



**Open Space & Visual Environment Commission  
Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 5:30 p.m.  
City Hall Conference Room #1  
85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio**

**Members Present:** Aaron Mucciolo, Wes Burgess, Eddie Miller, David Sokill, David Sonner

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Kate Pilacky, Council Liaison; Jeff Baumann, Staff Support;  
Sheri Runals, Staff Support

**Others Absent:**

Chair Burgess called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

**Welcome New Members**

Burgess welcomed new members: Sokoll, Sonner and Miller.

**Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Sonner nominated Burgess for chair. Burgess called vote. Burgess elected as chair.

Sonner nominated Sokoll. Burgess nominated Miller. Discussion was held. Burgess called vote. Sokoll elected as vice-chair.

**Approval of Minutes – November 23, 2010**

Mucciolo moved to approve the November 23, 2010 minutes as presented. Sonner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Appointment to Design Review Subcommittee**

Burgess stated that the appointment to the Design Review Subcommittee should have been done at the last meeting of the year. Mucciolo went over the Design Review Committee's charge. Miller nominated Mucciolo to serve on the subcommittee. Burgess called vote. All in favor.

**2011 Forecast Discussion**

Burgess asked the commission what they would like to accomplish in 2011.

Mucciolo brought up the topic of Arbor Day. This is an opportunity to educate the community. We should expand on past Arbor Days. Burgess would like to incorporate a climate change or global warming long-term theme. This could be through speakers or projects; anything that would get the point across on how global warming affects us here and around the world. In the past it has been a one day celebration.

Sonner stated that the OSVEC has been instrumental in undertaking the sponsorship of a fairly expansive community tree-planting effort. He stated that the City would not be funding this undertaking; hopefully there will be funding from other sources. He was researching on the internet and came across a very promising source – the American Forestry Association. They have a program called Global ReLeaf. He plans on calling them to discuss sources of funding for urban reforestation. Miller asked what the method was for sighting the trees. Sonner replied that he did not know where the trees need to be planted. There is software specifically designed to map where trees should be planted. Miller stated that if we were looking for a larger project to tie into, and possibly get some money from the project, it falls under watershed conservation. A global initiative going on now is the Million Tree Project. Glenn Gall may have information on this.

Mucciolo asked about a tree lawn plan. Baumann stated that the city has a database of all the planting sites and whether or not they are small, medium or large based on the width of the planting site and based on whether or not there are overhead utility conflicts. There was really no way of keeping it up to date; it is probably 80% accurate. Mucciolo asked who makes the decisions on where trees are to be planted. Baumann replied that OMLPS usually decides with our tree service consultant.

Miller stated that there were a few lectures that he either attended or was planning on attending. Nicole Foss will be speaking at First Church on January 28<sup>th</sup>. She looks at the ideas of peak oil, recession, inflation and resource depletion pretty fearlessly. He attended a lecture by Marcin Jakubowski. The topic of his talk was about building small scale industrial tools using locally available resources. Sonner added that several pieces of the machinery are intended for agricultural use. This commission should pay attention to what people want to do with it here, it will relate to gardening, open space, and local food production and security. We should not get involved with it directly right now.

Burgess would like to focus on the community gardens. It took a lot of work to get what they already have. We need to help them beautify it and make it more open to the public.

Mucciolo stated that this commission centers around forestry related topics. He asked what resources the City has to find out what people are interested in and if there are people to talk about these things. He asked about the natural landscape ordinance. This has not been looked at by council yet. Maybe we should look at redefining aesthetics. We could help ourselves and then help with any projects that we are connected to. Sokoll asked if there was a possibility of having Oberlin plant trees that could produce something profitable. The produce could either be sold or donated. Mucciolo stated that most fruit trees were part of the multi-year landscaping plan for the community garden at Legion Field.

Burgess said that the tradition for Arbor Day was to congregate in one location, put on a presentation and plant a tree. For the future he envisions a journey through Oberlin and planting trees as we go. We could talk to people as we walk from location to location. He asked the commission members to think of groups to invite to future Arbor Day celebrations. Sokoll suggested the community garden at the Lorain County Academy property as a potential location.

Arbor Day is Friday, April 29, 2011 but the celebration can be done at any time.

Mucciolo said that the contents of the celebration are what would draw a crowd.

### **Greenbelt**

Pilacky stated that the Western Reserve Land Conservancy has had very little communication with the college regarding the greenbelt. It will probably have to go out further than originally proposed; it was a pretty tight circle around Oberlin. They are looking for a 20,000 acre greenbelt. There currently is not enough land directly around Oberlin to protect 20,000 acres without landowners around Oberlin thinking that they are going to be told what to do with their properties. Eminent Domain is a concern of land owners. The Land Conservancy does want to protect the Oberlin South Woods.

Miller stated that he would like to meet some of the landowners. Burgess suggested that they come to one of the meetings.

### **Other Business**

Burgess stated that on March 11<sup>th</sup>, at Lakeland Community College in Kirtland, there is a North Coast Urban Forestry conference if anyone is interested in attending,

Sokoll attended the Lorain County Food Policy Coalition meeting at LCCC. They are setting up a sustainable ag program next year. The OSU Extension sponsored garden day is sometime in April or May. Filtrex will be giving away garden socks. Garden socks are ready to plant bags that are filled with compost and soil.

Burgess stated that he would like to communicate more via email between meetings. Mucciolo asked if there were any email restrictions. Baumann replied that you cannot make decisions via email. You can share ideas. You cannot send out an email with a question to all commission members; that is carrying on a conversation via email.

Burgess would like to attend the next Planning Commission meeting regarding the meadows ordinance. Mucciolo added that council needs to get this rolling. It has already gone through Open Space and the Planning Commission. Council should push the Planning Commission to do something. Pilacky stated that this needs to go through before the next growing season. She asked Baumann if he was able to update the plant list. Baumann replied that he did not receive specific feedback about adding additional species. It would be difficult to have a list of allowable species. Staff would not be able to learn to recognize meadow species that would be considered invasive. Pilacky stated that she will talk to Ken Sloane about getting this on the agenda.

Burgess encouraged new members to familiarize themselves with the City's website. They need to talk to people. We need to show Council that we exist.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m. Motion by Sonner; seconded by Sokoll.

Wesley R. Burgess

Wesley Burgess, Chair  
Open Space and Visual Environment Commission

Sheri Runals

Sheri Runals  
Staff Support

Approved: 2, 22, 11