



**Open Space & Visual Environment Commission  
Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 5:30 p.m.  
City Hall Conference Room #2  
85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio**

**Members Present:** Wes Burgess (Chair), Aaron Mucciolo, David Sonner, Gina Makris  
**Members Absent:** Carol Spiros (Vice-Chair)  
**Others Present:** Sheri Runals, Staff Support; Jeff Baumann, Staff Support  
**Others Absent:** Kate Pilacky, Council Liaison

Chair Burgess called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes – September 27, 2011**

Motion by Mucciolo to approve the September 27, 2011 minutes as presented. Makris seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**New Member**

Burgess welcomed new member Dr. Gina Makris. Burgess asked her what she was most interested in. Makris replied that she was interested in sustainable food supply and food policy.

**Green Acres Site**

Mucciolo stated that visual environment is important for this area. He suggested that the city look into purchasing Locke's Garden Center given its location next to Green Acres and for its wooded lot. This would add to the park space. Burgess added that it is a plus that Locke's has parking. Sonner expressed to the commission that the city does not have the money to buy Locke's; they want quite a bit for the property. When council approved the expenditure of the Green Acre's property they had to find the money. They justified what they could do with this property. He asked Baumann what the intent of the property was. Baumann replied that he has not been privy to those discussions which have been primarily between the city manager and the planning director. The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan indicated that there was a gap in service area in this location. There is some interest in creating a neighborhood park in this area. If the city were to split off some residential lots along Oberlin Rd., they would be able to recoup some of the money that was spent on the property and the costs of the future demolition. They could also try to expand the office complex zoning on the north side of the property. The city has contracted with a planning consultant to work with the planning

department to sketch out some preliminary concept plans. The city's largest intent is to subdivide the property in a meaningful way to achieve various mixed uses.

Burgess asked if cities make city blocks anymore or do they choose to do circular developments. Baumann replied that most development during his tenure suggests that most development was driven by developers creating a streetscape and a form that was marketable. For example, Reserve Ave. was built winding so you don't end up with a long straight sightline. The Planning Commission and the Planning and Zoning Code provide certain guidance with how properties can be developed. Generally the developer plays the lead role in bringing a proposal to the table then the city shapes it for the benefit of the community.

Makris asked what the relationship was between the parks, recreation, and Green Acres and the commission. Baumann responded that Green Acres would fill the gap in the service area; there is a gap between city parks. Sonner added that we have a wealth of parks but there is only one east-west thoroughfare. We need to be aware of anything that would increase traffic on Lorain St.; the street is not very wide.

Baumann stated that the commission could make some broad preliminary planning recommendations or they could wait and react to some concept plans. The commission will wait and discuss the concept plans when they become available.

### **Parks & Rec Strategic Plan**

Mucciolo brought up the subject of safe bike access through town. Baumann responded that Phase 1, the extension of the bike and trail system along Plum Creek, has already been accomplished at Park St. Park. Phase 2, which was proposed for this year's budget, got bumped to next year. This phase would include upgrades through Martin Luther King Park. Phase 3 would be Wright Park and would include the college's section over to S. Professor St. When we do come up with adequate funds to resurface/reconstruct S. Professor to the extent that is required, it is likely that we will create the bike lanes from College St. south to the bike path. Routes exist now but they are not in very good shape. Sonner asked if there will be a pathway between Park St. and Spring St. along the creek. Baumann replied that it has been contemplated but not planned at this time. Parts of the path stop and continue on private property before it gets back on city property.

Baumann stated that the strategic plan will be read on its 3<sup>rd</sup> and final reading at the next council meeting. Now is the time if the commission would like to make any recommendations or express their concern.

Sonner asked about the future of the diagonal bike path. He asked if the city had any plans to surrender the bike path to the county since they own the rest of the bike path. Baumann replied that it is not discussed in the strategic plan. He has not been privy to any other discussions on it. The city has crack sealed our sections twice and maintained the signs. We have probably spent \$35k in maintenance since it was built.

Mucciolo asked how much help Buildings and Grounds needs to eradicate the invasive species in town. Baumann replied that it is a human resource question. It appears, due to some impending staffing changes, that we might be able to make better progress next year and in subsequent years. Burgess asked about having a high school student work on it through a job program. Baumann replied that the challenge is getting rid of the materials in a responsible way. The Japanese Knotweed needs to be sprayed or treated to kill it at the root and then we need to go back through and plant other species behind that.

After review and discussion, a motion was made by Aaron Mucciolo and seconded by David Sonner for the following recommendation:

"The Open Space and Visual Environment Commission recommends that Oberlin City Council adopt the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan as presented."

The motion passed 4-0.

**Spring St. Park/Zion Village Garden**

Tabled until next meeting.

**Other Business**

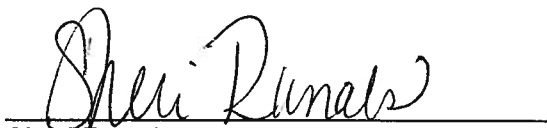
Burgess asked for an update on the old waterworks building. Baumann stated that they hired someone to stabilize the floor structure that burnt through and to conduct salvage operations with our assistance. The next step would be getting our insurance company, our architect and city staff inside the building to look at the extent of the damage. We already received a check from the insurance company. The back part of the building is badly burnt including the roof trusses. The original exterior wall served as a firewall; the brick wall was all the way up. Damages to the north of that wall are minimal. The heat was intense and must have burned for awhile; it burnt through historic 2 x 12's. The damage from the heat made it almost impossible to reclaim the back third of the building. The brick may be ok but the mortar is probably brittle. We need to get in there to get a close look. There have not been any conceptual planning discussions with the architect. We may use the insurance money to remove the back third of the building and to restore the structure to make it functional. There were materials and equipment lost. A large amount of fittings for Water Distribution were damaged.

Burgess passed out some information on Problems Associated with Suburban Deer Overabundance.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. Motion by Mucciolo; seconded by Makris.

  
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Wesley Burgess, Chair  
Open Space and Visual Environment Commission

  
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Sheri Runals  
Staff Support

Approved: 11/22/11