

CITY OF BEXLEY NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

EMBRACING OUR INNER BOB DYLANS WELCOMING NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS DREXEL AVENUE PAVES AHEAD PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES ONE BEXLEY UPDATE JEFFREY WOODS FESTIVAL

Did you know that 2023 marked a decade since the City of Bexley earned its municipal arboretum designation? Learn more at bexleyarboretum.org

From the Mayor's Desk EMBRACING OUR INNER BOB DYLANS



One of my earliest distinctly Bexley memories, other than perhaps the circular rug next to the piano in the Christ Lutheran preschool Rainbow Room, might be the storied high dive at the Bexley pool... looking

up at it in awestruck wonder, waiting to be old enough to try it out. Sadly the high dive isn't there anymore, much to my dismay and more than one hearty attempt to bring it back on my part (insurance companies are killjoys!). And where once a funeral home occupied space at Main and Parkview, there's now a bustling mixed-use development with restaurants, smoothies, and offices for growing Bexley businesses, and an elegant condominium complex in The Alexander. Not very long ago, Main Street used to be five lanes of solid asphalt, where today it is defined in its center by picturesque, calming trees that are a signature element of our Bexley streetscape.

As you read this, the finishing touches are being put on a new pond at Commonwealth Park. We found, when excavating the site, that there used to be tennis courts there—a bygone improvement to the park that would seem out of place if we were to propose it there today.

Examples abound of the slow and often beautiful changes that come to enhance and define our community spaces. What hasn't changed? That character that remains strong and unfettered and is distinctly Bexley—a community built around education "Come gather 'round people Wherever you roam And admit that the waters Around you have grown..."

and life-long learning. A growing green canopy above; an aspiration for timeless material choices in architecture and streetscape; an infrastructure designed at a human scale to connect neighbors and create common spaces.

Our region is in a period of astonishing growth. As a landlocked first-ring suburb, there is no escaping that we will be shaped by it. As housing trends toward ever increasing demand, a regional housing void will result in higher housing costs and increasing rates of housing insecurity and homelessness across the region, all of which will impact our community in a variety of ways. We have a part to play in ensuring that we are helping to fill the regional demand for housing, and doing so in a way that punctuates Bexley's role as an interdependent and connected neighborhood that will continue to stay rooted in those core community values.

As fall's bright colors have given way to winter snow, you might have noticed work finally commencing at the old gas station at Chelsea and Main; we've struck a deal with the owner of that site to have it cleaned and made available for development after years of laying groundwork to make that possible. The Trinity Apartment complex has a proposal that has come



The old high dive at the Bexley pool. I remember it seeming so much taller than this picture suggests...

before city boards and received conditional approval for a new mixed-use project with restaurant, retail, office, and apartments. Construction on the new COhatch will soon be underway, and Katalina's just announced they'll soon join our ranks of local restaurants on Main Street. New cherry trees line the Drexel medians, engineered to help slow traffic and provide safer connections for students traveling from the west of Drexel. Change is, indeed, a constant, and every day we have an opportunity to embrace that change with an optimistic resolve to continue to craft Bexley into an increasingly open and welcoming community, anchored by the best of the values that define us. Here's to taking that journey together—see you soon around Bexley!

Mayor Ben Kessler

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FROM THE COUNCIL DAIS

Congratulating President Lampke, Welcoming New Council Members Hurley and Silverman

Monique Lampke, Council President mlampke@bexley.org

Monique Lampke is the current President of Bexley City Council. Having been elected to office in 2017 and reelected in 2021, she previously served as the Judiciary and Strategic Committee Chair as well as the Safety and Health Chair. She received her B.A. in psychology and political science from Stanford University and her J.D. from The Ohio State University College of Law. She is the immediate Past President of the Bexley Women's Club. Her passions include her children and adorable rescue dog, volleyball, and cheering on The Ohio State Buckeyes and Cincinnati Bengals.

Danny Hurley

dhurley@bexley.org

Danny grew up near Dayton and has lived in Bexley since 2018. He and his wife, a Bexley High School graduate (class of '05), live in North Bexley with their two children, both of whom are enrolled at the JCC and will attend Maryland Elementary. Professionally, Danny has nearly two decades of experience in federal, state, and local politics. He currently serves as Vice President of Capitol Consulting Group, a lobbying firm based in Columbus. Danny is the Chair of the Strategic and Health Committee and serves as the

Council liaison to Capital University, Bexley CIC, the Board of Health, and Jewish Family Services. In his free time Danny is an avid reader and enjoys golfing and playing soccer. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University.

