



**Open Space & Visual Environment Commission
Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 5:30 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room #2
85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio**

Members Present: Wes Burgess, Aaron Mucciolo, David Sokoll, David Sonner
Members Late: Eddie Miller
Others Present: Jeff Baumann, Staff Support; Sheri Runals, Staff Support
Others Absent: Kate Pilacky, Council Liaison
Others Present: Sundance, Donna Parrish

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

Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2011

Mucciolo moved to approve the February 22, 2011 minutes as presented. Sokoll seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Arbor Day

Mucciolo stated that the Arbor Day Sub-committee met to discuss Arbor Day events. Burgess will check with different groups to see if they will be attending the Arbor Day celebration on April 30th. Burgess stated that he spoke with the Boy Scouts but it was too far in advance for them to decide. Sokoll said that the Food Awareness Club at the high school may be interested in attending. Mucciolo stated that the event will start at 10 a.m. at Legion Field with several small presentations. Around 10:45 the group will head over to Oberlin Community Services. The plan is to have someone from OCS talk about their gardens. We will plant a few more trees, read the proclamation, look at the gardens, and view any available information while at OCS. There are no scheduled presentations. We will end the event with a picnic and the movie, 'It's Arbor Day, Charlie Brown'. The Oberlin Depot has already been reserved. The commission members will check into additional activities/speakers.

Mucciolo asked if there were any liability issues if fruit trees were planted on public property. Baumann responded that it is not if Dennis does not see it as a problem and they are maintained properly.

Miller stated that he will check with McKenzie Brown to see if she is interested in speaking. She planted spaghetti beds at the Boys and Girls Club.

Discussion was held on publicity. Members will distribute flyers.

Analytical Greenbelt Report

Burgess proposed that the commission members take the greenbelt seriously and come up with issues that will eventually be passed on to City Council. He would like ideas which would end up as a workable document. The most pertinent issues need to be discussed. Sonner stated that a pertinent issue is the attitude of the landowners. He suggested that we talk with Pittsfield and New Russia Townships. Miller added that the townships have not been approached about the greenbelt yet. A lot of them do not know about it. Sonner added that there has been a history of the OSVEC taking the lead in examining greenbelt issues. Other townships feel that Oberlin is pushing into their domain in a way that they have rejected. It should still be examined. Burgess would like to have a working document to take to other township meetings. Mucciolo added that there is process and there is product. There were concerns about both. We need to figure out how we can best gather information. We need to do some research – how is a greenbelt run, what other city has one, what are the costs and benefits, how much is government involved, what are crop yields in this part of the country, etc.

Sonner stated that 3 officials from New Russia Township were at a recent city council meeting. They reported on what was being done cooperatively and mutually between the city and the township. Someone should talk with the township about the greenbelt being part of the Oberlin Project. Our goal is to gather information to inform council.

Parrish stated that her mother is the clerk of Camden Township. They appreciate it when other city's keep them in the loop. They should be given the option of being involved throughout the entire process. This would gain their support. Miller added that the research needs to be done before a township will listen to us. Farmers need to see an incentive.

Burgess suggested hiring a consultant. Mucciolo responded that this topic falls under the purview of this commission. He suggested that the commission do some research and check with other cities to see what they have done. We need to define what a greenbelt is, what forms it could take and whether it has or has not worked. There needs to be a goal. Mucciolo, Miller and Sokoll volunteered to gather some information.

Flood Plains and Damage

Burgess stated that the recent flooding affected a large portion of property in Oberlin. He asked the members what they thought about the current coverage of flood plains. Mucciolo stated that he was shocked when he found out that a lot of people did not have sump pumps; this is why a lot of basements in town flooded. Mucciolo asked how much of the flooding was the result of older storm sewer lines. Baumann could not answer that question. Burgess asked where people stand on this issue and what we can do to limit the damage next time this happens. Miller commented on how much the cityscape has changed over the years due to flooding. Burgess said that the residents of Reserve Ave., Vine St., and Morgan St. were heavily grieved by the flooding. Baumann explained that based on our survey, there were relatively few basements that flooded on Reserve Ave. The issue was the outlet; the centerline of Rt. 58 is about 4.5' - 6' higher than the entrance to Reserve Ave. The outlet is to the south and it is inadequate to carry the flow away in a timely fashion. The infrastructure is in Pittsfield Township; it is not even in the city. Miller added that wetlands need to be kept in mind before land moving projects are undertaken. Baumann replied that it is taken into consideration.

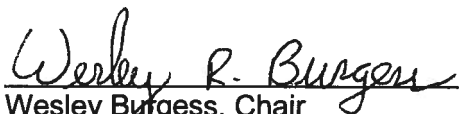
Mucciolo stated that there still would have been flooding even if people had rain gardens. Parrish added that rain gardens are only effective during the growing season.

Other Business

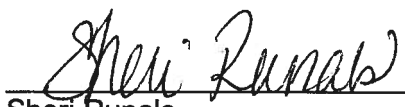
Sokoll will be attending a 'Digging In To Farms to Schools' conference sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. He will give a brief update at the next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. Motion by Sonner; seconded by Mucciolo.



Wesley Burgess, Chair
Open Space and Visual Environment Commission



Sheri Runals
Staff Support

Approved: 4, 2e, 11

