

**City of Oxford Tree Board  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, August 3rd, 2023**

**Opening**

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in special session on Thursday, August 3rd, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. in the City Hall Courtroom. The following were present:

**Tree Board:**

Cowan Hunter, Co-Chairman

Hume Bryant, Co-Chairman

Ed Croom

Mary Hartwell Howorth

\*Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, City of Oxford

\*ex-officio, non-voting

**Other:**

Megan Baker, Building Department

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects

Alex Ballard, MS Forestry Commission

Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist

**Call to Order**

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:07 AM.

**Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Cowan Hunter motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Hume Bryant seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

## **Approval of the July 2023 Minutes**

Commissioner Hunter motioned to approved the July 2023 Minutes. Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

## **Departmental Issues and Reports**

### **1. Buildings and Grounds**

- a. Inquiries or requests for assistance from property owners or others*
  
- b. Hazards, Removals, etc. ( Oak behind Oxford Floral)*

There was discussion regarding the Oak Tree behind Oxford Floral. Commissioner Hunter moved to support the removal of the tree because of potential hazard. Commissioner Howorth seconded, all in favor. Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, indicated the removal could be scheduled within the next two weeks.

- c. Update on Tribute Trees Project*

Commissioner Hunter let the Tree Board know he briefly met with Mayor Robyn Tannehill prior to the Tree Board meeting. Per Commissioner Hunter, they discussed Arbor Day as well as the Mayor's office planning to incorporate a park dedication into the event. See the business section. Commissioner Hunter also provided mock-ups of possible signage in relation to the Tribute Trees Project and a form he had shown the Mayor. There was discussion. Greg planned to provide the Tribute Trees Form to the City Clerk's Department.

- d. Update on Arborist Position and FY24 Budget Priorities.*

Greg briefly updated the Tree Board about the FY24 budget in relation to his department, but had nothing new to report for the regarding the proposed arborist position.

### **2. Planning**

- a. Current or upcoming development issues*

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not able to attend the meeting, therefore there was nothing new to report from the Planning Department.

### **3. Engineering / Special Projects**

#### *a. Update re: project timeline, etc for Brittany Woods Connector*

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, provided the Tree Board with an update regarding the Brittany Woods Connector Project. There was discussion and Mark was asked to get out a tree planting plan when possible. Commissioner Hunter informed the Tree Board that Bart Robinson, Chief Operating Officer for the City of Oxford, had been sent revised budget information regarding the FY24 Budget including Brittany Woods.

#### *b. Update re: City Hall Pocket Park ( Arbor Day 2023 site)*

The Tree Board discussed with Mark the need to get with Greg regarding Arbor Day. It was also discussed that the Mayor would like for Mark to make sure the Tribute Tree signage was appropriate for City branding. Commissioner Hunter stated he would provide a copy of the sign mock up the Mayor had seen for Mark to work from and Mark responded that he would work on it.

### **Business**

#### *1. Further discussion of Arbor Day 2023 planning, display, etc.*

The Tree Board discussed that the ribbon cutting for the City Hall Pocket Park as well as Arbor Day 2023 will be on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM. There was discussion regarding a display that would be in the City Hall lobby for Arbor Day. Commissioner Howorth reported she would be contacting the principal at Central Elementary School regarding the proposed Arbor Day poster contest.

#### *2. Discuss Tree Plotter workshop, consider tentative date and location.*

Alex Ballard, with MS Forestry Commission, indicated his boss wants Tree Plotter to be utilized. There was discussion regarding a potential workshop to help everyone learn how to use it. Commissioner Hunter indicated there would need to be a meeting between Greg and Lesley Rakestraw, City of Oxford GIS Analyst, about who would be imputing information into the system. There was further discussion. Alex reported to the Tree Board he had started on the tree canopy project. It was reported that an initial test canopy study using under 1,000 data points has been completed with positive results, indicating the tree canopy cover to be 66% in the city limits of Oxford, MS, and even pinning a parking lot tree as a data point. Commissioner Hunter invited Alex to attend the Board of Alderman meeting to be introduced to the Mayor and Board. Alex indicated he would attend on September 5<sup>th</sup> and speak regarding Tree City USA and the MS Forestry Commissions partnerships within these cities.

3. *Discuss items for upcoming Board of Alderman Tree Board update.*

Commissioner Hunter discussed with the Tree Board the Mayor's indication that the proposed arborist position was unlikely to gain approval due to increased funding mandates for PERS. Per Commissioner Hunter, the Mayor indicated that nothing had been decided yet. Commissioner Hunter indicated he discussed why he believed it was an important position for tree conservation efforts as well as Greg's department. There was discussion.

**Move to Adjourn**

Commissioner Hunter motioned to adjourn at 12:02 PM. Commissioner Bryant seconded; all members voted aye.