Looking for more information on your other City Council representatives? Find contact information and bios online at bexley.org/council.



asilverman@bexley.org

Alex was elected in 2024 to Bexley City Council and currently serves as Chair of the Service and Environment Committee. Alex is from Columbus and moved to Bexley in 2018. Graduating from Eastmoor Academy in 2004, he attended The Ohio State University for Hospitality Management and became a trained chef by Le Cordon Bleu in Pittsburgh, PA. Alex currently works for N. Wasserstrom as an account manager for national food service companies. Driven by a commitment to service and community, Alex is a member of the Bexley Events and Celebrations Committee, Montrose PTO, Bexley Minority Parent Alliance, and the Bexley Police Citizens Academy Alumni. His goals on Council are to work to bring family-friendly development, residential housing accessibility, and to enhance the community's togetherness through a shared vision. Outside of Council and professional life, Alex has been married to his best friend, Brittany, for 12 years. They have two children, Leon and Lillian, who attend Montrose Elementary and are active in Bexley youth football and cheerleading.

Public Hearing Set for Potential Zoning Code Updates

A public hearing has been scheduled for February 13 for proposed amendments to Bexley's Zoning Code in the form of Ordinance 04-24. The goal of the ordinance is to unify the City's Zoning Code across our three commercial corridors and align our code with the Joint Livingston Avenue Plan. The plan, which has been awarded \$15 million in federal funding for infrastructure improvements, supports a more unified, walkable, and vibrant Livingston Avenue streetscape. View the plan at *bexley.org/plans*.

Specifically, the ordinance proposes changing and expanding the commercial zoning district on Livingston Avenue from Commercial Service to Mixed Use Commercial with a newly-formed Livingston Overlay. Additionally, this ordinance addresses conditional uses to clarify residential







conditional uses in commercial districts; a proposed change that arises out of recent legal challenges to the provision of a conditional use permit for the proposed housing at 2300 East Livingston, and is designed to preserve the original intent of the Zoning Code's conditional use provisions.

The proposed ordinance had a second reading at the January 23 City Council meeting, and a third reading and public hearing is planned for the February 13 City Council meeting. We encourage you to view the ordinance and exhibits online at bexley.org/publicdocuments and to attend any of the upcoming meetings to learn more and share your perspective. If you are unable to attend in person, City Council meetings can also be viewed on the City's YouTube. Comments can be submitted to City Council at bexley.org/council.

APRIL

Earth and Arbor Month Festivities Abound, Including Activities at the Fairy Garden Installation at Schneider Park





PAVING AHEAD ON DREXEL

Work on the first phase of streetscape improvements on Drexel is nearing completion. Work to date includes the installation of curbs, gutters, curb ramps, sidewalk panel replacement, new medians and bump-outs. Notably, perimeter lighting is coming soon to the medians to help improve visibility at night. Designed with traffic calming in mind, the new medians will help to improve safety on the street overall, especially at the newly protected pedestrian crossings.

Phase II, namely resurfacing and striping, is awaiting final bidding by the Ohio Department of

Transportation (ODOT). The City anticipates ODOT moving forward this summer, with substantial construction completion by fall 2024. In the meantime, City crews plan to restripe the existing pavement.

The City appreciates neighbors' patience during this process. Please continue to drive with caution in the area as final construction punch-list items are underway. For information on the City's 2024 street projects, stay tuned to the City's website and subscribe to the Bexley Blast at *bexley.org/blast*.

2200 EAST MAIN

The review process continues for the proposed redevelopment at 2200 East Main Street (the Trinity Apartments site). To date, the proposal has undergone preliminary reviews at multiple City boards and commissions, and substantial feedback has been provided by the Architectural Review Board (ARB), the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning (BZAP), and the Tree and Public Gardens Commission (TPGC).

Most recently, the proposal was heard by BZAP at their December meeting at which they approved a number of variance requests as well as a Certificate of Appropriateness. A number of conditions were tied to the approvals, which means that the developer will now incorporate those conditions into updated plans for subsequent review. Up next, updates to the proposal will be heard at a January 31 ARB Special Meeting.

