

MINUTES

**City of Oxford
Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 6, 2024, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
City Hall Boardroom**



In Attendance

Allison Ferris; Cowan Hunter; Ed Croom; Greg Pinion; Hume Bryant; Mark Levy; Mary Hartwell Howorth

Notice that certain aldermen or commissioners may be included in the meeting via teleconference, subject to the City of Oxford Code of Ordinances, Section 2-82.

1. Call to order.

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Hunter inquired if there was a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Bryant motioned to approved the agenda. Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded; all aye. Commissioner Hunter also inquired at the end of the meeting to add an item to the Business Section regarding an update on volunteer organizations i.e. Hill Country Roots and Friends of the Forest Group. Commissioner Bryant motioned. Commissioner Howorth seconded; all aye.

3. Approval of May 2024 Minutes

Commissioner Howorth motioned to approve the May 2024 Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Bryant seconded; all aye.

4. Departmental Issues and Reports:

a. Buildings & Grounds Department

i. Public assistance requests or inquiries

Greg Pinion, Building and Grounds Superintendent, noted the Building and Grounds department received several calls where he had to measure City Right-of-Way and the issues were private. Therefore, Greg indicated there were no reported issues with public trees.

ii. Update on Tyler Avenue Specimen Tree

Greg noted the area around the specimen tree was roped off and things should be in good shape at this time. There was discussion. Greg indicated he met with the Building and Grounds representative from First Presbyterian Church. There was further discussion. Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist, referenced his previous report regarding measures that could be taken to mitigate risk. There was more discussion.

iii. Older trees assessments project

Greg noted he met with Matt Nielson, Green Grove Arborist, and discussed a plan for the evaluation of older trees. There was discussion.

b. Development Services-Planning Department

i. Update regarding current or pending development tree issues.

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, was not able to attend the meeting.

ii. G & M Pharmacy Crepe Myrtle Update

Commissioner Hunter noted he observed the crepe myrtle was removed from this location.

c. General Government-Special Projects Department

i. FY 25 Project Budget Recommendations and Timelines

Commissioner Hunter indicated that Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, would be discussing the budget recommendations and timelines for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025. Commissioner Hunter indicated the current funding in the Tree Escrow account should be \$161,000.00. Commissioner Hunter further discussed the Tree Escrow Fund. Commissioner Hunter inquired with Mark regarding what would be utilized during this fiscal year. Mark discussed the Oxford Police Department project, The City Grocery Parking Lot project, and the Oxford Swimming Pool Project. Mark indicated the only new project he added would be the Old Taylor Replacement project. There was discussion regarding the project timelines and budget recommendations. Commissioner Hunter recommended looking further into the projects that would take place in FY 2025 at the next meeting.

ii. Plans and timeline for startup of project reassessments

Mark discussed the different sites he and Greg assessed throughout the City. There was discussion. Matt Nielson inquired regarding irrigation in relation to Old Taylor. There was further discussion. Mark indicated he would like to hear from the Tree Board and Matt regarding recommendations regarding varieties of trees. There was more discussion. Greg discussed utilizing varieties in relation to project areas and Matt referenced the Land Development Code. There was further discussion.

5. Consider new business:

a. Discussion regarding feasibility of easement use in our conservation projects

Commissioner Hunter discussed the topic of conservation easements and indicated he hoped Ben would be present at the next meeting to discuss this topic. Commissioner Bryant discussed conservation in relation to tree canopy. Commissioner Hunter discussed tree conservation in relation to the City as well as what he's read about the use of easements in other places. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter recommended this be discussed further at a future meeting. There was more discussion. Matt indicated there was a workshop offered through the Mississippi Land Trust and recommended utilizing them as a resource. There was further discussion.

b. Mississippi Forestry Commission Updates

Commissioner Hunter indicated he requested an update from the Mississippi Forestry Commission, but had not received an update regarding the vacant position for North Mississippi. There was discussion.

c. Tribute Trees Project Update

Commissioner Hunter indicated he had some information to provide Greg regarding the Tribute Trees project. Greg inquired regarding the website associated with the Tribute Tree project. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter indicated he would follow-up with Lesley Rakestraw, City of Oxford GIS Analyst, regarding the project and facilitate a meeting between him and the IT Department. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter discussed the Tribute Tree project with Susan Marchant, from the Friends of the Forest Organization, at the meeting. There was discussion.

d. Update from Volunteer Organizations

Susan Marchant, from the Friends of the Forest Organization, briefly discussed their group.

Commissioner Hunter inquired with Matt Neilson, Green Grove Arborist, regarding the Hill Country Roots Organization. Matt indicated it was a student led group that promotes planting trees in Oxford. Matt indicated he serves as an advisor to the group and discussed the work of the group and their commitment.

6. Adjourn.

Commissioner Hunter moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:11 PM, Commissioner Howorth seconded; all aye.

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