

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Meeting Minutes
July 7th, 2022**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in regular session on Thursday, July 7, 2022 at 11:00 A.M. in the City Hall Courtroom with phone/video conference available. The following were present:

Tree Board:

Cowan Hunter, Co-Chairman
Hume Bryant, Co-Chairman
Ed Croom
Mary Hartwell Howorth
Bill Freeman
Greg Pinion*, Director of Building and Grounds
Allison Ferris*, Secretary

Representatives of the City of Oxford:

No other representatives from the City of Oxford were able to attend the meeting.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:06 A.M.

Approval of the Agenda

Commission Cowan Hunter motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Cowan Hunter motioned to accept the revised May Meeting Minutes as well as the June Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye. Commissioners Bill Freeman and Hume Bryant noted they would abstain from voting since they were not present for the previous meeting, however, Commissioner Freeman appreciated the May Minutes being revised. The motion passed.

Departmental Issues and Reports

1. Buildings and Grounds

a. Assistance to property owners, removals, etc. –

Per Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, Tree trimming has been on-going. Greg noted he has met with several homeowners. He also reported Eagle Springs would have a substantial limb removal. Greg discussed the on-going general trimming as well as working with AT&T to oversee tree-trimming in Right-of-Way for projects. Greg commented there was an on-going list of trees that need to be looked at due to the heat. There was discussion. Greg also advised regarding the reporting process for problem areas i.e. contact Building and Grounds. There was discussion regarding issues with the destruction of city property i.e. damaged trees and possible penalties & surveillance.

b. Tree conservation priorities, plans, recommendations for FY 23

Cowan asked Greg about priorities for tree conservation for the upcoming FY23 and support he may need from the Tree Board. Greg reported on the budgeting process for trees and maintenance. Greg discussed the on-going tree work at Baptist Memorial Hospital. Greg also commented he would like to revisit projects on Belk and Old Taylor Road, and he indicated it would be a substantial project i.e. more than re-planting trees. There was further discussion. Greg remarked on the possibility for necessary work on Price Street near the activities center. There was also discussion regarding the importance of considering what should be planted in certain areas. Cowan noted he wanted Greg to indicate if the projects discussed would be able to be managed by the Building and Grounds department. Greg discussed the capability of the Building and Grounds Department to maintain a certain number of trees each year in relation to 3-4 new projects. There was discussion regarding further evaluation in relation to new projects i.e. looking at areas in town that could use new trees, not committing to use escrow funding to maintain trees, and having proposals for the projects. There was further discussion.

2. Planning

Director of Planning, Ben Requet, was not able to attend the meeting.

a. South Grove update

Cowan reported to Hume and Freeman that he, Croom, and Howorth went out to the South Grove due to the reported concerns referenced at the previous June meeting. Cowan noted the citizens' concerns seemed to be in relation to the Planning Department requirements not the development plans. Freeman reported he believed this case has been pushed to a different date for the Planning Commission. Cowan noted he had not heard anything further from Ben. Cowan recommended that Hume talk with Ben regarding his concerns with the tree planting plans for this project.

b. Tree conservation recommendations for FY 23

Director of Planning, Ben Requet, was not able to attend the meeting.

3. Engineering, Special Projects –

Director of Special Projects, Mark Levy, was not able to attend the meeting.

a. Updates on FY 22 project –

Cowan noted that for the August meeting he would have firmer numbers regarding what has been spent for FY 22 as well as for FY 23. But, noted below are the projects and figures that were discussed during the meeting:

- Price Street – \$20, 000-\$21,000 - Cowan reported this has been budgeted and would be coming from the FY 22 budget.
- Oxford Commons Fire Station - \$11,000
- Woodlawn and Meadowlawn Culvert Project - \$9,700 - Cowan noted he would discuss with Mark Levy and Bart Robinson, Chief Operating Officer, regarding the current plans for this project.
- Tribute Trees/Signage - \$4,000 - Cowan noted these funds had yet to be used.
- Green Grove Arborist - \$5,500 - Cowan noted these funds were on track to be used for FY 22.
- Landscaping projects –\$3,000 - Cowan noted funds were budgeted for previous planner, Grey Parker, that haven't been used
- McElroy Project - \$7,275 - These funds were allocated for planting trees along the airport. Cowan noted it had to be determined regarding City Right-of-Way.
- Cemetery Shed - \$4,200 – Project was completed, per Cowan.

b. Project recommendations, plans for FY 23

Cowan reported he and Mark Levy had discussed possible adjustments to plans for FY 23 i.e. including the cemetery project, taking off other projects. Cowan reported he would get with Mark & provide better numbers for the budget prior to the next meeting in order to finalize the recommended projects.

Business

1. Discussion of budget recommendations for FY23 tree conservation

Cowan noted inflation would impact projects, costs, and the budgeting process. Cowan reported he and Bart Robinson, Chief Operating Officer, had discussed the budget in relation to the Cemetery Project i.e. \$30,000 that would be used from the Tree Escrow fund. There was further discussion regarding budgeting as well as the process of money being put in the Tree Escrow fund. Cowan noted he agreed with Greg's recommendation to keep the projects at 2-3 manageable projects as well as noted that the Board of Alderman has the ability to allocate

funds. There was further discussion. Croom inquired about options for seeing the plans for the possible proposed projects and plans in advance as well as recommended the Tree Board be firm in asking for the plans. There was further discussion. Cowan noted he would speak with Mark Levy regarding the plans and budgets for the new projects for the Tree Board to review. Cowan also noted that if future needs were identified that were not part of the proposed FY 23 budget, the Tree Board could go to the Board of Alderman at that time. There was further discussion regarding implementing the tribute tree project. Cowan noted he would also ask Mark for firmer plans for Old Taylor for the August meeting as well as asked that Greg and other Tree Board members to discuss their ideas with Mark.

Freeman reported he was approached by a couple of neighbors that have security concerns about the trees on the bike trail on Molly Barr. Freeman reported he inquired with an Oxford Police Department officer regarding past incidents and there was discussion. Greg noted he's not had reports of security concerns, but has had people report visibility concerns. There was further discussion, and Cowan recommended a site visit. Freeman also inquired about Oxford Utilities plans for underground utilities and the long-term goal of moving underground. There was more discussion. Cowan noted he believed they could ask Rob Neely, Director of Oxford Utilities, to attend a future meeting.

2. Update on Green Groves Arborist project

Per Cowan, Matt Nielson was out of the country, but was able to provide him with information and updates. According to Cowan, Matt reported the tree owners' project was moving along, but that he is running behind schedule. Cowan reported Matt plans to schedule tree tours with City of Oxford staff as well as present recommendations in the future.

Adjourn

Cowan Hunter made a motion to adjourn. Hume Bryant seconded the motion. All members voted aye; the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 P.M.