While reviews like this often represent a long and sometimes polarizing process, the City would like to thank all community members for their engagement to date. Similarly, we are grateful for the volunteers on the involved boards for their diligence and commitment to in-depth review of this and all projects, and for the amazing amount of expertise and insight they bring.

Proposal Synopsis:

- **Use:** Mixed-use restaurant/retail, medical office, apartment residential with structured public parking garage
- Proposed Restaurant/Retail Space: +/- 11,100 square feet
- Proposed Medical/Office Space: +/- 12,500 square feet
- Proposed Unit Count: +/- 232 units
- Parking Count: +/- 300 spaces

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

MAY

COSI Bexley Super Science Fest

City Council Adopts Universal Recycling Ordinance

Main Event Kick-off





Juneteenth Cookout Celebrates Freedom, Food and Friendship

Natural Dog Park Opens





Schneider Park Splash Pad Opens

Best Fourth of July Celebration (and Floats!) Bexley's Ever Seen



king garage square feet uare feet For current design submittals and relevant meeting recordings, visit bexley.org/2200-main







AUGUST

Bexley Police Department Hosts Inaugural National Night Out Event

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTED

Adopted 2023, Updated Daily: New Plan Calls for Further Community Input, Ongoing Component Plan Refinement



"We have a vocabulary, a perspective and a posture today that we didn't have even three years ago. Our world and the way we see it has changed, and so, we go into this strategic plan update with a strengthened vision of and a blueprint for a Bexley community that is resilient, forward-thinking, creative, energized, and prepared." —Mayor Kessler

Following a multi-year public engagement and development process (slowed by the pandemic and other major planning endeavors), the 2023 Strategic Plan was officially adopted by City Council at their December 12 meeting. Throughout the plan, the City's focus on equity, sustainability, and social services is brought into sharp focus. And unlike previous iterations, this updated plan incorporates the City's other recent master plans and studies. But just because the plan is now adopted, doesn't mean we're done seeking input on the future of Bexley. Stay tuned for further feedback opportunities as component plans are developed. *View the full 2023 Strategic Plan at bexley.org/plan.*

Active Component Plans

Zero Waste Plan (2017) Southwest Bexley Framework (2017) Commonwealth Park Master Plan (2018) Bike Friendly Bexley (2019) DEI Strategy (2020) Joint Livingston Avenue Plan (2022)

Component Plans Under Update/Development Climate Action and Public Art & Placemaking Plan (2024)

Climate Action and Sustainability Plan (2023-2024)

Jeffrey Park Strategy (2023-2024)

Land Use Strategy (2023-2024) Main Street / Commercial Design Guidelines Update (2024-2025)

Strategic Plan Primary Goal Areas

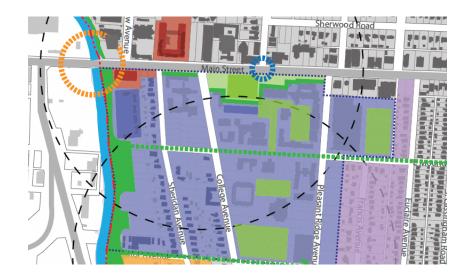
Community Health and Wellness Development Infrastructure Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Public Safety Recreation Sustainability

Recreation & Parks

Holtzmann Landfill

Strategic Plan (2024-2025)

Redevelopment Plan (2024-2026)



Land Use Strategy Refresh Underway: Give Us Your Feedback

The City is in the process of updating our Land Use Strategy. Adopted in 2011, the Land Use Strategy is a guiding document that identifies development challenges and priorities for ensuring meaningful redevelopment where appropriate. Now over a decade after original adoption, and with the regional population boom and housing shortage in mind, the Land Use Commission has been relaunched with the goal of refreshing the Strategy to align with emerging best practices and trends impacting business, housing, and community redevelopment.

The Commission hosted a public workshop in November 2023 and is now looking for more feedback. Take a brief online survey to share your ideas for civic improvements, beautification and desired end-uses for Bexley's key commercial corridors. We're also looking for feedback on the future of housing and the ideal regulations surrounding accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Get started at *bexley.org/landuse*.

