Minutes

Bexley Tree and Public Gardens Commission

Wednesday, June 26, 2024 – 4:00 to 6:00 PM

Bexley City Hall Council Chambers, Bexley, OH 43209

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

**Roll Call:**

**Voting Members Present:** Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz,

Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Linda Zupnick, Jim Wilson, Dave Wakeman,

**Alternates:** Barb Giller

**Absent:**

**Excused:**

**Non-Voting Present:** Elena Andrews, Mayor Kessler, Elena Andrews, Grant Archer, Marc Fishel

**B. Verify a quorum and appoint alternates as needed**

**C. Approval of Minutes of May 15, 2024 – Mrs. Quintenz**

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘the minutes of May 15, 2024 as

written and sent.’

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

For: Sheila Straub, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary

McMunn, Jim Wilson, Dave Wakeman,

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

**D. Additions to the agenda – Mrs. Quintenz**

1. **Review of Landscape Applications: Jim Wilson, Vice Chair and Elena Andrews, Staff Consultant**

1. TPGR-24-3 394 S. Columbia ROW Plantings - There are no update plans for this project. Karen McCoy – mksk studios

Staff Consultant, Elena Andrews, present her staff review and provided feedback to the applicant.

Karen McCoy from MKSK present the plan. The Tree Commission asked questions and shared their comments with the applicant.

This project was originally reviewed under application number TPGR-21-3 as a new build on 5/19/21. The project was approved as presented.

MKSK has been hired to provide an update to the landscape plan which includes three new columns and plant material in the City Right-of-Way. The installation of the columns is on the 3/28/24 BZAP agenda. Since the landscape plan is intrinsically tied to the columns, the applicant has chosen to come to TPGC first to obtain feedback on the proposed landscape plan in the ROW. TPGC should then provide a recommendation to BZAP, including any desired conditions, with the understanding that while BZAP has the authority to approve the columns, they will defer to TPGC for final approval of the landscape plan in the ROW.

The request for the columns to be in the ROW is because there is a large mature Oak tree along the south property line and the applicant did not want to disturb the structural roots by placing the column outside of the ROW on the property. BZAP recently approved columns 12” from the sidewalk at 141 S. Drexel Ave with the condition that the landscape plan be approved by TPGC.

A boxwood and liriope hedge connect the two northern columns and the bed is located immediately behind the sidewalk. It is the City Staff recommendation to provide a 12-24” lawn strip immediately adjacent to the sidewalk so mulch and plant material will not obstruct pedestrian traffic. The two beds around the columns flanking the driveway can extend to the sidewalk as that is the typology that exists throughout Bexley.

There is a large existing bed that was present during the TPGR-21-3 review and still exists today. It is the City Staff recommendation to allow this bed to remain as is and continue to touch the sidewalk as it provides landscape screening to the north neighboring property.

A revised planting plan should be submitted to show any recommended adjustments and can be approved by City Staff.

The landscape improvements outside of the ROW are not subject to review by TPGC but it should be noted that they are not only in keeping with the original design intent approved under TPGR-21-3 but also increase the variety and layering of the plant material throughout the site.

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘the landscape plan at 394 S Columbia with conditions that the installation of the landscape must occur within one calendar year from the date of approval by the Commission unless otherwise stated in the Finding of Fact Record of Decision. For landscape associated with new construction projects, installation must occur within one calendar year from the issuance of a temporary occupancy permit. The landscape plan is approved as presented with the condition that the owner has a choice to install one of the following three options: 1. Install metal edging along the sidewalk. 2. Install a (1’) one foot wide strip of lawn adjacent to the sidewalk. 3. Install a (1’) one foot wide strip of low growing groundcover adjacent to the sidewalk.’

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

For: Sheila Straub, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary

McMunn, Jim Wilson, Dave Wakeman,

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

B. TPGC-24-3 2691 E. Main St - COHatch - Commercial landscape review.

 This existing mid-century split level office building is having an addition added to the north elevation along Main Street and will house the company COhatch. The project was approved by BZAP under application number BZAP-23-8 on 4-27-23 with the condition that the “landscape plan is subject to further review and approval by the Tree & Public Garden Commission”. The project was given a Certificate of Appropriateness by ARB on 6-8-23.

