

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Special Work Session
Monday, March 27th, 2023**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in special session on Monday, March 27th, 2023 at 9:00 A.M. in the City Hall Conference Room with phone/video conference available. The following were present:

Tree Board:

Cowan Hunter, Co-Chairman
Ed Croom
Bill Freeman
Greg Pinion*
Allison Ferris*

*ex-officio member, non-voting

City Representatives:

Ben Requet, Director of Planning
Judy Daniel, Planning Staff
Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects

Other Guests:

Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM.

Approval of Agenda

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

Business

1. Consider which recommendations from the 2022 report by Green Groves Arborist could be both beneficial and implementable in the shortest time frame and determine initial steps to implementation

- a. Recommendations, comments, or concerns from city staffers, Matt Neilson, and board members*
- b. Discussion*
- c. Determine which recommendations to proceed with implementing and what next steps should be taken in that regard*

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, introduced Judy Daniel, Part-Time Planning Staff, and discussed Judy's role in helping the Planning Department review the Land Development Codes, specifically Chapter 34. Planning's been working to eliminate duplicate information and make revisions. Ben referenced emailing the Tree Board the notes as well as noted this process begun prior to Matt Neilson becoming a consultant. There was discussion about including Matt's modified tree list recommendation to the code as well as regarding the different types of trees and canopy. There was also discussion regarding the list and process with developers within the community and flexibility being necessary. Ben discussed the ordinance review process and those involved i.e. Planning Commission, then Mayor and Board of Alderman. Ben discussed the ordinance reading and approval process and acknowledged it typically takes around two months or so.

Judy inquired with Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist, about his recommended tree list. There was more discussion and referencing to the document that listed the explanation of all proposed changes to the Land Development Code. Matt discussed planting and specific types of trees as well and Commissioner Ed Croom requested the list be tabled until further review was possible as well as to account for the strange winter. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hume Bryant pointed out that modifications were necessary and Commissioner Hunter agreed. There was more discussion regarding proposed list changes and nursery availability. Judy recommended considering accepting the list, but acknowledged the need for more study time. Commissioner Croom explained his position further and request for botanical names to be added. There was more discussion regarding the proposed changes and process and Matt explained portions of the list. There was further discussion. Matt noted he'd have the botanical names added to the list provided as well noted the importance of establishing a regular review of the tree list. There was more discussion about the long-term goal of adding a City Arborist as well as the importance of the codes and ordinances, especially in relation to the Land

Development community. Commissioner Croom also discussed the list in relation to bio-diversity. There was more discussion about the ordinance review process. There was further discussion regarding "Native" trees and preference being given to those trees, if available, as well as trees in various areas of town. Matt discussed the impact of the list on nurseries in town and the adaptation process as well as made a point about being careful to not critique trees too much. There was more discussion. Ben reminded the Tree Board about staff input in the development process. Further discussion occurred regarding examples of staff input and recommendations during the process i.e. Lincoln property. Commissioner Bryant inquired about the Tree Board role in private property issues and Judy noted the City Attorney would have to be consulted regarding that process. Commissioner Hunter thanked Judy and Ben for their help.

Commissioner Hunter inquired if Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, had any opinions about the recommendations and possible ordinance changes as well the hope for a future City Arborist. Greg discussed his goals for recommending budgeting for this possible position at the next budget meetings with the Board of Alderman. Greg discussed his goal would be to hire a seasoned professional. Greg discussed possible job responsibilities if the future position were to be approved by the Board of Alderman. Greg noted he believed this type of position would very helpful in regards to his Building and Grounds Departmental needs and reiterates his department only works and maintains City property. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hunter discussed long-term goals for the possible position i.e. someone that would desire to stay in Oxford. Greg expressed his desire for the Tree Board to think about this possible new position and provide him with insight and their hopes for the potential position as well as inquired with Matt regarding his thoughts. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hunter noted that more discussion could be had the next two Tree Board meetings regarding this possible position. Commissioner Hunter inquired with Greg about his thoughts on the proposed recommendations previously discussed. Greg discussed the importance of adhering to the list of recommended trees as much as possible. There was more discussion.

Commissioner Hunter summarized for Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, the previous discussion during the work session i.e. proposed code changes and variance readings as well as continued review of Matt Nielson's recommendations over the next year. There was further discussion regarding the current code, the tree list (A.10.1) and recommendations, as well as definitions possibly being added. There was further discussion regarding the process as well as need for all codes to be in coordination and adequate. Commissioner Hunter noted he would put this item on the agenda for the next meeting to ensure nothing had been left out. Mark recommending looking at the small tree list. There was more discussion. There was more discussion regarding the

Municipal Code and Land Development Code. Mark recommended Ben discuss this further with the Tree Board at a future meeting. There was more discussion. Mark also recommended considering diversity of species when thinking about the possible tree list changes. There was further discussion.

Commissioner Hunter summarized the meeting and feedback received from City Staff as well as Matt Nielson. Commissioner Hunter recommended the Tree Board think about a possible job description for a potential City Arborist if approved by the Board of Alderman. Commissioner Hunter also recommended the Tree Board continue to review the Land Development Code and would await Ben's clarification.

Move to Adjourn

Commissioner Cowan Hunter motioned to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.