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW OCTOBER SEPTEMBER NOVEMBER One Bexley Gathering **Electric Aggregation Bexley Receives** Program Launches SolSmart Gold on Drexel Designation Bexley Receives Ohio HEARTSafe Bexley EPA's Gold Encouraging Launches Environmental Excellence Award

CODE ENFORCEMENT CORNER

Winter is here and we'll certainly have some snowy days before spring's arrival. Please remember Bexley requires home and business owners to clear snow and ice from public sidewalks and walkways within twenty-four hours. Please also take special care to keep our streets and gutters clear when snow plows will be clearing our roadways. Leaves, yard waste, or any other objects are extremely hazardous during plowing, so keep the streets and gutters clear.

Pro-tip: Avoid the "second shovel!" For heavier snowfall events, shovel snow to the right side of your driveway (facing the street). That way, when our plows pass through your street, they won't push your shoveled snow back over your driveway.

DECEMBER

Commonwealth Park Pond Substantially Complete

City Council Adopts 2023 Strategic Plan



Multiple Year of the Parks (YOTP) projects will wrap up in 2024 (you guessed it, some of the projects took longer to cross the finish the line than anticipated, but they're worth the wait!). Visit bexley.org/yotp for more details.

The "Jear" Continues

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2024



Did you know that Schneider Park is now home to a Birch Walk?! A Birch Walk is an interactive walking path surrounded by birch trees, specifically designed to celebrate Robert Frost's beloved poem Birches. Final touches are being put on stone stairs which will lead visitors down to the new public fire pit and seating area (pictured right) which we hope to open soon.

We're pleased to announce that the City was successful in our grant application to the

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) for the Schneider Park pedestrian and bike bridge, which will be situated just north of the Astor park entrance. The grant award of \$500,000 will go a long way and solidifies this project moving forward. Expect to see work underway on the bridge soon.

Up next: We're collecting community feedback on features for the skate/bike spot. Hunger Skateparks is collaborating with the Recreation Department and a working group of skate enthusiasts to develop initial concepts. Check out workshop details on the next page for input opportunities on the park design. Can't make the workshop? An online survey will soon be available at *bexley.org/yotp*.

Commonwealth Park

Commonwealth Pond is officially open - marked by a daring "polar plunge" in December. Work on the gateway features and arbor walk (connecting the northwest and southwest corners of the park) is underway with plantings coming in spring.

Up next: The City hosted a public workshop on January 24 to help determine next steps for the Columbia Connector. Did you miss the meeting? Send us your thoughts at *communicator@bexley.org*. A reminder that Columbia Avenue continues to be closed between Commonwealth North and Commonwealth South for utility work.

Outdoor Reading Room

Approvals are in place for the initial design concepts for the pocket park on Main Street between Torat Emet and Bexley Public Library. Architectural, engineering, and structural drawings are being fine-tuned to be resubmitted for public bid. Stay tuned as updates develop for this longawaited park located in the heart of our community!



WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOTP THUS FAR...





Athletic Fields





Main Street Trailhead

Havenwood Park Refresh

GET INVOLVED IN THE FUN: COMING INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

With multiple YOTP projects still underway, there are ample opportunities to give your input on design features and more. We hope to see you out at one of the following workshops. All workshops take place at Bexley City Hall (2242 E. Main Street).

5:30 PM, FEBRUARY 8: Jeffrey Park Preservation and Enhancement Public Workshop 6:00 PM, FEBRUARY 21: Schneider Park Skate Spot Final Design Review





GREEN BEXLEY NEWSBITES

Bexley Earns SolSmart Gold Designation

Bexley has officially been awarded a Solsmart Gold designation! The designation recognizes the City's commitment to streamlining the process for on-site solar and ensuring our staff and community have access to resources to help encourage solar adoption. Ready to go solar? Get started at bexley.org/solar.





Clean Energy Aggregation Update

Did you know that Bexley residents collectively saved over \$155,000 in the first month of our new electric aggregation program?! That's a lot of green! (See what we did there?) Now a full quarter into the program, the City remains committed to keeping you informed, including regular updates on AEP's residential "price to compare." For the generation supply portion of your bill for January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024 AEP's price to compare is **\$0.1132/kWh**, which is still well above the rate secured through Dynegy which provides renewable electricity at **\$0.0686/kWh** through May 2025. Learn more about the program at bexley.org/aggregation and stay tuned to the Bexley Blast for regular price to compare updates.