Due to the site constraints and the parking lot, the opportunity for landscape exists only at the foundation of the building on the east, west and south elevations. A larger bed is provided by the main entry at the north end of the west elevation that contains a Frans Fontaine Hornbeam, a flowering Hydrangea and evergreen juniper ground cover.

The east and west elevations have a simple rhythm of evergreen holly broken up by perennials in front of the windows.

The south elevation has a larger bed for the rear entrance where two more Frans Fontaine Hornbeams are symmetrically placed by the rear elevation and two rows of Lilacs and Catmint will give seasonal interest.

I suggested the last four holly south of the gutters of the east and west elevations be replaced with upright evergreens, such as a Blue Arrow Juniper. There are no windows in these areas and the additional height would add visual and species variety. However, this is purely a design suggestion and not a requirement for approval.

Overall, the plant selection is appropriate to the site and will provide seasonal interest.

The contractor building the project notified the City Arborist that the City Trees were in the way of construction. They were told that they needed to hire a professional arborist to trim the trees if the City could not get there in a timely fashion. The contractor hacked off limbs improperly and applicant was notified that they needed to properly prune the trees, or it would be the City Arborist’s recommendation for the Tree Commission not to approve the plan until it was completed. At the time of this report, Axe Tree Service (ISA OH-6295A) was hired to come out the week of 6-10-24 to properly trim the trees. As of 6/18/24, the City of Bexley trimmed the trees per their standards.

It is the staff recommendation to approve the plan as presented.

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘the landscape plan at 2691 E Main St with conditions that the installation of the landscape must occur within one calendar year from the date of approval by the Commission unless otherwise stated in the Finding of Fact Record of Decision. For landscape associated with new construction projects, installation must occur within one calendar year from the issuance of a temporary occupancy permit. The project has been approved with the following conditions 1. Replace eight (8) of the Iiex Crenata ‘Soft Touch’ with eight (8) upright Columnar Junipers (four (4) each on the southern end of the east and west building elevations.) 2. If feasible, the plant installation shall occur in the Fall of 2024.

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

For: Sheila Straub, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary

McMunn, Jim Wilson, Dave Wakeman,

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

 C**.** Revisions to motion of November 15, 2023 decision – Mr. Wilson

The City of Bexley would like to manage the installation of the pocket park instead of the Contractor. Vice Chair, Jim Wilson, drafted a motion and presented before the Tree Commission.

 Draft In light of the fact that the scope of the agreement between the CIC for the City of Bexley and the applicant for 2200 East Main has changed since our action of November 15, 2023, and that under the current anticipated agreement, the City of Bexley and the CIC will retain control over the design of the pocket park adjacent to the development, which will include review of the design by the T&PGC, the T&PGC hereby removes the conditions contained in its November 15, 2023 action upon the curb cut through the right of way for the access road on the west side of the development.

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘Draft In light of the fact that the scope of the agreement between the CIC for the City of Bexley and the applicant for 2200 East Main has changed since our action of November 15, 2023, and that under the current anticipated agreement, the City of Bexley and the CIC will retain control over the design of the pocket park adjacent to the development, which will include review of the design by the T&PGC, the T&PGC hereby removes the conditions contained in its November 15, 2023 action upon the curb cut through the right of way for the access road on the west side of the development.’

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

For: Sheila Straub, Linda Zupnick, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams, Mary

McMunn, Jim Wilson, Dave Wakeman,

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

D. Updates on other approved projects – Mrs. Quintenz

 Chair Quintenz discussed the pillars being installed at 394 S Columbia. BZAP approved the pillars to be installed within the right-of-way, with the condition that the landscaping proposed to installed around the columns to be approved by the Tree Commission. The landscape was installed around the pillars, before the Commission had a chance to review the landscape plan. City Attorney, Marc Fishel, spoke to the issue and stating the Commission could make tell the applicate to remove the pillars since the installation of landscape went in before the landscape plan had been approved. The Mayor provided more information regarding the project and the plantings. The discussion about planting within the right-of-way will continue. The Tree Commission would like to meet with members of BZAP and the new Zoning Director to improve communication between the Boards. Moving forward, the new Zoning Director will also be attending the Tree Commission meetings.

