

- **Name:** Erika Nelson
- **Address:** 5508 Brown Road
- **Email Address:** erika.d.nelson@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Mask Mandate, City of Oxford
- **Comments:**

Hello everyone! I am writing to express my concern over the proposed lifting of the mask mandate in advance of the Miami University graduation later this month. We have all worked so hard and have been careful for so long...please don't encourage people to let down their guard now! Miami has spread the event out over several days in order to protect participants, and would hate to see this become a 'super-spreader-event' as part of the memories. Thousands of people will be traveling in from out of town, and then returning to their communities. It is not fair to them, or the local residents, to take such a risk. True, not everyone 'obeys' the mandate, but even if 50% of people take it seriously, it is better than a free-for-all. Thanks for keeping our vulnerable residents (and restaurant and bar workers!) safe for this month and into the summer. Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 1:11pm:

- **Name:** Keith Gelber
- **Address:** 5115 Bonham rd
- **Email Address:** kgelber@hotmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Mask mandate
- **Comments:**

I was shocked to hear about Oxford removing the mask mandate before graduation. We are still in the midst of a pandemic and with many people refusing vaccinations, we know there will be an increased threat of Covid in Oxford during graduation due to increased population. I am 100% against the idea of removing the mandate and will be watching the decisions made by the city council to see if they are more supportive of community health or Miami graduation events.

- **Position:** Oppose

Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 3:23pm:

- **Name:** Jennifer Gelber
- **Address:** 5115 Bonham Road
- **Email Address:** jennyzambia@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** proposal to repeal Ordinance 3573 (facial coverings)
- **Comments:**

Honorable Councilmembers, I urge you NOT to repeal Ordinance 3573 requiring facial coverings be worn within City of Oxford limits. While the Director of Ohio's Dept. of Health has issued guidance on wearing masks, if the City repeals this Ordinance you won't have any way to enforce it. The State's guidance relies on County Health Departments and County Sheriff's office for enforcement. Both the Butler County Health Department and the Butler County Sheriff's office have stated they won't enforce any state orders or mandate related to coronavirus.

If there is confusion among residents, instead of repealing Ord. 3573, the City could choose to amend the ordinance to match the guidance coming from the State level. At least that way you can still enforce it. If you repeal it now you put the community at risk with Miami graduation coming up, which will bring outsiders to our community.

I'm fully vaccinated but CDC guidance says I can still catch COVID, and still spread it, therefore I still wear a mask in public in order to do my part to stop community spread. While the spread has slowed, it hasn't stopped. Masks are as important as ever to slow the spread - perhaps even more so with all the distrust of getting a vaccine.

- **Position:** Opposed

Comments submitted on Monday, May 3, 2021 - 4:53pm:

- **Name:** Michele Ittel
- **Address:** 7553 Jones Rd
- **Email Address:** micheleittel@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Mon, 05/03/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Mask mandates
- **Comments:**

I do most of my living inside the Oxford Community. I gather with friends, and eat in restaurants, and love going to the farmer's market. I feel lifting mask mandates will drive many of us back into our homes in quarantine. We are fully vaccinated but we do not feel safe in large crowds and/or around unmasked people. The virus continues to mutate into variants and sadly, not enough vaccines went into arms. I do hope you want to see Oxford area residents coming back into town as we have done. Today, I visited three businesses and plan to have dinner at Hueston Woods lodge this evening. This is huge as my husband and I quarantined for a year and two weeks until we both were fully vaccinated. You will drive us out of town lifting mask mandates at this time and this idea makes me very sad. I hope to continue enjoying Oxford, especially this summer. I really miss being around people and a mask is a small inconvenience a best. Thank you for your consideration.

Comments submitted on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 - 11:58am:

- **Name:** Heidi Schran
- **Address:** 319 W Withrow St
- **Email Address:** hschran@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** First Reading on the lifting of the ordinances for mass gatherings and face coverings
- **Comments:**

I am a high school teacher at THS and chaperoned at the prom this past weekend. Over 250 students attended, all wearing masks. It was wonderful to see them all celebrating and getting to experience a sense of normalcy in a safe manner.

