**Minutes**

**Bexley Tree and Public Gardens Commission**

**Wednesday, November 15, 2023 – 4:00 to 6:00 PM - Bexley City Hall**

**Bexley, OH 43209**

1. **Convening the Meeting:**
2. Call to Order/Call the Roll – Susan Quintenz, Chair

**Roll Call:**

Voting Members Present: Sheila Straub, Jim Wilson,

Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn

Alternates: Barb Giller

Absent:

Excused: Larry Helman and Dave Wakeman

Non-Voting Present: Mayor Kessler; Grant Archer;

Monette Friedlander, Spencer Martin, Ellen Bowden

1. Establish a quorum: appointment of alternates as needed
2. Approval of Minutes of October 18, 2023 – Mrs. Quintenz

Table of Minutes of October 18, 2023 – Mrs. Quintenz

Celeste Williams made a motion to Table – ‘the minutes of the October 18, 2023 for the December 18 meeting.’

Motion seconded by Sheila Straub Vote 7- 0 - passed.

For: Sheila Straub, Jim Wilson, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Barb Giller

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Larry Helman, and Dave Wakeman

1. Additions to agenda – Mrs. Quintenz

No new discussion items to add to the agenda

1. Announcements/Small Victories/Comments:
	1. December meeting is on a MONDAY, December 18, 2023
	2. Other

Ellen Bowden provided an update for the Trees of Bexley, so far twenty-nine thousand three hundred and seventy-one dollars ($29,371) with eighty-four (84) donors, seventy-four (74) trees can be purchased to help infill the community. The goal is 100 trees.

1. **Requests from Residents:**

No request from residents.

1. **Review of Landscape Applications – Elena Andrews, Staff Consultant**
2. 2200 East Main Street – EDGE/Continental Real Estate

Monette Friedlander presented the staff review for 2200 E Main St.

This project is currently under review by the City of Bexley. The ARB tabled the application on 11/9/23 to be reviewed in December followed by a review by BZAP. No substantial changes to the site plan and landscape are anticipated so the owner has decided to come to the 11/15/23 Tree Commission meeting for review. The Tree Commission is to review and provide a recommendation to BZAP of the landscape plan within the property limits of 2200 E. Main St and the street improvements in the Right-of-Way immediately adjacent to the property. The Tree Commission is to review the and vote on the proposed curb cut off Main Street per Ordinance 1262.01(m) which states: Construction of an access drive which requires the removal of trees within the public right-of-way shall receive the prior approval of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission which may condition its approval on the number, type, size and location of replacement trees and the charge, if any to the property owner to compensate the City for the loss of the tree or trees being removed. The proposed changes to the Bexley Square parking lot are not part of the review at this time. The Bexley Community Improvement Corporations (CIC), City of Bexley, Continental, and Edge are in preliminary discussions regarding the design and improvements. The Tree Commission can provide preliminary feedback if they desire with the understanding that a fully developed design will be submitted to the TPGC for a formal review in the future months

Tree Removal and Canopy Coverage A total of 58 trees will be removed on the site and in the Right of Way (39 deciduous and 19 evergreen). See Sheet L1.00. A total of 128 new trees will be provided (70 deciduous and 58 evergreen). See sheet L2.21. The existing tree canopy coverage on the site is 37%. Including the street trees and canopy in the Bexley Square parking lot, the coverage is 45%. The proposed tree canopy coverage on the site is 18% increasing to 24% at full maturity (a decrease of 13-19%). Including the street trees and canopy in the Bexley Square parking lot, the coverage is 27% increasing to 38% at full maturity (a decrease of 7-18%). It is important to note that the existing building and pavement coverage is 50%. The proposed building and pavement coverage is 66%, an increase of 16%. There is an opportunity to provide larger shade trees in the bed between the garage entries on the west elevation of the building facing the Bexley Square parking lot. Currently (5) Street Keeper Honeylocust and (4) Seven-son Flower trees are in the bed between the building and lawn strip adjacent to the sidewalk. If the lawn strip were to be removed and the bed increased, larger shade trees could be planted in this area to increase the overall canopy coverage. It is the staff’s recommendation to remove the lawn, provide a larger bed with larger shade trees and additional shrubs/perennials to fit with the overall design.

