

April 2025 Minutes

In Person Attendance

Cowan Hunter, Mary Hartwell Howorth, Hume Bryant, Ed Croom, Nick Matthews, Matt Neilson, Temple Harrison

Not in Attendance

Allison Ferris, Jaclyn Colemeta, Hollis Green, Ben Requet, Greg Pinion

1. Call to Order.

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:03 A.M.

2. Approval of Agenda.

Commissioner Hunter motioned to approve the April 2025 agenda, Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded; all aye.

3. Approval of March 2025 Minutes.

Commissioner Hunter motioned to approve the March 2025 minutes, Commissioner Ed Croom seconded; all aye.

4. Departmental Issues and Reports.

a. Building and Grounds

i. Public assistance requests and responses re trees

Nick Matthews from the Building and Grounds Department, spoke on behalf of Greg Pinion who was not able to attend the meeting. Nick reported they received a few calls regarding trees and trimming on Zilla Avent Drive. Nick also reported a tree that was removed on Thomas Street.

ii. Finalize plans for Big Event volunteer project April 5th

Nick informed the Tree Board that the Big Event Volunteer work would be held in the Northeast Corner of Avent Park on Saturday, April 5th weather pending in order to remove brush piles. There was further discussion.

iii. Discuss FY26 budget re tree planting maintenance

Nick informed the Tree Board that the plan for the FY26 budget consists of replanting trees on Old Taylor Road of different species, planting new trees along Price Street across from the new activity center, and adding trees along the sidewalk on Thacker Road. There was further discussion.

b. Planning

- i. Update re current or pending development tree plans, mitigation, etc.
Ben Requet, Director of Planning, did not attend this meeting.

c. Special Projects, Engineering

- i. Update re city pool and other projects this FY

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, did not attend this meeting. Therefore, Commissioner Hunter informed the Tree Board that the City Swimming Pool Project would be completed by the end of May excluding the landscaping. Commissioner Hunter also informed the Tree Board that the Old Police Department is in the works of becoming the new Development Services Building. Lastly, Commissioner Hunter informed the Tree Board of a new art installation in Morgan Park and the possibility of a new tree project on West Oxford Loop. There was further discussion.

ii. **Set date/time for initial meeting of reassessments workgroup**

Commissioner Hunter discussed the possibility of meeting on Friday's regarding the reassessment of projects.

d. **Business**

i. **Update from MFC Urban Forestry**

Tympel Harrison, Urban Forester for Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC), discussed with the Tree Board the importance of updating Tree Plotter and its benefits. There was further discussion on what information was desired to learn from Tree Plotter. There was further discussion.

ii. **Discuss potential project collaborations with Master Gardeners, others**

Commissioner Hunter signified the inclusion of the Master Gardeners with reassessing past projects and the potential of helping with new projects as well. There was further discussion about the possibility of attending one of the Master Gardner meetings.

iii. **Consider steps to address unfilled vacancy on this board**

Commissioner Hunter highlighted the importance of finding a new Board Member to fill a vacated position. There was further discussion.

iv. **Consider annual update to Board of Alderman**

Commissioner Hunter indicated the need to go in front of the Board of Alderman to give an annual update regarding projects. There was further discussion.

5. **Move to Adjourn**

Commissioner Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:56 A.M.; Commissioner Howorth seconded; all aye.