



**Open Space & Visual Environment Commission  
Tuesday, September 27, 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), Aaron Mucciolo

**Members Late:** Eddie Miller

**Members Absent:** David Sonner

**Others Present:** Sheri Runals, Staff Support; Eric Norenberg, City Manager; Tita Reed, Economic Development Officer; Cameron Hogg

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

Chair Burgess called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes – August 23, 2011**

Motion by Mucciolo to approve the August 23, 2011 minutes as presented. Spiros seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**Oberlin Industrial Park Wooded Lots**

Burgess stated that he received an email from a resident expressing his concern about preserving the habitat and open space in the Artino Street industrial park. As far as Burgess was concerned, the industrial park is meant for economic development just like a park is set aside for preservation. Tita Reed, the city's Economic Development Officer, passed out an aerial shot of the industrial park. This particular area being discussed is zoned M-1 Light Industrial. She also passed out the codified ordinance for that particular zoning district.

*Miller & Baumann arrived.*

Reed stated that this area has been zoned M-1 Light Industrial since 1970. She had read the email and was pleased that people are passionate about something. She is passionate about job creation and having this section of land available for this type of development. There are other places meant for open space and this was not one of them.

*Pilacky arrived.*

Spiros asked if the concern was that there might be future development on these properties. Reed responded that she would like to see this property developed. She likes to look at space in an industrial park as something that was set aside for the specific purpose of industrialization.

Pilacky asked which parcel the resident was concerned about. Burgess replied that it was the area around Agrinomix. This is the area closest to Kendal. Norenberg stated that the resident was also concerned about empty buildings that were not being utilized. The former Quebecor building is about to be sold. There is activity in this area. There is only one empty building in the industrial park. It is important to keep this land for industrial use.

Pilacky asked about a possible nature trail. Baumann replied that if you followed Artino St. to the end, there is a small parcel of land which the city owns. Due to its size, it would be tough to develop there. A connection could be made there that leads over to New Russia Township Park. This could create some recreational opportunities for employees in the industrial park. It would be similar to a bikepath. Burgess stated that he knows 3 people that walk to work in the industrial park and there are no sidewalks or crosswalks across Lorain St. to get there. Mucciolo suggested using right-of-ways to make connections.

Burgess asked if there were any business owners in the industrial park that were interested in naturalized landscaping. Reed responded that Ron Pierre sits on the OCIC board and is open to suggestions. He has always been concerned about how the industrial park looks. He would be a key person to have a conversation with. Pilacky added that he is also a member of the land conservancy. Mucciolo stated that our focus should be on naturalized landscaping.

Norenberg stated that Reed organizes industrial park roundtables where city staff and the businesses from the industrial park meet to discuss any concerns they may have.

Pilacky stated that she will respond to the resident's concern. The property that he is concerned about and walking on is private and zoned for industrial use.

*Reed left the meeting.*

### **Green Acres Site**

Burgess stated that the Green Acres site had been recently purchased by the city. He asked how this property was zoned. Norenberg replied that it was zoned R-1 Residential. The city has decided to do a planning study to see what the options are for potential use of the property that would be compatible with the neighborhood. The recent parks and recreation strategic plan calls for developing some sort of a park in that area. There have been suggestions of building homes along Oberlin Rd. or developing a business park along Lorain St. A planning consultant will look at different ideas that would compliment this area. Burgess asked if commercial, residential, and a park were realistic. Norenberg replied that this was what we would be looking into.

Miller's opinion was that this area would be a great eco-village and a good place for a small organic farm. Mucciolo suggested that the commission discuss community garden space at a future meeting.

Burgess asked about the demolition process. Baumann replied that the building has some asbestos in it. Due to the asbestos and the size of the building, it will require putting specs together and going out to bid since it will be more than \$25,000. Norenberg came up with sample specs of deconstruction rather than demolition. He received a proposal from a consultant to analyze this and work on asbestos removal specs. Council would like this done rather quickly. It would not be cost effective to reuse the buildings; the city may preserve the brick garage.

Norenberg said that they may look at the consultant's recommendation within a month and meet at staff level to discuss it. They may then meet with the commissions to discuss the best way to market the land. They may look at something that would create some income for the city.

### **Deer in Relation to Open Spaces and Residential Areas**

Burgess stated that many residents are upset with the deer in Oberlin. Some have installed fences and electric wire to keep the deer out of their gardens and yards. He asked what the city could do to limit the population or to try to push the population away. Mucciolo stated that he did not know enough about the topic to make an informed decision. He suggested that we invite someone to a future meeting that knows more about this; possibly someone from the OSU extension office or Oberlin College. Pilacky stated that the deer will probably not be going anywhere and we may need to put up deer crossing signs. The deer are being hunted outside the city, just not enough. Burgess said that there are salt licks on the market that contain enzymes that block pregnancy. Mucciolo asked what the scope of the problem was. Was it that the vegetables are getting eaten or are the deer getting aggressive? Burgess stated some instances in which deer were downtown.

Miller asked if deer were migratory animals or if they stay in one area. Pilacky responded that they are losing habitat. Burgess does not want to see residents poisoning or shooting the deer. Spiros stated that there is not much we can do as a commission. We could educate the residents. Burgess asked if the city could purchase the salt licks or would the residents have to do this on their own. Baumann replied that we could look at the idea of hormone ingested salt licks. The city probably will not allow hunting within the corporate limits.

Burgess would like to do some research on this and bring in an expert. This will be on a future agenda if he has any more information.

### **Other Business**

Miller stated that city council received the commission's recommendation regarding the number of members on the Design Review Sub-Committee. Councilman Burgess prepared an amendment that would allow appointments from other commissions, not necessarily the OSVEC. The amendment passed. There are now five members on the Design Review Sub-Committee.

Burgess passed around the registration to the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Preservation Summit. Norenberg stated that the city could probably find some money in the budget if someone wanted to attend. Pilacky said that this may be the last summit. It is not going to be managed through the office of Farmland Preservation. OSU may have to pick up the planning of this event. It would be a good opportunity to go this year.

Miller stated that he started a report titled 'The Oberlin Project Progress So Far'. He is asking for some feedback from some members of the commission. He would like for it to become an official Oberlin document.


Miller created a 'How to Guide' on what he has learned about gardening and growing your own food. He passed copies out to commission members.

Miller announced his resignation from the commission effective immediately.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m. Motion by Spiros; seconded by Mucciolo.

  
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Wesley Burgess, Chair  
Open Space and Visual Environment Commission

  
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Sheri Runals  
Staff Support

Approved: 10, 25, 11