

OXFORD TREES, PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Minutes – March 16, 2021

MEMBERS: Cheryl Ready, Chair; Michael Rogers, Vice Chair; Theresa Eady, Secretary; Nakeisha Cummings and Anderson Wright. Mike McQuaide was absent.

STAFF: Beryl Budd, City Arborist; Jody Reid, Utilities Superintendent; Matthew Pepper, City Manager.

GUESTS: Laura McCanless, City Council Member.

OPENING: At 5:00 PM, Ms. Ready called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

MINUTES: Upon motion of Mr. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Wright, the minutes for the meeting of February 16, 2021 were adopted. The vote was 5-0.

EMORY STREET TREE REPLACEMENT PROJECT: The Board discussed their project to replace the tree canopy on Emory Street/SR 81. The Board discussed whether they should plant trees on properties located on both sides of the street. On the west side of Emory Street, the city has its power lines which will make it difficult to plant trees at a reasonable distance from the existing homes. The Board agreed that they would divide into pairs and approach each homeowner in person. When approaching each homeowner, the Board agreed to use a previous letter (from the first attempt) as a template on how to explain the project. Ms. Ready and Mr. Pepper will send a copy of the letter to the other Board members. Before the next meeting, Mr. Pepper will send the homeowner list to the Board.

GUIDELINES FOR DONATIONS FOR CITY PARKS AND TRAILS: The Board discussed the two example guidelines from the City of Valdosta and the City of Hahira. They agreed that the Hahira's guidelines fit better with the Board's vision of the city's program. Also, the Board discussed the length of time at which a donated bench is maintained by the city before it is replaced (Valdosta's program was a minimum of ten years). In addition, the Board agreed that the program could be expanded to other items but felt that it is best to keep a focus on park benches at present. Mr. Pepper will develop a draft application to present to the Board at their next meeting.

FENCING AT GEORGE STREET PARK: Ms. Ready reported that she and Mr. Wearing counted each of the rails and posts that will need to be replaced. In addition, she stated that the project will be completed with a limited number of local volunteers. Ms. Ready expected the cost to be closer to \$1,000. They hope to complete the project within the next several weeks.

Ms. McCanless stated that this style of fence has longer and looser ends because the wood contracts and that using screws to fasten the rails and posts together on both ends could be problematic. She recommended fastening it on just one end. Ms. Ready will share this information with Mr. Wearing. In addition, Ms. McCanless shared that the city could explore the use of blueberry hedges as an alternative to replacing the fence.

TREE REPLACEMENT AT ASBURY STREET PARK: Ms. McCanless and Ms. Eady reported that the project to replace nine (9) Ginkgo trees at Asbury Street Park was successful. With the help of Mr. Budd and Seth Hawkins, the city used a small auger to remove the trees to help limit the damage to the root ball and surrounding sod.

FY2021 PRUNING PROJECT: Mr. Budd reported to the Board that he met with Arbor Equity to inspect the pruning work. He stated that they still have several trees that need additional work. Ms. McCanless asked if Mr. Budd visited with Arbor Equity about the poor pruning work completed on the giant southern red oak located on the property adjacent to city hall. Mr. Budd stated that he talked with

Arbor Equity about it, and they agreed it was poorly pruned. Mr. Budd will talk with Arbor Equity about a possible refund or a replacement tree.

MEMBERSHIP: The Board discussed filling the existing vacancy. Board members will continue to reach out to potential candidates individually. They will continue their discussion at the April meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Board did not discuss any items related to other business.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Ready adjourned the meeting at 5:40 PM.

Submitted by:

Theresa Eady, Secretary