I KNOW that enforcing these rules is not easy- I spend my days reminding students at the high school to wear their masks correctly. But I am the adult in the room, so I keep doing it. By having a mask mandate and ordinances against large gatherings, the City of Oxford has been "the adult in the room". To lift these regulations just before graduation would be massively irresponsible.

We are in the middle of a pandemic (just look at India to see what could happen if we allow people to think prematurely that it is over). If we all do our job well, no one will know. There won't be another wave and people will say that we should have opened up more. But that only means that we were successful.

Healthy Together does not mean that Miami's Graduation becomes a super-spreader event. It means it never had a chance to.

Those responsible high school students that were at the prom last weekend, following the rules, wearing their masks... they will be the people working at all of the businesses in town on graduation weekend once the undergraduates leave and the graduates celebrate with their families. They have not yet had a chance to be fully vaccinated. What message is sent if we put them at risk by lifting the ordinances that would help protect them?

Who would be served if these ordinances are lifted?

I ask that we do our best to serve the public good and hold the Miami Graduates and their families to the same standards as everyone else. Please keep the requirement for face coverings and limit gatherings to no more than ten until after graduation weekend.

Thank you.

And many thanks for "Talawanda School District Employee Appreciation Day".

- **Position:** Opposed

Comments submitted on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 - 5:28pm:

- **Name:** Alex French
- **Address:** 5431 Hester Road
- **Email Address:** amintorcio@gmail.com
- **Meeting Date:** Tue, 05/04/2021
- **Agenda Item:** Ordinance Repealing Ordinance No. 3573
- **Comments:**

I do not support repealing the mask mandate prior to graduation weekend. Miami is going ahead with in-person commencement ceremonies the weekend of May 15th. Further, they are allowing each student to have 6 people in attendance, meaning that for every student who moves out of a dorm or apartment, 5 (if not more) additional people are arriving to attend graduation. Graduation weekend also brings an influx in foot traffic Uptown. People looking in our shops and eating in our restaurants means longer lines and increased sidewalk crowds - making social distancing much more difficult.

By repealing the mask mandate, we are signaling that we are not prioritizing the safety of our permanent residents or the employees of our businesses. Our mandate will encourage the new arrivals to think twice before they ditch their mask - and if even a small percent of people mask up who otherwise wouldn't, that has significant impact on the health and safety of our community.

- **Position:** Oppose

Mr. Elliott recommended the proposed Ordinance be tabled noting he felt it was more appropriate to consider it at the next meeting when the majority of Miami University students would be gone.

Mr. Snavelly moved to table the proposed Ordinance. Mr. Prytherch seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Bracken, Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly
Ms. Southard, Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Second Reading – None.

A. Announcements & Communications.

Remarks from City Council and City staff. The comments expressed by individual members of Council or City staff during this portion of a City Council meeting do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Oxford, The Oxford City Council, or the City staff.

Future Meetings. (Virtual)

Mr. Elliott thanked Council for their support in amending the mass gathering Ordinance noting this has been a difficult for everyone and we were not out of the woods yet. Mr. Elliott thanked Council, City staff, Miami University and all of the community organizations for the excellent job they did this school year and advised he was proud of the City and what it was able to accomplish.

Mr. Elliott discussed the City's potential income tax revenue loss pending some proposals by the state legislature.

Mr. Elliott advised he and Chief Jones attended a Work Session with the County Commissioners regarding the consolidated dispatch services in Butler County and advised he felt the City of Oxford was paying more than its fair share because several villages and townships were not contributing. Mr. Elliott noted the commissioners were addressing the issue although there was not a final solution yet.

