

**City of Oxford Tree Board  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, June 1st, 2023**

**Opening**

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in special session on Thursday, June 1st, 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  
Hume Bryant, Co-Chairman  
Mary Hartwell Howorth

**City Representatives:**

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Approval of May 2023 Minutes**

The approval of the May 2023 Meeting Minutes was delayed until the July 2023 meeting.

## **Departmental Issues and Reports**

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

- a. Inquiries from and assistance to property owners or others.*
- b. Hazards, removals, etc.*
- c. Upcoming Projects, priorities for FY24.*

Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, was not able to attend the meeting. I

### **2. Planning**

- a. Updates on Gary Subdivision and other pending development issues.*
- b. Update on proposed tree related Code changes.*

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not available to attend this meeting.

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

- a. Upcoming projects, budget recommendations, priorities for FY24.*

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, reported on his projects and priorities for FY24 to the Tree Board. Mark presented a list of three projects: New Oxford Police Department station, "City Grocery" area parking lot renovation, and the City of Oxford Swimming Pool project. The list included the estimated number of trees required and cost estimates for purchase and installation. There was discussion and questions from the board. Commissioner Hunter asked about the time frame for these projects. Mark indicated the OPD station should be done by FY24 as well as that the parking lot revamp was also a priority for the Board of Alderman. Per Mark, the swimming pool project was not as far along in planning and would likely not be ready for FY24.

## **Business**

- 1. Continue discussion re development of arborist position proposal.*

As in previous meetings, there was continued discussion regarding the desired arborist position.

- 2. Discussion of project and funding recommendations for FY24 budget.*

The Tree Board discussed FY24 priorities and budget. Commissioners Bryant and Freeman expressed concerns about the cost estimates. Commissioners Croom and Howorth inquired about the type of trees and other project details that had not yet been determined. Mark discussed the reasoning for the cost estimates i.e. realistic based on current pricing. Mark pointed out the prices also include warranties for replacement. There was more discussion and Commissioner Hunter explained there would be a time for discussing detailed plans and merits of particular items, but the focus at this meeting was to set a recommended funding level from the Tree Escrow fund for projects as a place holder for FY24. There was discussion regarding the current escrow account balance of \$126,000. Based on Mark's presentation, The Tree Board unanimously voted to recommend the Board of Alderman use \$31,600.00 from the Tree Escrow for two projects in FY24. The two projects are The Oxford Police Department Station at \$16,900.00 and the Parking Lot renovation at \$14,700.00.

*3. Update re canopy study.*

Commissioner Hunter updated the Tree Board about his recent contact with Alex Ballard, Mississippi Forestry Commission, regarding the canopy study. Alex confirmed the timeframe for the work to be completed as well as the information needed for the City of Oxford GIS Analyst, Lesley Rakestraw. Commissioner Hunter indicated Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, expressed difficulty accessing and utilizing Tree Plotter. Commissioner Croom and other board members concurred. Commissioner Hunter inquired with the Tree Board if they would be open to Alex conducting a work session on Tree Plotter basics. All members affirmed interest and Commissioner Hunter indicated he would try to setup a meeting and report back.

*4. Continue discussion re Arbor Day 2023.*

Discussion resumed from the previous meeting regarding Arbor Day 2023. A tentative date of October 20<sup>th</sup> was selected and recommended by the Tree Board. The new pocket park next to City Hall was also selected as the location. Commissioner Hunter inquired with Commissioner Howorth about previous discussions regarding heading up the efforts in order to improve and expand the program. Commissioner Howorth agreed. Commissioner Hunter also asked for another member to assist Commissioner Howorth. Commissioner Freeman offered to assist as well as suggested possibly setting up displays at the library as well as City Hall. Commissioner Bryant indicated he would contact the Oxford Garden Club regarding the date.

*5. Discuss possible presentations to Board of Alderman.*

Commissioner Hunter would like to setup a time to speak with the Board of Alderman regarding a yearly update on current projects. He indicated he would be putting something together in the next couple of months. Commissioner Hunter also indicated he would like for Matt Nielson,

Green Grove Arborist, to speak with them as well as would like to discuss funding for the proposed arborist position.

**Move to Adjourn**

Commissioner Bill Freeman motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Hume Bryant seconded; all members voted aye.