**Minutes**

Bexley Tree and Public Gardens Commission

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 – 4:00 to 6:00 PM

Bexley City Hall Council Chambers, Bexley, OH 43209

**1. Convening the Meeting:**

A. Call to Order/Call the Roll – Susan Quintenz, Chair

Roll Call:

Voting Members Present: Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz, Linda Zupnick, Charlie Flower, Celeste

Williams, Mary McMunn, Adhra Young, Jim Wilson

Alternates:

Absent:

Excused: Barb Giller, Ellen Bowden,

Non-Voting Present: Grant Archer, Matt Klingler, Troy Markham, Monette Friedlander

B. Verify a quorum and appoint alternates as needed

C. Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2025– Mrs. Quintenz

D. Additions to the agenda – Mrs. Quintenz

To discuss the Tree Canopy throughout the city.

In reviewing our recent agendas, we have noted the challenge of finding enough time to bring forward the Old and New Business topics.  Therefore, we will revise the flow of the agenda for this meeting as a test.  Old and New Business items will be slated immediately after the Landscape Application(s).  Announcements/Small Victories/Reports will then follow.

**2. Review of Landscape Applications: Jim Wilson, Vice Chair**

A. 420 North Cassady:

Project history: This is a proposed 3 story mixed use apartment building at the southeast of Columbus and Cassady. The first floor is anticipated to be the new Bexley Senior Center with a few apartments while the floors are all apartments. This project needed variances which have been approved by BZAP while being remanded back to the Architectural Review Board for final design details.

The existing single-story building situated at the southeast corner of the property has minimal landscaping around its foundation, with minimal tree and shrub plantings throughout the property due to the extent of hardscape/parking lot coverage. The designer states that the proposed plan is intended to enhance the development’s exterior aesthetics and prioritize the restoration and expansion of the site’s tree canopy, and incorporate nave plant species.

The proposed tree removal and preservation plan (L2.0) description calls for the removal of (5) trees, but the corresponding drawing indicates removals of (7) trees in total. Tree #2 at the NE corner of the property, labeled as a red maple, is a Siberian elm. Stated conditions of trees to be removed are accurate. All proposed removals appear to be necessary to accommodate the site layout plan. A sugar maple located on the south side of Columbus Ave. in city easement is not indicated for removal in the plan, but is located in the same area as the proposed honey locust plantings. Per conversation with Grant Archer, this tree is scheduled for removal by the city and is therefore not addressed on the plan.

The proposed landscape plan (L2.1) calls for (17) large deciduous trees and (2) ornamental trees, positively increasing the amount of tree canopy on the property. Proposed tree species are site-appropriate. Care should be taken to ensure that the new elm proposed for the southwest portion of the property matches the same species of existing elm as closely as possible. As stated in a previous design review, substation of the Honey Locusts along the north side of the property with a different species should be considered if poor performance of Honey Locust has been historically observed in Bexley. Consider as an alternative matching the Ulmus sp. along N. Cassady Ave. or another site-appropriate species.

The plan also calls for a variety of evergreen and deciduous shrubs, as well as hardy and site-appropriate ground covers and grasses. Of particular concern is the Virginia creeper proposed for the trellis structures on the east side of the building and south end of the property. Virginia creeper is a hardy and aggressive growing vine that can reach 5 to 6 stories in height when le un-maintained. With much of the proposed structure consisting of brick and fiber cement façade, Virginia creeper could likely become a problematic plant within one to two seasons if not properly and frequently maintained. Long-term damage to structure is also possible with a lack of proper maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION substituting with alternative options, such as climbing hydrangea or non-invasive Honeysuckle species, or presenting examples of current commercial properties utilizing Virginia creeper in a similar fashion and successfully containing it in its designated bed space(s).

Provided documentation does not currently specify the installation of an irrigation system. In-ground irrigation for landscape installations around new commercial builds are strongly recommended for the long-term viability of the plantings. Commercial properties frequently do not get the daily or weekly attention needed for new plants to properly establish without supplemental irrigation, based on expected weather patterns that are likely to occur during the first 1-3 years of establishment. As the plan calls for 3” cal. trees, a 3-year establishment period can be expected for the larger proposed plant material, based on the generally accepted rule of 1 year for every 1” of trunk caliper with regards to establishment times for new plantings.

City Staff recommends conditional approval of the plan, pending the following:

 - appropriate substitution in place of Virginia creeper on the Landscape plan.

 - Landscape plan to include proper irrigation system or a detailed maintenance plan that includes supplemental watering as an annual contracted service.