Street Trees: Twelve London Plane tree street trees are requested to be removed. Given the change in grade and adherence to the Main Street Guidelines, the removal of the trees is necessary. Efforts to try and protect the trees in place (such as providing elevated tree well) would not only interfere with the footprint of the building, but the construction would most likely damage a significant portion of the roots thereby effectively killing the trees. Ten new Exclamation London Planetree are proposed at 30-feet on center. They will sit in a continuous 10’ wide channel of structural soil per the Tree Commission’s previous request. See sheet L2.01. There is a break in the row of street trees that identifies the central plaza accessed off the Main Street Sidewalk. The street trees are located in planters edged with granite curbs and filled with Wintercreeper. Limestone is the material used in the current planters along Main Street and the material should match the adjacent conditions. The plan does call for the brick border immediately behind the curb which will tie into the overall Main Street design. See sheet L3.01 While there has been a lot of debate currently about the use of Wintercreeper, the plant is currently installed in the medians along Main Street as well as most of the tree planters in the sidewalk. The Tree Commission and City should have a larger citywide discussion about the use and proposed replacement of this material and develop a plan for its replacement if desired. For visual consistency and ease of maintenance, Wintercreeper is an appropriate plant. It is the staff’s recommendation to change the granite curbs to limestone curbs, noting that the size and installation should match the immediately adjacent tree planter installations. Plant Selection Overall, the proposed plants are appropriate for the site and light conditions and offer seasonal interest. See sheet L2.21 for the plant list. Cross referencing the Arboretum Tree and Shrub List and considering recent City projects, this project introduces (6) species not currently listed as part of Bexley’s arboretum. They are: • Quercus bicolor ‘JFS-KW12’ PP 23632 / American Dream Swamp White Oak • Betula platyphylla ‘Fargo’ / Dakota Pinnacle Birch Tree • Juniperus chinensis ‘Keteleeri’ / Keteleeri Juniper • Syringa meyeri ‘Palibin’ / Dwarf Korean Liliac • Viburnum carlesii / Koreanspice Viburnum • Juniperus chinensis ‘Sea Green’ / Sea Green Juniper. Irrigation The project will be irrigated. See sheet L2.31. The tree wells along Main Street are shown to have drip irrigation. The City does not typically provide irrigation in the tree wells. Staff recommends that the City Arborist confirm if irrigation in the tree wells should be included or not.

Maintenance Plan: The project includes a maintenance plan which includes lawn care (which may or may not be needed), Landscape Bed Care, Tree Care, General Maintenance, and Manual Watering Guidelines. See sheet L2.21. Overall, the maintenance plan represents a typical commercial maintenance contract. If the project is to be irrigated, the guideline could be renamed ‘Watering Guidelines’. The Street Trees may require the Treegator bags if the irrigation system is into installed in the tree planters at least for the first year until the trees are established. It is the staff recommendation to amend the Maintenance Plan’s Manual Watering Guidelines pending the Tree Commission’s discussion. Planters (7) planters are proposed along Main Street on the west end of the south elevation where the sidewalk widens. In response to concerns about disproportionate planters, Development Guidelines for Tenant Improvements was proposed on sheet L2.21. This gives guidelines for site furnishings and lighting, including minimum sizes for planters and recommended materials. It is the staff recommendation that a note be included that all site furnishings (including planters, benches, tables & chairs, and trash receptacles) along public streets and corridors be submitted to the City of Bexley for staff review and approval.

Staff Recommendations: It is the staff recommendation to recommend approval of the landscape plan to BZAP as presented with the above comments incorporated. It is the staff recommendation to approve the new curb cut and removal of street trees in the Right-of way with the condition that the existing egress curb cut from the Bexley Square parking lot be removed and repaired to match adjacent conditions.

 The designer agrees with the staff report regarding the loss of canopy. A meeting with the CIC to discuss the overall concept is in process. The curb cut has been discussed and the city has advised to abandon the right hand turn onto Main St. for safety reasons. The Tree Commission also expressed their concern with the structure soil. The plan is to use structure soil and not cells and was asked to consider soil cells. The city has also provided a standard for structural soil. The Tree Commission will make recommendations to BZAP and the Commission will review a landscape plan for the parking lot and access road on the west (between The Alexander and the gateway building).

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘the request to locate access drive to west side of the building structure in regards to section 1262.O1(m) of the Bexley Ordinance to grant approval for a curb cut along that access road with the following conditions: approval of a landscape be provided by the owner of Bexley Square Parking lot that includes the removal of the existing curb cut on the western side of the parking lot, with such a plan approved before construction begins on the access road; and presentation of plan for reviewed within three (3) months to mitigate the loss of the two (2) city trees.’

Motion seconded by Celeste Williams Vote 7- 0 - passed.

For: Sheila Straub, Jim Wilson, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Barb Giller

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Larry Helman, and Dave Wakeman

Jim Wilson made a motion to Table – ‘2200 E Main and hold a special meeting 4:00-5:30 on November 27 at City Hall Council Chambers to review the landscape plan.’

