

CITY OF OAKWOOD
STATE OF OHIO
JUNE 6, 2022

The Council of the city of Oakwood, State of Ohio, met in a work session and executive session at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room of the city of Oakwood, 30 Park Avenue, Oakwood, Ohio, 45419. Council then met in a regular session at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers of the city of Oakwood.

The meeting was streamed live from the Oakwood city website, telecast live on Cable Access Channel 6 and was available via remote teleconferencing utilizing the Zoom.com platform.

The Mayor, Mr. William Duncan, presided, and the Clerk of Council, Ms. Lori Stacel, recorded. Mayor Duncan opened the meeting by asking all present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Upon call of the roll, the following members of Council responded to their names:

MR. WILLIAM D. DUNCAN.....	PRESENT
MR. STEVEN BYINGTON	PRESENT
MR. ROBERT P. STEPHENS.....	PRESENT
MRS. ANNE S. HILTON.....	PRESENT
MRS. LEIGH TURBEN	PRESENT

Officers of the City present were the following:

Mr. Norbert S. Klopsch, City Manager
Mr. Robert F. Jacques, City Attorney
Ms. Carol Collins, Leisure Services Director
Ms. Lori Stacel, Clerk of Council

The following in-person visitors registered:

Oakwood High School Academic Decathlon Team Members & Family
Oakwood School Superintendent Dr. Kyle Ramey
Ms. Cheryl Vargas, 210 Telford Avenue
Mr. Brian Barr, *Oakwood Register*

The following Zoom visitors attended via remote teleconference:

Mr. John Hemmert, AES

Mrs. Hilton advised Council she had read the meeting minutes of the May 2 regular session and work session, and the May 16 work session and executive session. Mrs. Hilton noted that she found the minutes correct and complete. Therefore, it was moved by Mrs. Hilton and seconded by Mr. Stephens that the minutes of the sessions of Council aforementioned be approved and the reading thereof at this session be dispensed with. Upon a viva voce vote on the question of the motion, same passed unanimously and it was so ordered.

STATUS REPORTS

Citizen Committee Appointments – Mayor Duncan presented the new appointment of Kate Halpin to the Budget Review Committee, Precinct G.

It was moved by Mayor Duncan and seconded by Vice Mayor Byington that the aforementioned appointment be confirmed. Upon a viva voce vote on the question of the motion, same passed unanimously and it was so ordered.

Electricity Rates – Mayor Duncan invited Mr. Jacques to comment on electricity costs and alternative electricity suppliers.

Mr. Jacques shared that with AES Ohio raising and potentially doubling the price of base electric rates, consumers are exploring their options to save on energy costs. He explained that a standard electric bill is divided into two components: a distribution component and a supply component. The distribution component is a fixed rate that consumers cannot change. The supply component is variable and consumers have the option to choose their electric supplier. Consumers have the option to continue with their current energy provider with the “standard offer,” choose an alternative third party energy marker, or participate in government aggregation, if available.

Mr. Jacques explained that government aggregation has been explored, but city staff is not seeing the potential for significant cost savings. The Ohio Consumers’ Counsel is the statewide legal representative for Ohio’s residential consumers in utility matters. Mr. Jacques noted that the Counsel basically looks out for the rights of consumers in Ohio. The Counsel recently stated that, in the aggregate, consumers typically get the best rates through their utility provider’s “standard offer.”

Mr. Jacques referenced a PowerPoint presentation and shared information about the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's (PUCO) "Apples to Apples" online tool that allows individual customers to shop around for alternative electricity suppliers. He displayed search results from the online tool showing a list of electricity suppliers, along with their rates and terms. He pointed out that there are often variable rates or teaser rates, as well as other risks that need to be taken into consideration. Mr. Jacques stated that because of all of these potential risk factors, the Ohio Consumers' Counsel generally recommends staying with their utility provider's "standard offer."

Mayor Duncan thanked Mr. Jacques for his report.

AN OAKWOOD MOMENT

Vice Mayor Byington recognized the Oakwood Academic Decathlon Team for winning their 10th consecutive Division III national title. He explained the ten-event competition that earned them the title and individually recognized the nine Academic Decathlon students.

Dr. Ramey congratulated the team and thanked City Council for recognizing them at the meeting.

VISITORS

Cheryl Vargas, 210 Telford Avenue, thanked Personnel and Properties Director Jennifer Wilder and Code Enforcement Officer Ethan Kroger for listening to her suggestions regarding the Oakwood weed ordinance and natural landscaping. She appreciates that city staff made some thoughtful changes to the ordinance to clearly address native plants and landscaping.

LEGISLATION

AN ORDINANCE

BY MRS. HILTON NO 4959

REPEALING CURRENT SECTION 549.01, *SALE OR DISCHARGE OF FIREWORKS*, OF THE OAKWOOD GENERAL OFFENSES CODE, AND ENACTING NEW SECTION 549.01, *SALE OR DISCHARGE OF FIREWORKS*, OF THE GENERAL OFFENSES CODE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDRESSING THE PROVISIONS OF H.B. 172 CONCERNING THE RIGHT OF MUNICIPALITIES TO RETAIN REGULATIONS AND PROHIBITIONS ON THE DISCHARGE, IGNITION AND EXPLODING OF FIREWORKS THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO THE ENACTMENT OF H.B. 172

A copy of the ordinance, having been placed on the desks of each member of Council prior to introduction, was read by title.

