

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 3, 2022**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in special session on Thursday, November 3rd, 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
Mary Hartwell Howorth
Ed Croom
Hume Bryant, Co-Chairman
Bill Freeman
*Allison Ferris, Secretary

*Ex-Officio, non-voting

City Representatives:

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects

Student Observer:

Janell Davis – Ole Miss

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:09 AM.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of October 2022 Minutes

Commissioner Cowan Hunter informed the Tree Board of a minor change in the October 2022 Meeting Minutes i.e. the portion “there is not an obstructed traffic triangle” regarding the Zaxby’s tree removal request. Cowan noted this has been corrected. Commissioner Cowan Hunter motioned to approve the revised minutes. Commissioner Bill Freeman seconded. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Departmental Issues and Reports

1. Buildings and Grounds

Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, was unable to attend the meeting. Cowan noted Greg indicated there’s nothing new to report. Building and Grounds is still replacing dead trees around town as well other normal seasonal duties.

2. Planning

- a. Update on tree issues, mitigation, etc. re current/ upcoming projects.*

Per Cowan, Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not available. Hume Bryant noted he’d heard from a citizen regarding a potential project on Lincoln that would be near a specimen tree in the citizen’s backyard. Hume noted the Tree Board should be mindful of this potential project. There was further discussion. Cowan noted he’d contact Ben regarding this potential project and the specimen tree location.

3. Engineering / Special Projects

- a. Update on status of currently underway projects.*

- b. Timeline/ next steps for upcoming FY23 projects*

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, provided updates on current projects:

Cemetery Ditch

According to Mark, he’s in the process of reviewing the quotes for re-landscaping this area, but he still needs to consult with Reanna Mayoral, the City Engineer. There was further discussion regarding the timeline as well as the possible cost for the work. Mark explained the City has been working with the homeowners, and noted it’s been a long

process. There was more discussion. Ed Croom inquired if there was a current/final list available. Mark noted the plans have changed several times, but there was a current list. Further discussion ensued regarding the nature of the project and the replacement trees being used/the landscaping.

City Hall Pocket Park

The City Hall Pocket Park project is still on-going. According to Mark, at this time, it's primarily concrete work. He estimated the trees would be planted in Mid-December/Early January and noted there would be irrigation on the trees.

Price Street Project

Mark noted this project was currently on hold due to other projects i.e. Oxford Police Department's future relocation. There was further discussion regarding the timeline of the project/plans. Mark noted the new location would need extensive tree mitigation.

The Board requested Mark send them the final Tree list for the Cemetery Project as well as the City Hall Pocket Park project.

Business

1. Recap Arbor Day 2022 and discussion of ideas for 2023

Cowan expressed appreciation to everyone for the preparation and execution of Arbor Day 2022. Cowan noted three trees were planted. There was discussion regarding the current details of the Arbor Day Program and possible adjustments for the future celebrations i.e. poster contest for the local schools. Hume discussed the past poster contest and the impact on community involvement. As well as presented the idea of re-introducing a contest. Cowan noted the contest was run through the Arbor Day Foundation and others throughout the community. There was discussion, and Cowan inquired if someone from the Tree Board would be willing to coordinate the effort of this possible addition to the Arbor Day celebration and program. There was discussion. Mary Hartwell Howorth presented the idea of a poetry contest as well. There was more discussion. Mary Hartwell indicated she was willing to begin contacting the schools regarding this idea. Cowan suggested Mary Hartwell contact the MS Forestry Outreach Officer, Tymple Harrison, regarding contacts within the community. There was additional discussion regarding ideas for educational aspects and increased community involvement for in relation to Arbor Day.

2. *Update re timeline Green Groves Arborist project.*

Cowan reported that Matt Nielson, Green Groves Arborist, was in the process finalizing his project presentation and would be prepared to share it with Tree Board and City Officials within the next few weeks. Cowan noted Matt's repeatedly stated he's had great feedback and involvement from City Officials throughout the entire Green Grove Arborist project. There was further discussion as well as a reminder regarding Matt's original goal and purpose of the project i.e. provide feedback on where Oxford is and future needs. There was dialog regarding the timeline of the presentation and a possibly scheduling an additional "Special Meeting" to discuss Matt's recommendations. Due to the recommendation of the December Tree Board Meeting being cancelled, Cowan noted Matt could come in January 2023. There was further discussion regarding making time for giving Matt feedback prior to his presentation i.e. timeline of Tree Board being notified for upcoming projects. Cowan stated he'd ask Matt to send his draft of recommendations to the Tree Board for review. There was more discussion. Cowan once again reminded the board about the project's task i.e. review of the Land Development Code, current process, as well as future changes that could be needed. Cowan encouraged the Board to express any remaining concerns to Matt via email.

3. *Timeline re porting of data and setting up of Tree Plotter.*

Cowan noted he'd be contacting Lesley Rakestraw, City of Oxford GIS Analyst, about the process and a timeline of converting and setting up Tree Plotter.

4. *Look ahead and discussion re 2023.*

Cowan discussed the importance of advanced preparation for planning, projects, and special events i.e. Arbor Day. Cowan noted Ed Croom's point of trying to incorporate more educational opportunities within the community throughout the next year. According to Cowan, Matt Nielson said there should be grant funding, and there was opportunity for the Board to "think bigger" in their ideas and plans. There was further discussion regarding importance of preparation and planning as well ideas for public outreach.

Cowan recommended the December Meeting be cancelled due to the busy Holiday season. There was discussion. Cowan noted if something came up, they could call a Special Meeting, if needed. There was further discussion regarding the impact of cancelling the meeting with the Green Grove Arborist timeline. Cowan encouraged the Tree Board to utilize December as a time for thinking of ideas for the upcoming year as well as board responsibilities and coordination of ideas. There was further discussion. Bill Freeman indicated he'd be willing to take on advancing the Tree Board's online presence.

Cowan motioned to cancel meeting in December, Mary Hartwell seconded. All voted aye.

Move to Adjourn

Cowan motioned to adjourn at 12:11 PM.