

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 6, 2022**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet in special session on Thursday, September 8th, 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
Hume Bryant, Co-Chairman
Bill Freeman
Ed Croom
Mary Hartwell Howorth
Greg Pinion*, Director of Building and Grounds
Allison Ferris*, Secretary

*ex-officio, non-voting

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:06 A.M.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Cowan Hunter motioned to approve the agenda. Commission Hume Bryant seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Approval of September 2022 Minutes

Commissioner Cowan Hunter motioned to accept the September 2022 Minutes. Commissioner Hume Bryant seconded. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Departmental Issues and Reports

1. Buildings and Grounds

a. Assistance to property owners, removals, etc.

Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, reported several hundred trees had been trimmed since the previous meeting. Greg noted they're currently working on a list of trees to replace due to weather related issues. There was discussion regarding the replacement tree list. Greg reported the work should be done this fall, within the next couple of months. Greg also indicated he's visited several properties this month. There was further discussion regarding the different property locations. Greg noted several stump removals have occurred since the previous meeting. There was discussion regarding healthy vs. unhealthy trees and ways to monitor older trees.

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2. Planning (subject to availability)

a. Update on tree impacts, mitigation, etc. re current or upcoming projects

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not able to attend the meeting. Cowan indicated he hasn't heard from Ben, therefore, they should still be working on the projects discussed at the previous meeting.

3. Engineering / Special Projects

a. Progress report on current projects

Cowan indicated Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, called him regarding being unable to attend the meeting. He indicated Mark sent a summary of projects i.e. City Hall Park and Cemetery Project. There was discussion regarding city ordinances in relation to projects and trees. Cowan indicated he and Mark briefly spoke about tree-planting at the Cemetery i.e. planting in late Fall, early Winter. There was more discussion. Cowan also indicated he'd be passing along something Mark sent him, "Talking Trees", that he'd like for Mark to discuss with the Tree Board at a future meeting.

Cowan indicated he'd spoken with Reanna Mayoral, City Engineer, this morning and the conversation will be discussed in the Business portion of this meeting.

Ed Croom noted he planned to contact Mark regarding concerns about trees/plants listed on the Cemetery Project plans that might be an invasive plant. There was discussion.

Business

1. Consider request by Zaxby's re removal of tree from Jackson Ave ROW

Cowan summarized the Zaxby's representatives request at the previous meeting i.e. to remove a large tree.

Cowan asked Greg to provide an overview of the tree. According to Greg, the Zaxby's representatives mentioned two trees. The main tree of concern would be the larger tree. Greg indicated both trees are healthy, properly placed, and not what he would call a safety issue. Greg reported he does not agree with removing the trees or that trimming the trees would be necessary. Hume indicated he agreed with Greg. There was further discussion. Cowan reported he spoke with Reanna Mayoral, City Engineer, regarding the trees in question. According to Cowan, Reanna indicated that on average 26,000 cars travel on Jackson Avenue. Reanna indicated this area is typically where accidents occur in the City of Oxford. Per Cowan, Reanna noted at the entrance to Zaxby's there's not what is considered an obstructed "Traffic Triangle", which would cause issues or concerns. Cowan also reported Reanna indicated that in relation to accident reports, when locations are listed, they frequently list businesses, however, that does not mean

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that particular business is where the accident actually occurred. According to Cowan, Reanna stated if the Zaxby's representatives are concerned about safety issues, the city would be willing to remove the curb-cut and put in a sidewalk, if it were causing issues. Cowan reported he contacted the Chief of Oxford Police Department regarding accidents in this area. According to the provided report from Oxford Police Department, Cowan indicated from 2008-2021, Zaxby's was listed 52 times. Cowan also reported, in relation to the accident reports, Oxford Police Department indicated trees were not mentioned as a cause/issue. There was discussion.

There were no representatives from Zaxby's present at this meeting, though they were informed this would be discussed at the October meeting. Cowan acknowledged the desire for businesses to be seen and noted the visibility issues do not appear to be caused by the city trees. Cowan discussed his opinion of other factors in relation to signs and visibility i.e. knowledge of location as well as other options for finding businesses i.e. internet, maps.

Cowan moved for the Tree Board to vote on the removal of the trees. All members of the Tree Board voted against the removal of the trees in question near Zaxby's.

2. Finalize plans for Oxford's Arbor Day event, October 21, 2022

Arbor Day 2022 will be on October 21st, 2022 at Birney Branch. Allison Ferris, secretary, reported that provided Kara Giles, The Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Communications Director, the Arbor Day 2022 proclamation for the Mayor to read at the next Board of Alderman meeting on October 18th, 2022. Cowan reported he'd spoken to the Mayor about Arbor Day as well. Cowan also indicated he's spoken with someone from the Forestry Commission regarding a representative attending the meeting. There was discussion. Cowan indicated he would plan to speak with CoreLogic regarding the ceremony as well as the Notting Hill Homeowners Association. Hume indicated the Garden Club had been notified. There was discussion regarding the tree options with Greg. Hume reported he would send more information regarding the ceremony plans. Cowan asked Greg to contact Seth with Oxford Park Commission regarding the Arbor Day plans. Mary Hartwell indicated she would be working on securing a poet for the ceremony.

Adjourn

Cowan motioned to adjourn at 11: 50 AM, Ed Croom seconded, all aye.