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘Landscape 420 S Cassady with conditions
Pod Design consult with city staff regarding a different tree species other than the Honey Locust to be planted along Columbus Ave. the property be irrigated as described and regular watering for the 3in caliper trees, Virginia creeper be switched with a Climbing Hydrangeas or noninvasive Honeysuckle, once selected the furniture return for approval ‘

Motion seconded by Charlie Flowers Vote 8 - 0 - passed.

For: Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz, Linda Zupnick, Charlie Flower, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Adhra Young, Jim Wilson

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

B. 2200 East Livingston:

The existing structures located centrally on the property are surrounded by standard foundation shrubbery, some smaller ornamental trees, and larger shade trees. Most of the smaller plant material could be considered past its useful lifespan in the landscape, or in the case of the larger trees, some potently even posing a safety risk to the property. The designer states that the proposed plan is intended to enhance the development’s exterior aesthetics while incorporating the requirements of the Joint Livingston Avenue Plan, prioritize the restoration and reintegration of the tree canopy, incorporate the use of nave plant species, and promote long-term community benefits.

The proposed tree removal and preservation plan (L2.0) description calls for the removal of (10) trees in total. Stated conditions of trees to be removed are accurate. All proposed removals appear to be necessary to accommodate the site layout plan.

The proposed landscape plan (L2.1) calls for (39) large deciduous trees and (8) ornamental trees, positively increasing the amount of tree canopy on the property. Proposed tree species are site-appropriate. The plan also calls for a variety of evergreen and deciduous shrubs, as well as hardy and site-appropriate ground covers and grasses. Virginia creeper is listed on the Preliminary Plant List on page L2.1 and shown in the Plant Palette Imagery on page L2.2, but does not appear to be included in the conceptual landscape plan on L2.1. As referenced in greater detail in the review of TPGC-25-2, the aggressive nature of this plant is of concern on a commercial property where frequent maintenance is less likely to be administered. Recommend eliminating Virginia Creeper from the plant list or substituting an appropriate species if this plant is/was in fact intended to be included in the plan. See the excerpt paragraphs below for further reference:

Taken from TPGC-25-2: “Of particular concern is the Virginia creeper proposed for the trellis structures on the east side of the building and south end of the property. Virginia creeper is a hardy and aggressive growing vine that can reach 5 to 6 stories in height when le un-maintained. Per an Ohio State University Fact Sheet, “Virginia Creeper can grow as much as 20’ in a single year in Ohio”. With much of the proposed structure consisting of brick and fiber cement façade, Virginia creeper could likely become a problematic plant within one to two seasons if not properly and frequently maintained. Long-term damage to structure is also possible with a lack of proper maintenance. RECOMMENDATION - substituting with alternate options, such as climbing hydrangea or non-invasive Honeysuckle species, or presenting examples of current commercial properties utilizing Virginia creeper in a similar fashion and successfully containing it in its designated bed space(s).”

**03-24-25 Revision:**

Revised Landscape plan submitted 03-16-25 includes minor changes to the plant palette and corresponding landscape plan. Of concern within the proposed changes is the addition of Ilex vomitoria ‘Shillings’, or Dwarf Yaupon Holly. This plant is a staple in southern landscapes and is listed for zones 7-9. As such, it is not an appropriate plant for central Ohio. Major dieback or complete death of the plants is to be expected in any given average central Ohio winter. Provided documentation does not currently specify the installation of an irrigation system. In-ground irrigation for landscape installations around new commercial builds are strongly recommended for the long-term viability of the plantings. Commercial properties frequently do not get the daily or weekly attention needed for new plants to properly establish without supplemental irrigation, based on expected weather patterns that are likely to occur during the first 1-3 years of establishment. As the plan calls for 3” cal. trees, a 3-year establishment period can be expected for the larger proposed plant material, based on the generally accepted rule of 1 year for every 1” of trunk caliper with regards to establishment times for new plantings. Specifically pertaining to this property, the south and west facing sides of the proposed structure appear to account for approximately 50% of the proposed landscape plantings. These exposures, along with the reflected heat from the building and street (both in close proximity to the southside plantings) will almost certainly make for unsuitable/undesirable site conditions if no supplemental irrigation system is in place.

