

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 2nd, 2023**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meeting for a regular meeting on Thursday, November 2nd, 2023 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

*Allison Ferris, Development Services - Engineering Department, City of Oxford, MS

*ex-officio, non-voting

Other:

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, City of Oxford, MS

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, City of Oxford, MS

JW McCurdy, Owner, MR Construction

John Granberry, Engineer, Granberry & Associates, LLC

Call to Order

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:07 AM.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of the October 2023 Minutes

Commissioner Hunter motioned to approved the October 2023 Minutes. Commissioner Hume Bryant seconded. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Departmental Issues and Reports

1. Buildings and Grounds

Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, was not present. Cowan remarks regarding planting around town.

- a. Inquiries or assistance requests from public*
- b. Hazard trees, removals, etc.*
- c. Tribute Tree project update*
- d. Fall planting update*

2. Engineering / Special Projects

- a. Brittany Woods connector trees update*

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, reported he'd previously emailed the Brittany Woods tree-planting plan to the Tree Board. Mark indicated he's been working on getting bids for this project. There was discussion regarding the bids and the budget for this project as well as discussion regarding the planting process and if there would be warranty for the trees.

- b. Tribute Tree Grove signage design, mock up, etc.*

Commissioner Hunter discussed with the Tree Board the Tribute Tree Grove the signage needed for this project and Mark's role in the process. There was discussion regarding the signage

specifications and feedback given regarding the proposed sign. Commissioner Hunter indicated he would get with Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, regarding the sign as well and indicated a meeting would need to be scheduled with IT regarding the QR Code.

3. Planning

a. Update re current or pending development tree issues

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, reported regarding on-going building in the different subdivisions and areas. Ben introduced John Granberry, Engineer with Granberry and Associates, LLC representing JW McCurdy, Owner of MR Construction, regarding a variance approval they are seeking from the Tree Board as well as from the City of Oxford Planning Commission.

Business

1. Consider variance request Granberry & Associates re Muirfield Meadows

John Granberry, Granberry and Associates, discussed with the Tree Board the proposed development i.e. town homes and single-family lots. John discussed the proposed locations for the town homes and lots as well as other features of the development i.e. roundabout, clubhouse, etc. John indicated they're asking for a variance as opposed to what would typically be required. Discussion followed regarding the topography of the area and trees in the proposed development and possible ideas for tree mitigation. There was discussion regarding the required tree mitigation. JW McCurdy, Owner of MR Construction, further discussed with the Tree Board the topography of the area and the need for a variance for a property this size. Commissioner Hunter inquired regarding marketing for this development. Discussion followed. Mr. McCurdy referred to The Lamar as an example. There was more discussion. Commissioner Hunter inquired with Ben Requet, Director of Planning, regarding the development in relation to the housing needs in Oxford. Ben discussed typical development practices as well as housing needs in Oxford in addition to enrollment growth at The University of Mississippi. Discussion followed. Commissioner Hunter inquired with Ben regarding where this project was in the development process. Ben indicated this project was in the beginning phases. There was further discussion regarding tree mitigation and current mitigation rules. Ben discussed passed variances in relation to tree mitigation. Commissioner Hume Bryant inquired about the financial aspect of the tree mitigation for the proposed project and that an arborist would be assessing the area. Discussion followed. Mr. McCurdy discussed his belief regarding this project fitting in with this area in regards to the proposed development. More discussion followed regarding the topography of the area as well as proposed aspects of the development. Commissioner Bryant inquired about Old Taylor Road. Ben referred Commissioner Bryant to the Engineering Department regarding future plans for Old Taylor Road i.e. widening. Commissioner Ed Croom inquired regarding the history of this area as well as regarding plans for the development if a

variance was not granted i.e. project may not proceed. Discussion followed. Commissioner Hunter attempted to summarize goals of ordinances and the land development code in relation to trees and role of protecting the City's tree canopy. More discussion followed regarding the proposed development and requested variance and the tree mitigation process. John discussed the Land Development Code in relation to the topography of this area and to the variance request as well as the history of site. More discussion followed. Commissioner Hunter discussed his belief the amount proposed for the variance in relation to the tree mitigation would be insufficient in relation to the number of trees that would be removed. There was more discussion regarding plans for tree mitigation in relation to this proposed project as well as the Land Development Code. The Tree Board expressed a desire for more details regarding the landscaping/tree-planting mitigation plan for the proposed development. There was more discussion. Commissioner Croom discussed his views of this area as an urban forest and desire for more information. Discussion followed. There was more discussion regarding tree mitigation and what would be required for the proposed development. Ben reported the number of trees would be in the 150 range. More discussion followed. Commissioner Hunter motioned that based upon the information provided and that plant requirements are followed to recommend the Planning Commission approve the variance. Commissioner Howorth seconded. The motion failed. The Tree Board once again expressed their desire for more information regarding the project plans. Mr. McCurdy indicated more information would be provided prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

2. Discuss steps to expand and improve Tree Plotter use and data collection

Commissioner Hunter discussed a workshop would be needed regarding Tree Plotter. He indicated the Tree Board would work to find a date for the workshop in January. Discussion followed. Commissioner Howorth volunteered to help with the data collection.

3. Arbor Day 2023 recap

Commissioner Hunter indicated discussion could occur at the next meeting regarding Arbor Day 2023 recap.

Move to Adjourn

Commissioner Hunter motioned to adjourn at 12: 28 PM.