

**City of Oxford Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 1st, 2024**

Opening

Be it known that the City of Oxford Tree Board did meet for a regular meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2024 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, *via phone*

Mary Hartwell Howorth

Ed Croom, *via video conference*

*Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds Department, City of Oxford, MS

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

*ex-officio, non-voting

Other:

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

Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist

Call to Order

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:14 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 January 2024 Minutes

Commissioner Hunter noted a formatting change regarding the Building and Grounds section of the January 2024 Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Hunter motioned to approve the January 2024 Minutes. Commissioner Howorth seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye; the motion passed.

Departmental Issues and Reports

1. Buildings and Grounds

a. Public Assistance Requests or Inquiries

Greg Pinion, Director of Building and Grounds, reported there were no updates and indicated his department had been working on winter storm clean-up.

b. Winter Storm Related Tree Issues

Greg reported no major tree related issues during the Winter Storm.

c. Discuss Possible Volunteer Project

There was discussion regarding the possible volunteer project options with Ole Miss for the UM Big Event in the Spring i.e. Animal Resource Center for City of Oxford.

2. Planning

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not present.

a. Update Re Current/Pending Development Tree Issues.

Commissioner Hunter indicated he planned to reach out to the Planning Department regarding an update on current/pending developments.

3. Engineering/Special Projects

a. Update Re Current and FY 24 Projects

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, noted the Cemetery Creek Project re-plantings had been completed this week. Mark discussed the Brittany Woods planting project and indicated there was delay, but planting should begin next week. There was discussion. Commissioner Howorth proposed the idea of a future Arbor Day occurring in Brittany Woods one day. In relation to other projects, Mark noted any potential planting associated with the new Oxford Police Department building would occur in late fall. There was discussion.

Mark spoke to the Tree Board regarding trees at St. Peters Episcopal Church that would be removed. Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist, reported to the Tree Board regarding a risk assessment he performed for the congregation. Greg Pinion noted the trees are private trees. There was discussion i.e. regarding the street closure being presented to the Board of Alderman.

b. Consider Assessments of Ed Perry Blvd and Taylor Rd

Commissioner Hunter encouraged the Tree Board to assess these areas regarding growth of trees planted within City Right-of-Way. There was discussion.

Business

1. Tree Plotter March Webinar and Plans for Related Workshop

Commissioner Hunter discussed details with the Tree Board regarding the Tree Plotter webinar and plans for a related workshop. There was discussion.

2. Matt Nielson Re Encounters with Tree Service During Winter Storm

Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist, discussed concerns regarding groups of people who came to Oxford during the recent winter storm and offered to provide services, that per Matt, may or may not be needed. There was discussion regarding the concerning practices of the group. Commissioner Hunter discussed the possibility of discussing concerns with Director of Emergency Management for the City regarding these types of groups. There was further discussion regarding public education and awareness.

3. MFC Updates Re Tree City, Columbus Tree Board, Canopy Project

Commissioner Hunter discussed updates from the Mississippi Forestry Commission and a request for assistance for Columbus, MS in their process to form a Tree Board for their community. Commissioner Hunter reported there was no update regarding the Canopy Project. There was discussion. Commissioner Bryant reported to the Tree Board regarding the Tree City Application process and noted the application approval.

Greg discussed with the Tree Board a request to review a requested removal in City Right-of-Way from a local business in coordination with requesting a new sign for the business. Greg requested the Tree Board to review the area prior to the next meeting. There was discussion.

Move to Adjourn

Commissioner Hunter motioned to adjourn at 12:00 PM. Commission Bryant seconded; all aye.