**03-24-25 Review Staff Revision:**

 Revised Landscape plan submitted 03-16-25 includes the addition of the following verbiage under NOTES on sheet# L2.1: “1. ALL PLANTING AREAS ARE TO BE IRRIGATED” City Staff recommends conditional approval of the plan, pending the following: - Virginia creeper omitted from the Landscape plan (unless already absent). - Ilex vomitoria ‘Shillings’ omitted from the Landscape plan, replaced with suitable and site appropriate alternative shrub, or submit examples of this plant being used locally and established successfully for a minimum of 4-5 years in a similar landscape seng. - Landscape plan to include proper irrigation system for all planting areas immediately adjacent to building. (Addressed in 03-16-25 revision)

Jim Wilson made a motion to Approve – ‘the landscape at 2300 E Livingston Ave with conditions Virginia Creeper be switched with a Climbing Hydrangeas or noninvasive Honeysuckle, the Holly be switch to an Inkberry, the property be irrigated as described and regular watering for the 3in caliper trees, the ground cover in the planting wells return to the Commission with a more appropriate ground cover, once selected the furniture return for approval ‘

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

For: Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz, Linda Zupnick, Charlie Flower, Celeste Williams, Mary McMunn, Adhra Young, Jim Wilson

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

C. other

**3. Residents Comments**:

**4. Announcements/Small Victories: Mrs. Quintenz**

A. Celebrating Arbor Day All April:

Please remember to nominate your favorite White Oak tree!

Go on line to the Bexley Blast and fill out the form!  Deadline is the 11th!

a. “The Bexley Times” with thanks to Mary, Charlie, Jim, Sheila, Bexley

Historical Society

b. April 11, 5:00 PM – Landmark Tree Nominations due

c. April 14, 10:00 AM -Jeffrey Mansion preschoolers plant trees

c. April 15, 7:00 PM - “Giants Rising” - free movie at Drexel. Talkback moderated by Jim Wilson.

 "Giants Rising: The Secret Superpowers of the Redwoods" is featured at the **Drexel Theater on Tuesday, April; 15 at 7:00 PM**.  **Tickets are free (popcorn is not) but please register on the Drexel** **website below.** The documentary film has received multiple awards and was previewed at the Naples Film Festival by our own Ellen Bowden.  Megan Meyer, Director of Administration and Development for Bexley, will introduce the film, and Jim Wilson, will moderate a "Talk Back" post the 80-minute movie.  If you are able to come early to meet and greet those attending, it would be much appreciated.

d. April 23, 2025 – 1:00 PM – Amy Stewart - “The Tree Collectors” BPL

e. April 23, 2025 – 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

**Wednesday, April 23, from 5:30 to 7:30,**we will be hosting**Arbor Day Author, Amy Stewart, who also wrote the NYT bestseller "The Drunken Botanist" at a private home at 107 Ashbourne for a very fun outing**.  Amy will talk about drink recipes from the "Drunken Botanist" and (small) sips of those featured libations will be provided by "The Lion", Bexley's new cocktail lounge.  Hors d'oeuvres and wine served as well.  Tickets are $100.00 and benefit the Bexley Public Library Community Author Series at the Bexley Community Foundation.  Tickets available through Event Brite or just drop off a check at the Community Foundation, 552 South Drexel, made out to the BCF.  Again, volunteers to assist in hosting would be wonderful.

**More info and links to register -**

**April 15 -** 7pm Drexel Theatre -Free tickets and need a reservation -  [Reserve Your Tickets Here!](https://prod1.agileticketing.net/websales/pages/info.aspx?evtinfo=487021~e2e0a350-c626-4e33-bc63-27e983f4aecf&epguid=ab0b2f82-403c-4972-9998-5475e7dcfa0e&mdy=4/15/2025&)

**April 23 -**1pm Amy Stewart - Free to attend - [Reserve Your Spot Here!](https://bexley.libnet.info/event/12955089)

**April 23** - 5:30 pm Amy Stewart -Tickets available for purchase - [Get Your Tickets Here!](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-amy-stewart-tickets-1267785523629?aff=oddtdtcreator)

f. May 7, 10:00 PM – Tour of Governor’s Residence and Heritage Gardens

B. Community Gardens and “Rooted in Bexley” Lecture Series – Mary McMunn

The lecture series had about three hundred (300) people over all attended the lecture series. There are twelve (12) people on the wait list for a spot at the North community gardens and thirteen (13) at South end.

C. Rehabbing brick curbs – Mrs. Quintenz

A discussion was held regarding the brick curbs that being re-done along Stanbery Ave.

D. PROFESSOR MARKHAM Returns:

**5. Staff Reports:**

A. Spencer Martin

1. Fall tree planting – takeaways

 The fall tree planting will fill gaps along Broad Street and Parkview.