ALL ABOUT EARTH AND ARBOR DAY

Treeadore and the rest of the Green Bexley Team invite you to join us in celebrating all things trees at the Earth and Arbor Day Festival on Saturday, April 20! The morning kicks off with a Community Clean-Up event, followed by a festival at Schneider Park. Stay tuned for more details as the celebration approaches!

Earth and Arbor Day activities are just one of the many ways we celebrate Green Bexley and the Bexley Arboretum. If the day-of events don't fit your schedule, visit us online at *bexley.org/arborday* for a full list of activities including Bexley Library Book Club opportunities and our self-guided tree tour of Bexley.

SAVE THE DATES: JEFFREY WOODS FESTIVAL

A beloved Bexley tradition continues! Help celebrate the Bexley Arboretum at our annual Jeffrey Woods Festival and Maple Syrup Workshop! Play lumberjack for the day with a sawmill demonstration, axe sharpening, woodworking projects, and of course Bexley's signature Kevelden Maple Syrup production. Register in advance at www.bexleyrec.com. *Cost is \$15 per participant.*

Maple Syrup Tapping

February 24, 9:00 - 11:00 am

Meet arborists from the City of Bexley, our local Scout Troop, and our maple syrup consultant to learn how to identify and tap maple trees and install buckets for sap collection.

Maple Syrup Production

March 2, 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Join Mayor Kessler and our maple syrup crew to evaporate the maple sap and turn it into maple syrup. It takes 42 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup!

Wood Chop Shop

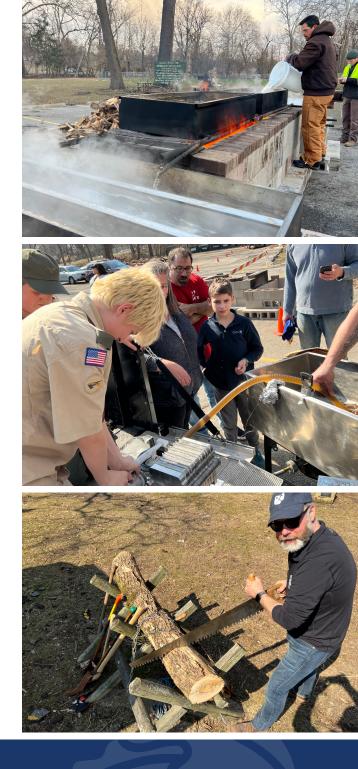
March 2, Time Slots Vary

Join a community of would-be-lumberjacks as they process downed city trees (removed by City arborists for reasons other than being turned into firewood). Participants are welcome to take home as much firewood as they can help process during the 90-minute program. Firewood from the Chop Shop will also be available this spring at the new Schneider Park fire pit for use by anyone interested!

Sugar Maple Spotting

Bexley's annual Jeffrey Woods Festival offers a chance for the community to make a giant batch of maple syrup straight from the sugar maples abundant throughout Jeffrey Forest. But do you know how to spot a sugar maple (Acer *saccharum*) on your property?

As the trees turn next fall, look for vibrant leaves with five lobes that are deeply cut. Like



all maples, the leaves and branches grow in opposite orientations. You can also look at the cupped vertical bark to help pinpoint that what you have is a sugar maple. If you have a confirmed sugar maple tree, you can tap it and make your own syrup! Or join us for the Jeffrey Woods Festival to learn more and to celebrate the perks of living in an urban arboretum.



Together with Bexley City Schools and Bexley Public Library, we are working to build a community free from racism and prejudice in all forms, where all residents and visitors are valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

ONE BEXLEY WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS



Following a series of community input sessions as well as initial programming that included author visits, community conversations, and the One Bexley Gathering on Drexel and Main in fall of 2023, the partnering organizations have selected a project coordinator to continue to develop the One Bexley concept and launch a full fledged program in 2024. Read on to meet our coordinated team and stay tuned to *bexley.org/onebexley* for updates.



Lachandra (La) Baker

La was selected as the One Bexley Project Coordinator based upon her breadth of experience in crafting thoughtful and innovative programs around diversity, equity, inclusion, and restorative justice. As a program participant with One Bexley from the start, La is hitting the ground running and working with the support of Steve Shapiro (see more information about Steve below) to craft a full-fledged project proposal and to begin to implement programming and resources around the One Bexley goals.

Steve Shapiro

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Steve most recently served as the Leader of Experiential Learning and Community Engagement for Bexley City Schools and he also helped to lead the Mosaic Project. His background in education and experiential learning equips him well to assist La with program development and community facilitation.



