**Minutes**

**Bexley Tree and Public Gardens Commission**

**Wednesday, August 20, 2025 – 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 – Jim Wilson, Vice-Chair

Roll Call:

Voting Members Present: Jim Wilson, Mary McMunn, Linda Zupnick, Shelia Straub, Susan Quintenz, Celeste Williams

Alternates: Adhra Young

Absent: Charlie Flower

Excused:

Non-Voting Present: Walter Reins, Grant Archer, Ellen Bowden

1. Verify a quorum and appoint alternates as needed
2. Approval of Minutes of June 18, 2025– Mr. Wilson

Celeste Williams made a motion to Approve – ‘of June 18, 2025 as written and sent.’

Motion seconded by Sheila Straub Vote 5 - 0 - passed.

For Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz, Linda Zupnick, Celeste Williams, Jim Wilson

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Charlie Flower, Mary McMunn

1. Additions to the agenda – Mr. Wilson
2. Review of Zoom Policy for Bexley Tree and Public Gardens Commission members and alternates – Mr. Wilson

**Virtual Meeting Policy**

Generally, members of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission will attend meetings in-person. However, recognizing that certain unexpected issues may arise and/or an emergency meeting may be scheduled making in-person attendance difficult, members of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission may hold, conduct, and attend meetings “virtually” consistent with this Policy. More specifically, members may hold, conduct, and/or attend meetings by means of video conference, or any other similar electronic technology, provided the virtual meeting complies with this Policy, including any “Notice” and “Public Access” provision included in this Policy.

Notice

Prior to holding any meeting and/or hearing virtually, the Tree and Public Gardens Commission shall provide notice of the meeting to the public, media, and any party requesting notification at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting, unless it is a lawfully scheduled special meeting or emergency meeting. For purposes of this policy, a meeting or hearing is considered to be held virtually if one member of the Commission intends to participate by remote means. The date, time, location, agenda, and the manner by which the meeting will be conducted shall be included in the notice.

In the event of a special meeting, the Tree and Public Gardens Commission shall provide notice of the date, time, location, agenda, and the manner by which the meeting will be conducted at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting. Such meeting shall be designated as a “special meeting” in the public notice. The notice of emergency meetings shall be provided in accordance with applicable law and shall include the manner by which the meeting will be conducted. Such meeting shall be designated an “emergency meeting” in the public notice.

Notice of any meeting is to be provided by reasonable methods that would permit any party to reasonably determine the time, location, agenda, and manner of the meeting and/or hearing.

Public Access

The Tree and Public Gardens Commission shall provide public access to any virtual meeting in the same manner as the public would otherwise be entitled if the meeting was to occur in-person. Such access must be provided in the same manner in which the meeting is being conducted.

If the meeting and/or hearing is to occur virtually, the Tree and Public Gardens Commission shall maintain a sufficient connection to allow members to be seen and heard clearly at all times.

When meetings are conducted virtually, the Tree and Public Gardens Commission will ensure that there is an established method to permit public comment, when applicable. Any method established by the Tree and Public Gardens Commission shall use electronic equipment and means that are widely available to the general public.

When hearings are conducted virtually, the Commission will ensure that there is an established method to converse virtually with witnesses, receive documentary testimony and physical evidence, and to permit public comment, when applicable.

Member Attendance

If attending a meeting virtually, members of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission shall be considered present, and in-person, so long as notice of the meeting was provided consistent with this Policy. If a member of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission plans to participate in a meeting virtually, they must notify the chair of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission at least 48-hours in advance of a regularly scheduled meeting. Such advance notice is not required for a special meeting or emergency meeting. In the event of a special meeting or emergency meeting, any member electing to participate virtually shall notify the chairperson of the Tree and Public Gardens Commission of their intent as soon as practicable.

Members attending virtually shall be permitted to vote, and be counted as present, for purposes of determining whether a quorum exists.

Voting

Roll call is to be taken during any vote conducted virtually, or for any vote occurring with some members participating virtually, unless there is an unobjected motion for unanimous consent. Any resolution, rule, or other formal action taken during a virtual meeting will be the same as if it occurred during an open, in-person meeting.

F. Small victories and celebrations

1. **Residents Comments:**
2. **Old Business:**

 A. Update regarding 81 N. Drexel – Matt Klingler

 Director of Building and Planning

The applicant is requesting two (2) trees to be removed. Both trees are dying and it was recommended for safety issues for both to be removed. The trees that are declining are an Ash tree and a Hackberry. The architect and homeowner have been contacted and a request was made to plant 2 new trees with the same canopy cover.

 B. Bexley Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan requirement for the removal of

 wire baskets and burlap – Grant Archer, City Forester

Grant Archer presented This memo to address concerns regarding the new Tree Care and Planting plan for the City of Bexley, specifically concerning the requirement to remove all burlap and wire baskets during planting.

Following the passing of the new plan, I requested an updated quote from the contractor for the Fair Avenue project. The revised quote includes an additional cost of $3,204.33, which is roughly an extra $65 per tree, and the contractor would not provide a warranty for the trees under these conditions.

Further research involved contacting other landscape companies that have previously performed planting for us. All contacted companies also stated they would not warranty trees if all burlap and wire baskets were removed. Their reasoning is that this process significantly disturbs the roots during planting, leading to a reported death rate of approximately 80% in such cases.