Mrs. Hilton explained that the Governor of Ohio recently signed H.B. 172, which amends state law to legalize the discharge of fireworks on private property on certain designated days of the year. H.B. 172 also provides that pursuant to its constitutional home rule authority, a city may choose to restrict the days and times that a person may discharge consumer grade fireworks or may impose a complete ban on the use of consumer grade fireworks.

Oakwood is almost entirely residential, and has nearly 4,000 housing units within 2.2 square miles. Given this density, fireworks pose a significant risk to persons and property, and the Director of Public Safety has recommended that Council opt out of H.B. 172 and reaffirm Oakwood's existing ban on possessing, selling or discharging fireworks. Of note, Oakwood has prohibited fireworks for over 100 years, dating back to 1920.

The ordinance being introduced will update and reaffirm Oakwood's ban on fireworks before the new state law takes effect on July 1, 2022. The ordinance was introduced with a first reading at the April 4 Council meeting.

Thereupon, it was moved by Mrs. Hilton and seconded by Mrs. Turben that the ordinance be passed.

Upon call of the roll on the question of the motion, the following vote was recorded:

MR. WILLIAM D. DUNCAN.....	YEA
MR. STEVEN BYINGTON.....	YEA
MR. ROBERT P. STEPHENS	YEA
MRS. ANNE HILTON	YEA
MRS. LEIGH TURBEN	YEA

There being five (5) yea votes and no (0) nay votes thereon, said ordinance was declared duly passed and it was so ordered.

AN ORDINANCE

BY MR. STEPHENS

NO 4960

AMENDING CHAPTER 551, *WEEDS*, OF THE OAKWOOD GENERAL OFFENSES CODE BY UPDATING THE TITLE THEREOF TO *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*, ADDING RELEVANT DEFINITIONS, REORDERING EXISTING PROVISIONS, AND INCORPORATING NEW PROVISIONS TO AUTHORIZE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MANAGED NATURAL LANDSCAPE AREAS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY.

A copy of the ordinance, having been placed on the desks of each member of Council prior to introduction, was read by title.

Mr. Stephens explained that this is an ordinance to update Oakwood's laws on noxious weeds and mowing. It does not make significant changes to the existing requirement that grass and weeds be mowed or maintained at a height of 8" or less. However, Council recognizes that there is a growing movement to think about landscaping in new or non-traditional ways, particularly with regard to the use of native plants, rain gardens, and butterfly gardens. These kinds of plantings have always been permitted in Oakwood, but have not been clearly addressed in the Code, which is the purpose of the ordinance is being introduced.

This ordinance makes the following changes:

1. It updates the title of the chapter from "Weeds" to "Landscape Management."
2. It adds relevant definitions, as well as a statement of purpose that reads:

"The purpose of this chapter is to encourage the use of vegetation throughout the City to maximize ecological and aesthetic benefits while respecting existing community values regarding landscaping to include well-maintained yards, preservation of sight lines, compatibility with existing structures, and public safety. Ecological benefits of "managed natural landscapes" include enhancement of pollinator support habitat, stormwater management, carbon sequestration, erosion control, and preservation of biodiversity."

3. It eliminates the species-specific list of weeds contained in the current ordinance. Instead, it defines "weed" in a manner that encompasses any type of vegetation that is neglected or overgrown.
4. For properties that are placarded due to high grass or weeds and mowed by the city, the new ordinance will allow a streamlined notice process that makes it easier to deal with subsequent violations after the first violation.
5. It adds provisions to expressly authorize property owners to establish "managed natural landscape areas" on their property. It is important to note that this does NOT give homeowners permission to neglect their yards or allow them to "go wild." The key concept behind a managed natural landscape area is that it must be "managed and maintained" as required by the new ordinance.

This was a first reading of the ordinance, so Mr. Stephens made no motion.

STAFF REPORT

Leisure Services Report: Ms. Carol Collins, Leisure Services Director, delivered the following report:

Gardner Pool opened over Memorial Day weekend. There have been 461 family pool memberships, 61 single memberships and 92 senior memberships purchased so far this season. The Oakwood Community Center (OCC) has three "Summer Fun at the Pool" family nights planned on the following Sunday dates: June 19, July 3 and August 14. Pool staff will organize relay races and fun games throughout the night. The pool will close at 9 p.m. on all three nights, one hour later than normal.

The Oakwood Dolphins continue to dominate their league with over 160 swimmers. The registration deadline for the OCC and "Swimtopia" is Sunday, June 12.

Gardner Pool staff offers swim lessons that are certified by the American Red Cross. The lessons are available for toddlers with parents all the way to advanced Level V and VI.