POLICE **DEPARTMENT UPDATE**

Fall 2023 marked the one year anniversary of Chief Lewis's leadership of the Bexley Police Department and over the past twelve months the department has achieved many great things, including the successful implementation of routine business checks; extensive training for Officer Shawver and the department's new canine bomb detection officer, Pia; a cookout luncheon to honor department retirees; and the enormously successful inaugural National Night Out event.

Stay up-to-date with the department by following them on their Facebook page, applying for the next Citizens Police Academy, or stopping by an upcoming community event (an officer is sure to be present to say hello)!

All programs and initiatives of the Bexley Police Department are rooted in the department's key principles of Fairness, Integrity, Respect, and Empathy. As new programs and initiatives are developed, and as existing practices are examined, practices and policies will ensure that the enforcement of the law and the investigation of crimes is conducted in a fair and equitable manner, while continuing to prioritize the safety of all.





HEARTSAFE BEXLEY

Fun Fact: Over 240 Bexley community members have participated in the HEARTSafe Bexley program since its launch this fall. Join the movement to help improve survivorship of sudden cardiac arrest by participating in an upcoming CPR/ AED class. The classes are free and open to anyone in the community. Register at *bexley.org/heartsafe.*



City of Bexley 2242 East Main Street Bexley, Ohio 43209



UPCOMING EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS



TEXAS HOLD'EM FUNDRAISER | February 2, 6:00 pm **Q** Jeffrey Mansion

You've gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em at the Bexley Community Foundation's annual Poker Tournament! 21+. Register: *bexley.org/poker*



JEFFREY WOODS FESTIVAL | March 2, 8:00 AM-2:00 PM Jeffrey Park

Play lumberjack for the day with a sawmill demo, axe sharpening, wood working, and of course some Bexley Maple Syrup making! Details: *bexley.org/jeffreywoodsfest*



2024 STATE OF THE COMMUNITY | March 7, 6:30 PM St. Charles Preparatory Academy, Convocation Center

Learn about 2023 highlights and 2024 initiatives from Mayor Kessler and other community leaders. Register: *bexley.org/soc*



GREEN BEXLEY CLEAN-UP DAY | April 20, 8:00-11:00 AM **O** Delmar Drive, Near Bexley Police Station

Dispose of unwanted household items, furniture, prescription drugs, batteries and other hard-to-recycle items. Details: *bexley.org/cleanupday*



THE MAIN EVENT KICK-OFF | May 3 **O** Main Street Lawn at Capital

Join us for Bexley's signature outdoor movie series, including live music, family activities, crafts, food trucks and more. Details: *bexley.org/mainevent*



BEXLEY POOL OPENING DAY | May 25 David H. Madison Community Pool Dreaming about summer and warmer days ahead?

Us too! Don't forget pool membership sales start March 1. Details: *bexley.org/pool*



TREE TAPPING | February 24, 9:00-11:00 AM **Q** Jeffrey Park

EGG DASH | March 30, 12:00 PM

Details: bexley.org/eggdash

Q Jeffrey Mansion

Learn how to identify and tap maple trees and install buckets for sap collection with City arborists and Scout Troop 166. Register: *bexley.org/jeffreywoodsfest*



EARTH AND ARBOR DAY | April 20, 10:00 AM-1:30 PM Schneider Park

It's a mad dash to see who can collect the most eggs! From start to finish, this event only takes a few minutes.

Lend a hand at our community clean-up, then celebrate all things green at a sustainability-centric festival in Schneider Park. Details: *greenbexley.org*



COSI SUPER SCIENCE BLOCK PARTY | May 3, 6:00-8:00 PM *Q* Main Street Lawn at Capital

Let's get geeky! Enjoy a mini science fair (stations of hands-on science activities), science inspired arts and crafts, food trucks and more. Details: *bexley.org/COSI*



Stop by weekly through October 24 for your fill of fresh fruits, veggies, artisan jams, baked goods, live music, and more! Details: *commongreensohio.org/bexley*



JAZZ IN THE PARK KICK-OFF | May 27, 5:00-7:00 PM Very Havenwood Park

The City's free outdoor concert series returns this summer featuring Central Ohio bands, food trucks and more. Details: *bexley.org/jazz*

