



Open Space and Visual Environment Commission

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Oberlin Enrichment and Activity Center (OEAC)

36 N. Prospect St.

Also: Virtual Meeting Live Streamed @ <http://oberlinoh.swagit.com/live>

Members Present: Chris Kulhanek (chair), Martin Buck (vice-chair), Carmen McFarlin, Elizabeth Meadows, Miles Samson

Others Present: OSVEC: Jeff Baumann, Staff Support; Sheri Runals, Staff Support; Jessa New, City Council Liaison; Jason Keltner, B&G Superintendent

GPD Group: Leanne Andrysko, Jason Nolde

Recreation Commission: Kevin Miller, Alex Kosman, Andrew Pike, NaStasha Cochran, Recreation Director Ian Yarber

Call Meeting to Order and Roll Call

Kulhanek called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m. Roll call was taken. Introductions were made.

Joint Meeting with the Recreation Commission and GPD Group of Akron, OH to discuss the Planning Study and Feasibility Assessment for the Oberlin Enrichment and Activity Center (OEAC)

Baumann stated that the city has owned the former Prospect building (NKA Oberlin Enrichment and Activity Center – OEAC) for a little over 3 ½ years. The former city manager sent Yarber over to the Prospect building to try to conquer this monstrosity. Since then, the city has been trying to figure out how to keep the heat on and the doors open. Baumann said that with Keltner's and Yarber's help they embarked on a qualification-based process. GPD Group was chosen as the most qualified architectural and engineering planning consultant to help us through this process. The OEAC planning team was expanded to include Recreation Assistant Dave Witworth; City Council Member Jessa New; Heidi Freas, owner of Welcome Nursing Home; and Kevin Miller, Recreation Commission Chair to develop the scope of work. The planning team has branched out from the internal stakeholder outreach to groups such as the seniors who currently have space at the OEAC.

Andrysko stated that the GPD Group has a small presentation with some survey opportunities to talk with the group to really craft what the building wants to become. GPD has been working with Baumann and the planning team on what the stakeholder conversations are. They would like to craft a mission and a set of guiding principles for what the building wants to be. The building is largely used by the Recreation Department. Discussions have been held about who would be able to occupy the building. GPD is hoping to get some feedback on what the perspective is for who and what this building is for Oberlin.

Andryscio stated that a big piece of the scope that they are working through is the facility assessment. They are working on a comprehensive report on what it means to make the building safe and dry. They will look at the structural system, HVAC system, plumbing, etc. They will continue on-going stakeholder engagement. A survey will be launched to the community, and a community open house will be held at the OEAC. Once they get through the first piece, they will look at the program of what the building looks like. They will look at how many departments or groups want to be in the building and how much space they need. They will look outside of the building and see what the community may want that space to be. All this information will become a master plan for the City of Oberlin on what this building is.

The goal is to create a mission statement and set of guiding principles to serve as a decision-making tool for the future planning of the OEAC. Andryscio went through the survey with the members in attendance. The questions and answers are provided in the attached document. *See attached.*

Andryscio said that they want the space to be welcoming and used by everyone. Baumann stated that one thing that most people like about Oberlin is the diversity, but this does come with an uneasy tension. He wants to find a way to make this space feel ok to people. Not everyone feels comfortable. The city administration considers the public library a neutral space that everyone accepts. As Public Works Director, Baumann hears, from time to time, allegations that the department provides services differentially or capital projects differentially to the folks that live on the east side of town as opposed to the folks that live on the west side of town. If the city would put \$3 million to \$5 million in a project on the west side of town it means we would not have the same type of money to invest in the UGRR, the recreation park, or Green Acres. We are going to get to a point where we will have to make choices and find a way to make the OEAC space available and welcoming to everyone.

Samson stated that there needs to be other ways to get to the OEAC if you are not driving. New said that people that live in the far east will not likely come to programs at the OEAC since it is not centrally located. The city's responsibility will take a whole lot of extra effort, marketing, promotion, and transportation to get people that live east of Professor St. to come to the OEAC. Kosman does not think that even with a large amount of effort to try to get people to go to the OEAC they will not. He said that even if you can make it accessible as you want and put signs everywhere and provide transportation, you would still need to sell people to go. The city needs to look at how much is going in a location that may not get utilized. New does not think that a lot of what we do as a city is communicated to the extent of its potential. There is only one person in the communications department.

Meadows would like to see the building maximized to its potential. The city was given the building and needs to make the investment to utilize what they can afford. This would be an opportunity to create a community center.

Andryscio thanked the commission members for all the feedback. She announced that the community engagement open house will be on August 20th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Baumann added that a postcard will be mailed to all utility customers.

Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.



Sheri Runals, OSVEC Secretary

Approved: 9 / 23 / 2025