Chief Jones advised the 2021 Citizens Police Academy wrapped up last month noting it was a trying year to have one. Chief Jones thanked Councilor Bracken for attending the academy as well as Hannah Stohry from the Police Community Relations & Review Commission and 13 other citizens. Chief Jones noted it was great to get back to doing some community outreach even though it was scaled down from previous years due to Covid-19. Chief Jones thanked Officer Wagers and Lt. Fening who helped facilitate the program.

Mr. Newlin reminded everyone the due date for filing taxes this year has been extended to May 17, 2021.

Mr. Wooddell noted the aquatic center would open in 25 days and advised he felt the Parks and Recreation Department operated the facility very safely last summer and they would do the same this year.

Mr. Wooddell advised the Epic Cup Soccer Tournament was held last weekend and would be held again this weekend at the Oxford Community Park noting 100 teams participate each weekend.

Mr. Wooddell thanked the Lions Club and the Rotary Club noting they donated money again this season to allow OPRD to offer free swimming lessons and free life guard certification courses at the aquatic center.

Ms. Greene advised she was conducting listening sessions regarding the American Rescue Plan funds to learn how the public may wish the funds to be used. Ms. Greene noted a session was held with the non-profit providers and one would be held next week with business providers. Ms. Greene advised there was also an open community survey and encouraged citizens to share their thoughts.

Ms. Greene advised staff was researching with community partners how to provide mobile vaccine clinics and possibly using incentives to promote it. Ms. Greene noted her hope to have a proposal for Council soon.

Ms. Greene advised staff was also researching what public meetings will look like once they are being held in person noting there were a lot of unknowns at this point especially with regard to virtual participation.

Ms. Greene referred to Town/Gown initiatives noting she is working very closely with the Miami University President's Office on a variety of topics including the College@Elm building, Amtrak and the Oxford Area Trail. Ms. Greene advised Miami University recently committed to providing matching funds for Phase III of the trail. Ms. Greene noted there has been a very open line of communication between the City and Miami University during this very challenging year.

Mr. Conard advised he did not feel it was necessarily the year to conduct a Charter Review and suggested at a later date Council may also want to consider adding language in the Charter to address a State of Emergency.

Ms. Raghu thanked Ms. Greene for the update on the American Rescue Plan process noting she felt it was important to get as much input as possible.

Ms. Raghu advised she ran for Council because she wanted to live in a town that was really clean, equitable and thriving noting from a moral standpoint she wanted to know that the people she lives down the street from feel like they are not going to get evicted. Ms. Raghu advised she wanted to know that they can have access to permanent housing. Ms. Raghu noted she wanted more things to do in town and she wanted to know as a 35 year old person that there are things to do and that Oxford is thriving which she felt Oxford can not do without a permanent year-round residents. Ms. Raghu inquired with Oxford's biggest employer paying half of their staff less than \$40,000 what can Council do to make sure those who work here can also live here so our economy can thrive, so it is the right thing to do so people do not have to commute from far away. Ms. Raghu noted she felt Covid-19 exposed all of Oxford's societal

problems and lit them on fire and Oxford's housing problem is even bigger now. Ms. Raghu advised she strongly hoped Council can do whatever it takes to actually try to make housing available for everyone. Ms. Raghu noted her hope going forward Council can do what it takes to invest the Rescue Plan money and not throw it away or just spend it.

Mr. Ellerbe noted he felt we could see light at the end of the tunnel after dealing with a difficult year and commended City staff for doing a fantastic job of getting the City through and setting examples of how to do some things not only in the state but in the country. Mr. Ellerbe advised Oxford has a very large gathering in front of it and can not lose sight of making sure everyone in town stays safe. Mr. Ellerbe noted once graduation is over he looked forward to all of the good things the City did last year to get the residents of Oxford out and interacting with the businesses and with each other. Mr. Ellerbe advised he hoped graduation weekend would be uneventful and that everyone has a safe and respectful time.