Gardner Pool offers two different types of water workouts. A "Deep Water Workout" is offered on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, and "Water Aerobics" is available on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

The Oakwood Community Center will be offering the following summer camps and activities: Quilting Camps, Irish Dance Camp, Camp Shafor, Kiddie Camp, Skyhawks Sports Camps, Girls Field Hockey Camp, Camp Hodge Podge, Ballet Dance Camps, Kidz Home Alone & Better

Babysitters, Super Kids Study Skills, Kids Trivia, Youth Tennis, Ultimate Frisbee Camp, Youth Theatre Camp and Old River Sports Camp. The following adult classes will also be offered: Tennis, Bambini Beats/Golden Beats, Tai Chi, Upper Body Conditioning, Kid +1 Yoga, PiYo, Core Strength and Stretch, HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training,) Dancercize and Indoor Spinning.

The city of Oakwood took possession of the Hollinger Memorial Tennis Club in late 2016. The Oakwood Community Center is responsible for collecting all monetary donations and membership revenue for the club. To date, there have been 56 memberships renewed, including four new summer memberships.

For the 41st consecutive year, Ohio was recognized as the nation's leader in Tree City USA communities, with 237 participating cities, villages and townships. In 2021, Ohioans planted more than 24,000 trees, pruned more than 77,000 trees, volunteered more than 39,000 hours in urban forestry programs, and invested a combined total of \$40 million toward urban forestry efforts. Oakwood was recognized for 40 years as a Tree City USA city.

In 43 consecutive years, a total of 3,183 trees have been planted through the Johnny Appleseed Street Tree Planting Project at a total cost of \$442,464. The program is offered each year and includes a 50% discount to homeowners for trees that are planted in the city rights-of-way.

This year's annual "Arbor Day Celebration" included a "Treasure Hunt" to find different species of trees in Oakwood for kids from both Smith School and Harman School. The event included a coloring contest with over 90 entries.

The OCC, in conjunction with Wright Memorial Public Library, is presenting another fun season of "Story Hour at Smith Gardens". The events offer a magical morning in the Gardens as the Children's Librarian reads enchanting stories at 10:30 a.m. on the following Friday dates: June 24, July 29 and August 26.

The 2022 Friends of Smith Gardens Perennial Sale raised approximately \$6,300. During the sale, around 25 children participated in the Garden Workshop for Kids.

The 2022 Smith Gardens Blanket Concerts began last Sunday with Madcap Puppets – "Fantastic Fairy Tales." The remaining concerts are scheduled for Sunday, July 24 at 7 p.m. – The Blue Leaf's Band and Sunday, August 21 at 7 p.m. – Murphy/Kelch. Hundreds of people enjoy these free concerts every summer by bringing their families, blankets and chairs to relax in the beauty of Smith Gardens. In case of rain, the concerts will be held at the OCC.

Ms. Collins recognized the Oakwood Beautification Committee for doing a beautiful job with the Far Hills boulevard planting near Telford Avenue.

Ms. Collins closed her presentation by sharing information on the City's upcoming annual events. Oakwood's Ice Cream Social is scheduled for 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 14. Scarecrow Row and the Family Fall Festival are scheduled for Sunday, October 9. The Holiday of Lights event is scheduled for 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 11.

Mr. Stephens asked if the number of pool memberships are back to where they were before COVID-19.

Ms. Collins answered yes.

Mrs. Turben thanked Ms. Collins for coordinating so many different activities throughout the Oakwood community.

Ms. Collins said that she appreciates the opportunity to serve the residents of Oakwood.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Klopsch noted that Ms. Collins accomplishes a lot with a very small staff. He then reported on the following items:

Pickleball courts will soon be available at Orchardly Park. One of the two tennis courts at Orchardly Park will be converted to two pickleball courts.

Mr. Klopsch shared that as a resident on Volusia, he has purchased trees through the Johnny Appleseed Street Tree Planting Project each of the last three years, and he plans to buy another one this year. Mr. Klopsch commented that that is a wonderful program for Oakwood.

The monthly debris drop-off event at the Public Works Center continues to be heavily used. He participated in the event last weekend and there were cars lined up with items to drop off.

This year's leaf mulch program ended the second week of May, but there is a pile of leftover mulch available for pick-up at the Public Works Center while it lasts.

Asphalt repaving is scheduled for the latter part of July. Additional information, including a list of streets being repaved, is available on the City's website and in the June/July *Oakwood Scene* newsletter.

The annual Sidewalk, Curb and Driveway Apron project work will not begin until September due to a backlog of infrastructure work in the region.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Turben shared that she will travel to Le Vésinet in late June to represent Oakwood at the 50th anniversary of the twinning between Oakwood and Le Vésinet.

Mr. Stephens congratulated the Oakwood High School graduating class of 2022 and wished them luck. He thanked the Oakwood community on behalf of Oakwood Rotary and Oakwood City Council for their support of the "That Day in May" event.

Vice Mayor Byington shared that the Oakwood Farmers' Market opened this past Saturday. He encouraged people to come out and visit. He congratulated the Oakwood High School girls track team on winning their second straight Division II state championship.

Mayor Duncan shared that he recently attended the first in-person change-of-command ceremony at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in over two years. The National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base welcomed Colonel Ariel Batungbacal as its new commander.

The public meeting concluded at 8:20 p.m.



MAYOR

ATTEST:



CLERK OF COUNCIL