
THE ADDITION OF A STUDENT MEMBER TO THE AVON TREE COMMISSION

EXPLORING THE “WHY” AND THE “HOW”

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TO THE CITY OF AVON TREE COMMISSION





INTRODUCTION

Objective:

- To understand the purpose and process behind adding a student member to the Avon Tree Commission.

Overview of the Tree Commission:

- The function of the Tree Commission is to study, advise and encourage the adoption and then implementation of a comprehensive plan for the proper planting of new and replacement trees and maintaining the health of existing trees in the urban forest.
- The Tree Commission is essential for the community because they provide resource materials and information pertaining to proper tree selection and care to the residents of Avon.
- The Tree Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

WHY ADD A STUDENT MEMBER

ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
FOSTERING A SENSE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

BRING FRESH PERSPECTIVES

STUDENTS BRING INNOVATIVE IDEAS, NEW TRENDS, AND AN
UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUES FROM YOUNGER GENERATIONS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND PUBLIC POLICY,
URBAN ECOLOGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

BUILDING A DIVERSE VOICE

THE COMMISSION CAN BENEFIT FROM DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES, MAKING
DECISIONS MORE MULTI-GENERATIONAL AND COMPREHENSIVE





BENEFITS TO THE TREE COMMISSION



**Increased Awareness of
Student Concerns**



**Direct communication of
environmental concerns
and challenges faced by
students**



**Strengthened
Community Connection**



**Builds a connection with
younger generations and
creates advocates for tree
preservation and
environmental efforts in
the future**



**Future Leadership
Pipeline**



**Exposure to governance
and environmental
management can inspire
future leaders**

THE SELECTION PROCESS

- **Application and Nomination:**

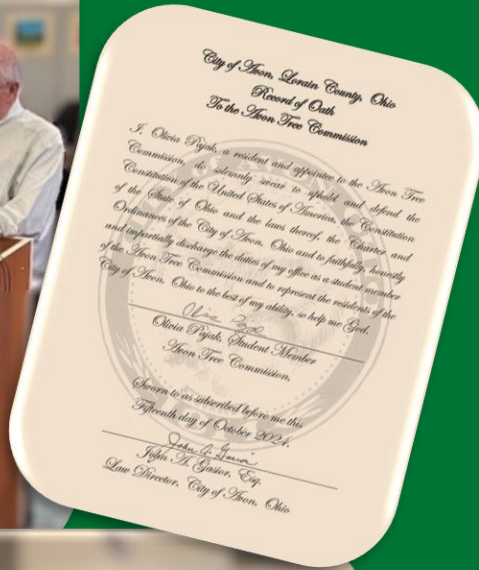
- To engage the interest of younger citizens of Avon to become more involved in the community, the Tree Commission recommended the creation of a position for a local high school student to become an appointed member of the Tree Commission and subsequently City Council passed Ordinance No. 66-24 on June 24, 2024, to allow such.
- The selected candidate must be an Avon resident, and a high school student at least sixteen years of age. The position is not compensated, non-voting, and for a term of two-years.
- The Tree Commission received five strong applications and conducted interviews, ultimately facing a difficult decision due to the high qualifications of all the applicants.
- After interviews were conducted, the Tree Commission made a recommendation to the Mayor as to their preference of a student member to the Tree Commission. Mayor Jensen subsequently made the appointment on October 15, 2024, based on the recommendation made by the Tree Commission.

- **Role of the Student Member:**

- Responsibilities and expectations include attending Tree Commission meetings, contributing input, and engaging in discussions.
- The hope is that the student member will help engage peers in activities related to the Tree Commission such as the Arbor Day celebrations.



Olivia Pajak



APPOINTMENT TO THE AVON TREE COMMISSION

OATH OF OFFICE
OCTOBER 15, 2024



"I am interested in becoming more active in the community in a way that allows me to explore my passion for nature and the environment all while helping my community stay beautiful and healthy. I am a huge advocate for protecting and enhancing the environment so this would be a great opportunity for me." ~ Olivia Pajak

HOW THE STUDENT MEMBER CONTRIBUTES

- **Voice in Discussions:**
 - Suggest implementing educational programs or organizing workshops targeted at local schools to increase awareness about the importance of trees.
 - Create a “Tree Ambassador” program for local students to lead tree planting and care events.
 - Leverage social media for outreach to promote the commissions work and engage the younger community.
- **Bridging Generational Gaps:**
 - Encouraging more involvement from the local community, particularly from the youth demographic.
 - Encourage future leaders to take an active role in urban forestry and sustainability efforts.
- **Educational Outreach:**
 - Sharing knowledge with peers and helping foster environmental awareness in schools or universities.





COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- Broader Engagement:
 - The presence of a student member can motivate other youth to engage in environmental actions.
- Long-Term Commitment to Sustainability:
 - Encouraging long-term environmental stewardship by involving youth early in the decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

- The benefits of including a student member:

Fresh perspectives, youth engagement, educational opportunities.

- Future Goals:

Encourage continued youth involvement and collaboration with local government on environmental issues.

QUESTIONS?





THANK YOU

- Rick Varga, Arborist and Chair
- Mary Berges, Council Representative

To the Avon Tree Commission