



**Open Space & Visual Environment Commission
Tuesday, July 26, 2011, 5:30 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room #2
85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio**

Members Present: Wes Burgess (Chair), Carol Spiros (Vice-Chair), Eddie Miller, David Sonner, Aaron Mucciolo

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Sheri Runals, Staff Support

Others Absent: Jeff Baumann Staff Support; Kate Pilacky, Council Liaison

Chair Burgess called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Burgess welcomed Spiros back to the commission.

Election of New Vice-Chair

Sonner nominated Spiros to fill the vacant vice-chair position. Burgess called vote. All in favor. Spiros elected as vice-chair.

Approval of Minutes – April 26, 2011

Mucciolo moved to approve the April 26, 2011 minutes as presented. Miller seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – May 24, 2011

Miller moved to approve the May 24, 2011 minutes as presented. Sonner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Cemetery Issues/Formation of a Sub-Committee

Burgess stated that some citizens have brought some cemetery concerns to his attention. Some of the issues were the organizational layout, drainage control, historical significance, security, and invasive species control/lawn care maintenance. He heard complaints that the Westwood Cemetery

was not being run as a business like other cemeteries in the county are and that those cemeteries are more successful. The commission could discuss issues pertaining to the commission or they can make a recommendation to council to form an official cemetery sub-committee. The city's Buildings and Grounds Department is responsible for maintaining the cemetery. Sonner stated that there is currently an organization that pays attention to some of the cemetery matters. A large concern is the lack of security. Sonner stated that the cemetery is one of the city's largest open spaces. He asked Burgess about his comment that the cemetery was not as successful as other cemeteries; he asked how you measure success. Burgess responded that we do not have the ability to group families together; our cemetery does not have a good track record of keeping families together. There were instances in which plots could have been unofficially reserved. Some families are spread out around the cemetery. Sonner stated that customers should be asked if they need other plots at the time of a burial. He commented on how nice the cemetery currently looks. We need to find out from the living if people are content with their kin/friends being buried in the cemetery. Mucciolo stated that we may need to look further into this to see if there is a personnel or a policy gap. We many need to allocate more resources or look at cemetery policies. Spiros stated that we need to have Jeff and Dennis come in to speak about their vision. Burgess said that there was talk about renovating the cemetery house. There is also concern about boundaries between the golf course, residential property and Westwood Cemetery and how it affects the landscaping. Some chemicals used by the golf course run off into the catch basins at the cemetery creating algae blooms in the pond. If the cemetery is run like a business we may be able to scan records so people can search family trees and historical information.

Spiros stated that as far as open space, we need to discuss plans for landscaping and drainage with Jeff and Dennis; maybe they already have plans for some of these issues. It is a good idea to form a sub-committee but to choose whether the cemetery is to be run as a business or not and talking about where people are buried does not fall under OSVEC's purview. These are very important topics but it does not have to do with this commission. The sub-committee could raise awareness about the issues that the people in Oberlin have about the cemetery. Mucciolo suggested that a member from the OSVEC meet with those interested in forming a sub-committee. Sonner and Burgess were both interest in being on this sub-committee. Burgess asked the commission members to bring some specific issues to the next meeting.

Invitation to Oberlin Main St. Director to give a Presentation (aesthetics)

Burgess and Spiros would like to visit Scott Schell to discuss how we could help each other in regards to aesthetics. Some issues that could be discussed are planters, hanging baskets, hedge/flower rows, and artwork.

Design Review Subcommittee

Discussion was held on the proposed change to reduce the number of Design Review Subcommittee members from 7 to 3.

Mucciolo left the meeting.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by David Sonner and seconded by Eddie Miller for the following recommendation:

"The Open Space and Visual Environment Commission recommends that the Design Review Subcommittee be reconstituted with five members, one of those members should be from the Open Space Commission."

The motion passed 4-0.

Other Business

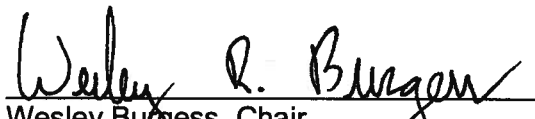
Miller stated that he had been speaking with Pilacky about conservation options for landowners. In order for a Greenbelt to be viable you would have to have some type of non-permanent land conservation. There needs to be some type of certification that's different from a conservation easement. Sonner stated that the city does not have any legal jurisdiction out of town. The city, OSVEC and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy should be marching together but only in our boundaries. We do not have any authority beyond the city limits. Miller suggested that the city's needs could be met through the area around Oberlin and the school belt; the Oberlin School District is about 25,000 acres. He will do some research to see if our needs could be met this way. The commission may want to invite the Sustainability Coordinator from the Oberlin Project to a future meeting. Burgess stated that this was a good idea but we do not want to step on anyone's toes.

Miller stated that during commencement and at different times throughout the summer he has not seen parking as a problem. He had been downtown often during peak times and there were always spaces available.

Runals reported that 12 trees were planted and approximately 80 seedlings were given away on Arbor Day.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m. Motion by Sonner; seconded by Spiros.



Wesley Burgess, Chair
Open Space and Visual Environment Commission



Sheri Runals
Staff Support

Approved: 8 / 23 / 2011