Given this information, and in accordance with Section 5(V) of the planting plan (tree planting standards), subsection 6, I find the full removal of all burlap and wire baskets at planting to be impractical for the trees' health and, therefore, it will not be required. I recommend reconsidering these requirements.

For reference, Section 6 states: "Remove and discard the remainder of the wire basket. Remove the burlap to the bottom of the root ball. Preferably all burlap will be removed from the root ball and planting hole. If a contractor determines it is impractical to remove all burlap and/or the wire basket at planting, it shall report that fact to the City Forester, and provide pictorial evidence showing why the full removal of burlap and/or the wire basket is impractical."

 B. Framework for evaluating/reviewing landscape applications: – Matt Klingler

and Walter Reins, Tree and Public Gardens Commission staff consultant

 C. Update on Ordinance Review Working Group – Jim Wilson

 D. Education and Enforcing Mulch Ordinance – Matt Klingler

1. **Landscape Applications:**
2. **T**PGC 25-8 Fair Avenue Quercetum

**Project Description:** “In 2024, Trees for Bexley raised $37,000.00 to improve the 11 medians at Fair Avenue. Over the years, old trees have had to be removed and there are many opportunities to plant new ones. The street tree for the Fair Ave medians is a Bur Oak which is the majority of what is currently planted there now. During the design process, Paige Crane introduced the idea of a ‘Quercetum’ - an arboretum dedicated to oak trees. The City hired Spruce for the median design. The design fee included an assessment of the plant material, field locating the existing trees, meetings with an appointed design group, preparing drawings, Tree and Public Gardens Commission review, and coordination with Yard Barbers for an installation cost. There are 17 species of oaks native to Ohio. The medians currently have 39 oak trees, representing 6 of the native species. The proposed landscape plan will provide 36 new oak trees that will allow the other 11 native species to be represented. In the areas where there is not enough space, 21 pink or white dogwood trees will be planted as understory trees providing spring and fall color. Also included in the plan are replacement of the dead/dying plant material at the endcaps at Drexel and Gould Avenues. Approximately (9) existing trees have been designated as unhealthy and need to be removed.”

Using the 11 medians located along Fair Ave. from S. Drexel Ave. to S. Gould Rd. provides a great location to showcase a full collection of Ohio’s common and not-so-common native oak trees. - A site visit confirmed there are a number of trees located in the medians that are unhealthy. Some of these trees, if not already done so, should be deemed high risk due to their locations and close proximity to a number of targets.

- The use of smaller understory trees as well as the renovation of the endcap landscape beds will help to provide a varying aesthetic along the medians and offers options where larger trees (in maturity) do not have the room to grow.

 - Also noted during the site visit, the recent break in steady rainfall during the spring and summer months helped to reveal the root competition present in many of the areas throughout the medians, as the larger trees take much of the resources, resulting in a browning of the surrounding, unirrigated lawn areas. Since the new trees will be immediately adjacent to the well-established root systems of mature trees, this should be taken into consideration with the new plantings A more aggressive post-planting watering schedule for the first 1-2 years of establishment should be considered.

- Most species of oak native to Ohio are capable of adapting to a wide range of soil conditions, including pH, moisture, and soil composition. 2 exceptions to this are pin oak and scarlet oak. Central Ohio provides an overwhelming number of examples of pin oaks struggling with chlorosis due to high (alkaline) soil pH levels and a general lack of organic matter in most urban sites (though this is also occurring on very large, old, and mature trees that clearly were not chlorotic for much of their younger stages of growth, suggesting in influence by an outside variable in recent decades (lawn care practices perhaps?). Scarlet oak, though not as commonly planted and therefore not as commonly observed, can struggle similarly with neutral to alkaline soils. With Tree & Public Gardens Commission Application Staff Review Page 2 of 3 From Rev. September 2018 regards to plantings of specifically these 2 species in this project, consideration should be given to increasing the level of amendment of the planting holes to attempt to positively influence their long-term viability.

- Recommend approval of landscape plan as submitted.

1. **New Business:**
2. Trees for Bexley 2025-2026 Fundraising Campaign Focus – Ellen Bowden
3. **Staff reports:**
4. Matt Klingler,

Our Commercial Design Guidelines project is moving forward as well. After the successful public workshop, some additional meetings are being set with some key stakeholders to obtain more in-depth perspectives. We’ve also been circulating an online survey on the Blast to obtain more feedback from community members who weren’t able to attend the workshop. We’ll continue to keep Council posted as this develops

 B. Grant Archer

The crews are performing tree maintenance and groundwork throughout the city, working on tree pruning and mowing.

 C. Walter Reins

 D. Troy Markham, City Council Liaison to Tree Commission

 E. Other

1. **Election of 2025-26 Chair and Vice-Chair – Mrs. Quintenz**

Celeste Williams made a motion to Approve – ‘the Election of 2025-26 Chair Jim Wilson and Susan Quintenz as Vice-Chair.’

Motion seconded by Sheila Straub Vote 5 - 0 - passed.

For Sheila Straub, Susan Quintenz, Linda Zupnick, Celeste Williams, Jim Wilson

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Charlie Flower, Mary McMunn

1. **Adjourn**
2. **Next meeting is Wednesday, September 17, 2025.**