1. **Announcements/Small Victories: Mrs. Quintenz**
2. National/International visitors to the SCG – Mrs. McMunn

Mary shared her experience with the tour she took. The tour was provided by The Ohio State University. The Community Garden was a stop on the tour.

1. 2024 Bexley Bloomers: What’s new?

The bloomers have put in over 300 volunteer hours. July 10, at will be the first ‘Weed and Garden Party.’

1. Franklin County Rainwater Master program – FCSW – Ms. Quintenz

Franklin County is offering a five-six-week program to discuss the rain gardens and rain water programs. Chair Quintenz had asked the if there are any members of the Tree Commission who would like to attend the class.

1. 2024 Bexley Landmark Golf Cart Tour – Sheila Straub

The golf cart tour will take place October 11, 2024 at 1pm. They tour will start at City Hall. Sheila Straub has invited Tree Commission to attend.

E. Professor Markham

1. **Staff Reports:**

A. Grant Archer: Urban Forester, Assistant Service Director

 1. Arbor Day Tree Giveaway Project

 Five (5) of the winners selected returned the trees because the tree would be too big. The city found other spots within the city to plant the trees.

 2. Mulch Volcano elimination program – any difference?

Grants staff has the door hangers in the trucks and passes out the information as they notice a resident has a volcano around the tree. The forestry website has good information regarding mulch volcanos.

 3. State of the Urban Forest: Summer 2024

 The heat will cause the leaves to yellow and fall off, insects will also start to eat leaves. This is all normal during the summer months.

 4. Tree Plotter: Shape File

No updates regarding the tree plotter.

 B. Elena Andrews, Staff Consultant

 1. With gratitude

 This is staff consultants, Elena Andrews, last Tree Commission meeting. She will continue to work on design projects and the Tree Commission will be reviewing projects she had design coming up in the future.

 C. Ben Kessler, Mayor, City of Bexley

 1. Design Process for Unification of Columbia

An internal team will be coming together to begin the design process for the unification of this street between the two (2) parks.

 2. Result of Survey on prioritization or Tree Commission Project.

The Mayor presented the results of projects on prioritization or Tree Commission Projects. Staff Consultant, Elena Andrews, shared the top five (5) projects from the survey. Six (6) responses online and seven (7) through email.

 3. Dovetailing Tree Commission priorities with Bexley Beautification Fund Advisors priorities

 The fund has money left in the funds and they would like to put some of the funds toward the South end and focus on the College and Livingston gateway. Central Bexley they would like to add more trees along Fair Ave or on Broad, and Parkview. North end the improve the Roosevelt medians and to infill tree planting as spaces become available.

1. Cassady and Fifth Updates

 A timeline for the Cassady and Fifth Ave updates. The right of way plan is complete and out to be bid at the end of August. The goal for the project to start will be in 2025.

 5. Commonwealth Arboretum potential additions

 6. Other

The bike bridge at Schneider Park over Alum Creek Plan was discussed. A plan is in the works and the Mayor is giving the Commission a heads up a few trees will need to be removed for the installation of the bridge.

New Tree Commission members have been approved by City Council and will be starting July 1, Jim Wilson’s role was continued and Luke McClellan was added a new voting member. New alternate members will include Dr. Charlie Flower and Ahdra Young.

1. **Old Business:**

 A. Infilling all tree vacancies in Bexley within three to five years? What will our plan look like? Mrs. Quintenz

 1. Suggestion: Major throughfares first and second years followed by residential street third through fifth years.

B. Planting and Tree Maintenance Study Group – Jim Wilson

 1. Planting street trees in monocultures versus a variety of cultures:

 Discussion on info from Cornell

Vice Chair, Jim Wilson, started the discussion about the street planting plans and how to include a more variety of trees and to take a look at the street tree planting list.

C. Goals for the Arboretum – Additional Species and Education

1. **New Business**
	1. 2024 Trees for Bexley Fundraising focus – Ellen Bowden
2. **Adjourn**

**No meeting in July. Next meeting is August 21, 2024**