**Minutes**

**Bexley Tree and Public Gardens Commission**

**Wednesday, December 18, 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, Jim Wilson, Linda Zupnick, Charlie Flowers, Celeste Williams,

Alternates: Barb Giller, Ahdra Young

Absent:

Excused: Mary McMunn,

Non-Voting Present: Mayor Kessler, Grant Archer, Matt Klingler

1. Verify a quorum and appoint alternates as needed

Alternates, Barb Giller and Ahdra Young have been appointed as voting members.

1. Approval of Minutes of November 20, 2024 – Mrs. Quintenz

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘the minutes of November 20, 2024 as

written and sent.’

Motion seconded by Sheila Straub Vote 8- 0 - passed.

For: Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz, Jim Wilson, Linda Zupnick, Charlie Flowers, Celeste Williams, Barb Giller, Ahdra Young

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Mary McMunn

D. Additions to the agenda – Mrs. Quintenz

 No additional items to be added to the agenda.

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

A. No applications to review

1. **Residents Comments:**

No discussion was held

1. **Announcements/Small Victories: Mrs. Quintenz**
2. End of year summary of Bexley Bloomers 2024 season – Mrs. Quintenz

The Bloomers ended the 2024 year with over 3,000 volunteer hours.

889 volunteer hours for the 2024 fall season.

The amount of the food donated from the Community Gardens to the Food Pantry 1,225lbs. donated in the 2024 year. A total of 10,700 lbs have been donated over the past years.

 B. 2024 Trees for Bexley update – Barb Giller

**TFB 2024 Year to Date**

$34,263 - Total

107 - # of Donors

$320 - Average Gift

Compared to the same time frame in 2023:

**TFB 2023**

$31,721 - Total

100 - # of Donors

$317 - Average Gift

Also, for donors that gave $250 an up in 2023 but have yet to give in 2024 a follow up letter has been sent today.

As an FYI Bexley in Bloom 2024 current total is **$17,985**which is right in line with 2023.  Will send a wrap up to the BIB team after year end.

1. Overview of Bexley’s urban forest power point by Bill Waterman – Mrs. Quintenz

An upcoming seminar presentation by Bill Waterman regarding the drought and the affect it will have on existing trees. Chair, Quintenz had asked if members are interested in attending the seminar.

1. **Staff Reports:**

**A. Grant Archer: Bexley Urban Forester**

 1. City’s Fall Planting and Maintenance Plan – 200 tree and counting

The city has planted over 200 trees this fall to infill spots.

 2. Suggestions for alternative tree on Denver.

Grant Archer suggested that Commission members visit Denver and provide suggestions on the which tree species to alternate. The right of way along the street varies in size. There are power lines located on the north side of Denver.

 **B. Ben Kessler, Mayor, City of Bexley**

 1. Other

The Annual Tree Lighting event on Sun., Dec. 8th at Drexel Circle and it was a beautiful day for it. We had a great turnout to celebrate the lighting of the tree and to visit with Santa Claus.

2025 Budget has passed- it includes funds for land marks and facilitated design processes.

Landuse Update: Document drafting has officially begun and staff are working with planning advisors OHM to develop illustrations for core focus areas. The Commission anticipates bringing a draft strategy to City Council in early 2025: <https://bexley.org/landuse/>

Through LinkUs, COTA would invest in more than 500 miles of sidewalks, bikeways, and trails across its service area, making it safer and easier to walk, bike and ride COTA. Here's what's in the plan for the Bexley community specifically.

Premium bus rapid transit (BRT) along E. Main Street from Downtown Columbus to Reynoldsburg $1.6 million in Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) funds to cover the City of Bexley’s local match the for major infrastructure and safety improvements coming soon to Livingston Avenue from I-70 to Kellner Road

Bexley Calm Corridor on Cassingham and Remington Roads; This includes road calming improvements such as raised intersections, bump outs, and other engineering solutions to make the corridor safer for pedestrians and cyclists

Pedestrian/cyclist improvements on Main Street Bridge over Alum Creek. For more info. <https://bexley.org/linkus/>

 The auto repair building and the apartments on the northeast on Cassady ave will be removed. The road will be widened in the area to create a better turning radius for trucks.

There have been three (3) interviews for a new landscape design consultant. The goal is to have someone in place in January.

1. **Old Business:**
2. Additional tree species in Tree Lawn around Montrose – Ahdra Young, Grant Archer

Montrose Elementary School is located in the south end. S Remington, Mound, and Montrose are the three (3) streets, which are currently being looked into for a new planting plan.

The Silver Linden in the current street tree on S Remington. The Horse Chestnut is the current street tree on Mound. The Forest Pansy Redbud is the current street tree on Montrose, but currently the Tatarian Maple is being planted. The suggested new tree species to plant in the area is a Smoke tree species.

Suggestions have been requested to review the current street tree planting plan and make necessary updates to follow the current planting plan. Once a new street tree has been approved by the Tree Commission. Grant Archer and Ahrda Young will meet on site again to review the area, set up a formal plan, and bring back the findings to the Commission.

Tree Commission members are going to walk the area and come back with suggestions in January.

B. Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan – Jim Wilson

 Vice-Chair, Jim Wilson, has a goal to present a draft of the ‘Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan’ in January. The current draft is coming along, and he reviewed his current findings with the Tree Commission and his definition of ‘Right-of-way.’

1. Right of Way: A historical perspective– Mr. Wilson

Vice-Chair, Jim Wilson, presented his findings on past practices regarding the right-of way. He reviewed how the use of the right-of-way has evolved. A discussion was held among the Commission members to better assist Jim with the draft of the Tree Maintenance Plan he has been preparing.

C. Summary of Join Commission and City meeting – Mrs. Quintenz

D. Other

1. **New Business**
2. 2024 Hits and Misses – Bexley Tree and Public Gardens “Year in Review.”

The Commission discussed their successes and flops for the 2024 year. A few goals to make 2025 more successful next year is to continue to communicate to residents better on the right-of-way. The goal for events is to try and combine events and highlight trees.

Over 200 trees had been planted throughout the city, which will improve the canopy, and the Commission would like to continue the trend of adding more trees throughout the community.

Overall, the Commission had a successful 2024 year! They wish to continue their work to make 2025 better.

 B. Other

 **7. Reports from:**

 A. City Council Liaison – Troy Markham

 **8. Adjourn**

 Next meeting is Wednesday, January 15, 2025 – 4:00 PM

**2025 Tree and Public Garden Meeting Dates**

* January 15
* February 19
* March 19
* April 16
* May 21
* June 18
* July -- no meeting
* August 20
* September 17
* October 15
* November 19
* December 1