Motion seconded by Sheila Straub Vote 7- 0 - passed.

For: Sheila Straub, Jim Wilson, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Barb Giller

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Larry Helman, and Dave Wakeman

1. 481 N. Drexel Ave – Angela Niermeyer

Monette Friedlander presented the staff review for 481 N Drexel.

This landscape installation to screen a wood fence was originally reviewed at the 11-16-22 TPGR Meeting. It was approved with the following conditions: Project is approved with the following conditions: 1. Homeowner to add evergreens at the east end of the fence in front of the climbing hydrangeas. Design to be approved by staff. 2. Homeowner understands that if the Magnolias fail, they will either need to be replaced or return to the Tree and Public Gardens Commission with a revised plan for the area where the Magnolias are located. The landscape was installed but not per the approved plan and conditions. David Hrdlicka, Code Enforcement Officer, sent Angela Niermeyer a letter stating two options for compliance. The options for compliance are as follows: 1. Install the missing landscape plants from the approved plan reviewed on 11/16/22 by the Tree and Public Gardens Commission. The missing plants include (3) Hydrangea petiolaris (Climbing Hydrangea) on the east and west ends of the fence and evergreen shrubs in front of the (2) Climbing Hydrangea on the east end. The landscape staff recommendation is to add a minimum of (5) Boxwood (#3 installation size) to match the nearby existing Boxwood. There is not a need to remove the additional (3) Magnolia grandiflora ‘Bracken’s Brown Beauty’. Only (5) were proposed in the original approved plan. It is acceptable to have the (8) trees in that area. 2. Revise the plan to match what has been installed and return to the Tree Commission to explain the changes and seek approval for the revisions. The homeowner chose to return to the Tree Commission with a revised plan that has (8) Brackens Brown Magnolia trees evenly spaced in front of the fence. The reasons stated for the change are that the ‘purchased evergreen bushes did not look aesthetically pleasing’ and that ‘(3) additional, larger (8 ft) than proposed (5-6 ft) trees were available. The Bracken’s Brown Beauty Southern Magnolia will grow to be 20-30’ tall by 15-25’ wide. It has large white blooms in May/June and can live in full sun to part shade. The tree placement is appropriate for the light conditions as well as placed far enough away from the fence to allow growth into the full mature size. It is an evergreen tree so will provide year-round interest and eventually screen the majority of the fence. The repetition of the same tree is an aesthetic choice that fits with the overall design of the home and homeowner’s desire for a more modern appearance in the side yard associated with the pool. With the City’s goal to increase the overall tree canopy coverage, having (8) trees instead of (5) is a benefit to the community. The staff recommendation is to approve the revised plan as presented.

Jim Wilson made a motion to Reject – ‘The current landscape plan for 481 N Drexel and to return with correct planting and layered effect no later than March 2024.’

Motion seconded by Linda Zupnick Vote 7- 0 - passed.

For: Sheila Straub, Jim Wilson, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Barb Giller

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Larry Helman, and Dave Wakeman

1. **Staff Report: Grant Archer, Bexley Urban Forester, Assistance Service Director**
2. Issues from Residents
3. Other
4. **Mayor’s Report: Ben Kessler, Mayor, City of Bexley**
5. Land Use Strategy Commission Workshop update
6. Strategic Plan Workshop -- November 16th.
7. 2024 City Budget update

The initial draft of the budget was presented to city council. Mayor Kessler shared the Tree Commission budget for a seventy-thousand five hundred ($7,500) line item. Also, in the budget is to add three (3) new staff members to the forestry department.

1. **Staff Report: Elena Andrews and Monette Friedlander, Staff Consultants**
2. Landscape Installation Inspections
3. **Old Business:**
4. Planet Bexley – Earth Day, Arbor Day, Fairy Village, Love Your Alley
5. Tree Plotter – Update – Jim Wilson. Vice Chair

The tree plotter Is live and on the city’s website.

1. Tree Commission related ordinances revision– Jim Wilson

The ordinance revision is still in process. The city does not have a current tree planting and maintenance plan for the city. Vice Chair, would like to form a small group to assist in making a plan and has asked for volunteers.

1. **New Business**
2. Developing written plan for such municipal care and planting program per Ordinance § 288.03
3. **City Council Liaison: Lori Ann Feibel**
4. City Council Updates
5. **Adjourn**

**Next regular meeting is MONDAY, December 18, 2023 – 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. A special meeting will be held November 27, 2023 – 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM.**