Mr. Snavelly advised many people in Oxford do not have computers or the ability to participate in Zoom meetings. Mr. Snavelly noted he served on two other boards/committees that are now meeting in person. Mr. Snavelly inquired what Council's plans were moving forward noting he felt pretty comfortable meeting in person. Mr. Snavelly advised he felt Council should discuss meeting in person so people can attend in person noting perhaps there could be a mechanism for people on computer who can not attend in person.

Ms. Southard advised she was struck recently by a comment made by someone who works at the university who had never heard the term town/gown. Ms. Southard noted town/gown was a phrase Council used all the time and she felt Covid-19 has frayed the town/gown relations somewhat. Ms. Southard advised Council looks forward to better connections between the university, City and community. Ms. Southard noted the International Town/Gown Association has met for many years and the Ohio Town/Gown Association was formed a few years ago and has met in Lima, Ohio and in Oxford. Ms. Southard advised there had been a number of meetings dealing with the various problems that university towns have. Ms. Southard noted she felt this was something Council needs to continue to work on.

Mr. Prytherch noted he felt it was nice to vote on loosening some of the restrictions Council adopted locally almost a year ago when faced with a crisis. Mr. Prytherch advised none of Council when they ran for Council thought this would be a crisis and none of the people who were employed by Miami University thought 2020 and 2021 would be dedicated to this issue. Mr. Prytherch noted he was proud of what we have done and how we have managed the crisis. Mr. Prytherch advised as much as he was happy to loosen the outdoor gathering restrictions he was happy to table the mask ordinance as he felt we were not ready for that yet.

Mr. Prytherch advised we do face another crisis and noted there is an observatory on top of Mauna Loa that measures the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and it peaked at the highest number ever recently. Mr. Prytherch noted as we pass through pandemic we are going to face perhaps a much greater crisis locally and globally. Mr. Prytherch advised at the May 18 Council meeting the Climate Action Steering Committee will share with everyone some of the work they have been doing.

Mr. Bracken suggested for the families coming into town for graduation celebrations that the celebrations be held at Hueston Woods, the Leonard Howell Park or the Oxford Community Park rather than at the private residences. Mr. Bracken noted then there is no chance for indoor gathering and there is much more room to spread out in a park. Mr. Bracken highly recommended everyone get vaccinated before they come to Oxford.

Mr. Bracken advised he too looked forward to opening up events again especially outdoors.

Mayor Smith noted the Coalition for a Healthy Community held a "drug take back" a couple of weeks ago and set a new record by collecting 202 pounds of un-needed medication.

Mayor Smith advised the ShareFest event would return this year from May 13-19 noting items can be dropped off at Chestnut Fields parking lot. Mayor Smith encouraged anyone wishing to volunteer to go to www.sharefestoxford.org to sign up.

Mayor Smith advised he would like Council to return to in person meetings in June as long as the numbers keep dropping.

Mayor Smith advised 2 years ago he had the opportunity to attend the Town/Gown conference at Kent State University and noted today is the 51st anniversary of 4 students losing their lives on that campus and we should never forget that.

WED May 5 Environmental Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

MON May 10 Oxford Parking & Transportation Advisory Board Meeting 9:30 a.m.

TUES May 11 Public Arts Commission of Oxford Meeting 4:30 p.m.

TUES May 11 Planning Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

WED May 12 Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission Meeting 6:15 p.m.

THUR May 13 Recreation Board Meeting 11:30 a.m.

TUES May 18 City Council Meeting 7:30 p.m.

WED May 19 Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting 6:30 p.m.

THUR May 20 Climate Action Steering Committee Meeting 9:00 a.m.

THUR May 20 Police Community Relations & Review Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

MON May 31 Holiday – City Offices Closed

Adjourn.

Mr. Snavelly moved to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. Ms. Southard seconded. The motion passed by the following roll call:

AYE: Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Prytherch, Ms. Raghu, Mr. Snavelly, Ms. Southard
Mr. Bracken, Mayor Smith (7)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

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