2. Other

B. Mayor Kessler

**Bexley Times: Tree Edition is shipping out!**

Through collaboration with members of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission, and other enthusiastic community volunteers, a special “Tree Issue” of Bexley Times is set to hit mailboxes in early April. A special thank you to all those who contributed! View the online version at bexley.org/newsletter.

**Additional Main Street Furnishings for Spring**

Thanks to the continued generosity of the Bexley Community Foundation, in early April we’ll have new inviting seating areas throughout the City. Keep an eye on the area just being the sidewalk at the Capital Lawn at Main Street for new blue Adirondack chairs. A selection of new chairs will also be installed at Commonwealth and may pop up at a few other locations throughout the City so keep your eyes peeled for new places to kick back and enjoy those beautiful spring days in Bexley, all made possible through the original Year of the Parks grant funding.

**Commonwealth Park Update**

The unification at Commonwealth continues to progress. The new curbs and sidewalks at Columbia should be complete by next week and preconstruction meetings and plans are underway to determine more specific timing for the the water line and pavement work in this area. Furthermore, we had a great internal meeting with landscape design for the center of the park, and expect to be workshopping draft plans in the near future.

**Commonwealth Park Update**

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**Jeffrey Woods Festival recap**

Another Jeffrey Woods Fest is in the books and this year was better than ever. Lots of folks braved the brisk, windy weather to enjoy the wood chop, maple syrup boiling (yielding more than 150 bottles!), and other Woods Fest favorites. This year, we added to the program with a selection of Arboretum events to kick off Earth and Arbor Month, including tree climbing, nature displays, and a super popular falconry program. A huge thanks to the Service and Recreation Departments, especially Grant, Ron, Mike, and Elizabeth for their help in pulling this event together.

**Tree Commission & Tree Preservation Ordinance Update**

TPGC Chair Susan Quintenz and I are planning the launch of a working group to work on streamlining the TPGC code and study a more robust tree preservation and replacement code. We’re in the process of planning out the meeting scope and content, with a working group structure in place to include TPGC chair and vice chair, several council members, the building director, chief urban forrester, and myself .

**Commercial Streetscape and Design Guidelines Process Update**

As called for in the City’s Strategic Plan and budgeted for in this and last year’s budgets, we’re getting ready to kick off the Commercial Design Guidelines update process. This new guidelines will re-envision the current Main Street Design Guidelines by establishing overarching guidelines for core commercial areas in Bexley and providing specific standards tailored to the unique contexts of East Main Street, North Cassady Avenue, and East Livingston Avenue. These guidelines will establish standards for future redevelopment, and collaborate with a steering committee to ensure that the updated guidelines are contextually appropriate and align with the city’s long-term vision. The first step is to identify a planner to assist with the effort; an RFP has been circulated to the planning community to assist as project lead in the effort.

**Cherry Blossom Kickoff (and Map!)**

The 2025 Bexley Cherry Blossom Walk/Rides Kickoff event takes place this Saturday, March 29 at 2:30 pm at Bexley Public Library with music and special speakers to celebrate the season of cherry blossoms!

With the cherry trees just beginning to bloom across the City, this year’s timing looks perfect to enjoy this once-a-season delight. In addition to speaking at Saturday’s event, I’ve also created a map of cherry trees in Bexley. Check the map and maybe plan your next walk to bike route to include a few of these beautiful trees.

C. Matt Klinger, Director of Building and Planning

1. Mulch Volcanoes

A discussion was held regarding mulch volcanoes and how landscape companies and homeowners will be notified.

2. Mother-in-law suites – landscape plans

Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case bases, and if landscape should be sent to the Tree Commission.

3. Review of ongoing construction conditions

 No discussion was held

4. Record of Decision versus approved minutes

 The record of decision takes full effect from when they received the record of decision.

5. Other

6. Old Business:

A. Tree Commission landscape design priorities: Recap of Roosevelt Medians

workshop from Wednesday, February 26, 2025.

B. Updated Tree planting and maintenance guidelines – Jim Wilson

 The discussion was held and will take place in April.

1. Updated ODNR planting guidelines – Celeste Williams

C. Other

**7. New Business:**

A. Framework for evaluating/reviewing landscape applications: Mrs. Quintenz

B. Other

8. Reports from:

A. City Council Liaison – Troy Markham

B. Walter Reins, T&PGC Commission staff consultant

1. Pollarding hornbeams on Broad Street gateways

**8. Adjourn**

Next meeting is Wednesday, April 16, 2025 – 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM