

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 6th, 2023**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in special session on Thursday, July 6th, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. in the City Hall Courtroom. The following were present:

Tree Board:

Cowan Hunter, Co-Chairman

Ed Croom

Bill Freeman

Mary Hartwell Howorth

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

*Allison Ferris, Office Manager for Engineering Department- City of Oxford, Secretary for Tree Board

*ex-officio, non-voting

Other:

Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist

Call to Order

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:14 AM.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Bill Freeman motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Approval of the May and June 2023 Minutes

Commissioner Hunter discussed a public records request from a citizen for Tree Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Hunter thanked Allison Ferris for providing the requested information. Commissioner Hunter reminded the Tree Board all meetings are available to stream each

month online. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter reminded the Tree Board as members they may be asked about information. Allison informed the Tree Board the meeting minutes are available on the City of Oxford website on the Tree Board's designated webpage. Commissioner Hunter noted there were minor corrections to the minutes that Allison corrected prior to the meeting, therefore, he motioned to approve the May and June 2023 Minutes, Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. 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

Greg Pinion reported the Building and Grounds Department has been dealing with multiple issues with trees down due recent storms. Greg discussed with the Tree Board a mature tree in the City Right of Way behind the business of Oxford Floral. There was discussion regarding issues that come from that tree. Greg indicated it was an Oak tree and asked the Tree Board to go assess the area and report back.

b. Hazards, removals, tree maintenance work, etc.

Greg discussed various small tree removals had occurred around the City as well as a small upcoming removal of a dead tree. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter discussed with Greg a big tree in the community that appears to be dead. Greg discussed with the Tree Board of the role of code enforcement and the process for hazardous trees.

c. Progress update on Tribute Tree Groves

Greg informed the Tree Board he'd been contacted by someone desiring to purchase a Tribute Tree in honor of her father. There was discussion regarding Commissioners Hunter's interaction with this person as well as the Tribute Tree Form, process, and payment. Commissioner Hunter indicated he may also purchase a Tribute Tree for Lamar Park in honor of his brother. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hunter summarized for the Tree Board the workflow when a request has been received i.e., submit request for Tribute Tree, Appointment to Details, and Payment Process. Greg recommended the Tree Board focus on signage and a website for the Tribute Tree information. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hunter discussed other ideas for possible layout/details for a sign. Commissioner Hunter indicated the Tree Board would be talking about the necessary funding in the Business Section of this meeting.

d. Progress update on arborist position

Greg informed the Tree Board he'd presented the proposed Arborist position at the first round of budget meetings for the upcoming fiscal year. He indicated it was not affirmed or denied. There was discussion. Greg reported he would be presenting his budget to the Board of Alderman next Tuesday, July 11th. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hunter indicated he would be willing to voice his approval to the Board of Alderman at Greg's presentation.

2. Planning

- a. Progress update on proposed code changes.*
- b. Current or upcoming development issues*

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not able to attend this meeting, but did send updates to Commissioner Hunter. He indicated he would distribute those updates to the Tree Board. In relation to the progress on the proposed code changes, Allison let the Tree Board know that per Ben, the Board of Alderman did adopt the recommended changes as discussed in previous meetings.

3. Engineering / Special Projects

- a. Review of projects report*

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, was not able to attend the meeting, however he passed along a request to Commissioner Hunter regarding the Brittany Woods Project. Per Commissioner Hunter, Mark is asking the Tree Board for funding for adding additional trees to this area for the connector road project. Per Commissioner Hunter, Mark believes the project should be ending this Fall, thus, he anticipates being able to plan trees. There was more discussion.

Business

1. Consider FY24 funding recommendations for additional projects

Commissioner Hunter noted he'd forwarded the Tree Boards budget recommendations for the Board of Alderman to vote upon for FY24.

Commissioner Hunter inquired with the Tree Board their thoughts on funding for the Brittany Woods Project. There was discussion. Commissioner Freeman motioned to add the Brittany Woods Project to the recommended funding for FY24 at \$7,350. Commissioner Howorth seconded the motion passed. Commissioner Hunter reminded the Tree Board that this was simply a recommendation and the budget needs could change. Commissioner Hunter noted it would be added to the budget request for FY24.

There was also discussion regarding possible expenses in relation to the Tribute Tree Groves signage. Commissioner Hunter motioned to add \$500 for this item to the Tree Boards recommended budget for FY24. Commissioner Freeman seconded; the motion passed.

2. Update from Mississippi Forestry Commission Re: Canopy Study, Tree Plotter workshop

Commissioner Hunter reported to the Tree Board he'd discussed with Alex Ballard, of the Mississippi Forestry Commission, the Canopy Study. Commissioner Hunter reported Alex had begun the process of the Canopy Study, but due to an IT issue, he had to start over. Alex let Commissioner Hunter know he would be continuing to work on this project. There was discussion.

3. Discussion of Arbor Day plans

Commissioner Hunter indicated he'd not talked with Mayor Robyn Tannehill, but had discussed with Bart Robinson, Chief Operating Officer for the City of Oxford, the proposed location for Arbor Day being at the new the City Hall Park. There was also discussion regarding logistics of implementing proposed ideas discussed at previous meetings i.e., art contest for local schools. There was further discussion regarding this process. Commissioner Hunter recommended the Tree Board continue to work on plans and indicated he'd provide information to Commissioner

Howorth as soon as possible. There was also discussion regarding planning for the type of trees to plant for the event. Commissioner Hunter reminded the Tree Board the date was tentative due to the Board of Alderman having not voted, but it would hopefully be on Friday, October 20th, at 10 AM. There was more discussion regarding aspects of Arbor Day.

Commissioner Hunter reminded the Tree Board to go assess the tree behind Oxford Floral prior to the next meeting in August. There was discussion regarding maintenance performed for safety. Greg indicated he did not believe it was an emergency removal, but that the tree was in decline, therefore, the Tree Board plans to go look at the tree as soon as possible.

Commissioner Hunter indicated he plans to request to be on the agenda for a future Board of Alderman meeting to update them on current projects, plans, and proposals in relation to the Tree Board.

Move to Adjourn

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