



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021 – 7:00 PM
Via Teleconference**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady – Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
James Windham – Councilmember
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember
Laura McCanless – Councilmember
Avis Williams – Councilmember
Lynn Bohanan – Councilmember

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Matt Pepper – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Dave Harvey – Chief of Police
C. David Strickland – City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: Natalie Faulkner (Allen Memorial United Methodist Church), Mike Ready, Cheryl Ready, Art Vinson, Laura Gafnea (Oxford College), Anderson Wright, Steve Longcrier, Sarah Davis (Covington News)

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. Invocation – Rev. Natalie Faulkner (Allen Memorial United Methodist Church).
3. **A motion was made by Jeff Wearing to accept the Agenda for March 1, 2021. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
(Attachment A)
4. **A motion was made by Jeff Wearing to accept the Consent Agenda for March 1, 2021. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
(Attachment B)
5. **Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions**
None.
6. **Citizen Concerns**
Anderson Wright notified the City Council that he has been elected President of the Oxford Historical Cemetery Foundation. Alexa Devetter has been elected Vice-President. The other officers remain the same. Mr. Wright looks forward to meeting with the committee of the City Council working on the agreement with the Foundation. Mayor Eady stated that Lynn Bohanan is chairing the committee, James Windham is also on the committee, and Erik Oliver has also expressed interest in being on the committee.

7. **Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails Signage**

In 2016, the City of Oxford approved installing signage for the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails program in three locations in the city. At the February 2021 Work Session, the City Council revisited the decision to install the signage. The City of Oxford Committee on Race was asked to provide a recommendation on the signage.

Mayor Eady asked Avis Williams to provide the Committee's recommendation. Ms. Williams stated the recommendation of the Committee is not to put up any additional signs, reimburse the organization for the expenditures of the signs that have not been put up including travel costs, and leave the existing sign in place.

George Holt made a motion to follow the recommendation of the Committee on Race. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a majority (6/1). Jeff Wearing voted Nay.

Mayor Eady advised Steve Longcrier to follow up with Matt Pepper on the cost of printing the signs including customization based on the requests of the City of Oxford.

Mr. Longcrier stated he is aware that Oxford is a unique community in Oxford. With Oxford having no retail establishments, there is not any incentive for these signs from a tourism perspective. He has been aware because of the events that have occurred nationally recently that something like this might occur, but they have placed signs in 120 communities, and this is the first time that this type of action has been taken. His organization is prepared to work with Oxford and wants this to be a positive experience. He does not want it to be a divisive issue, but a unifying issue. He thanked the City Council for their consideration.

8. **Emory Street Sidewalk Project**

The FY2021 Capital Budget includes \$562,000 for a project to extend the sidewalk along the west side of Emory Street from Geiger Street to Moore Street. In 2019, the City Council awarded the contract to Tri Scapes, Inc. for \$561,751.13. Contract approval was received from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) in December 2020. Due to the extended amount of time that had elapsed since their bid was submitted, Tri Scapes, Inc. felt that they could not hold to their original bid. They are requesting a 7.5% increase in the total contract value, which amounts to \$42,131. With the increase, the new contract amount is \$603,882.

Matt Pepper stated that the issue for consideration of the City Council is whether to pursue the project given the increase in the contract price.

George Holt asked if the amount is non-negotiable. Mayor Eady stated that if the City rejects the bid, the contract must be rebid. Mr. Holt asked if the City can attempt to negotiate the price if the new bid is accepted. Mr. Pepper stated that the City would try to negotiate on the price.

Jeff Wearing questioned the appropriateness of spending the money for the sidewalk at this time, notwithstanding the price increase, given that the pedestrian bridge that was part of this project will not be built any time soon.

Mayor Eady asked for clarification from Mr. Pepper on the City's responsibility of the total of \$603,882. Mr. Pepper stated that the grant covers about \$450,000. There is a match from the City of Oxford of \$112,350. The price increase of \$42,131 would be added, as well as the cost of construction administration and materials testing, bringing the total to about \$190,000 that the City of Oxford would be responsible for.

Laura McCanless questioned the need for a redundant sidewalk leading to the bridge into Covington. There is a crosswalk at Oxford College for students. The investment of about \$200,000 required is a considerable amount of money that could be redistributed to other projects that are more critical.

James Windham and George Holt agreed with Mr. Wearing and Ms. McCanless. Mr. Windham further stated that there are other areas of sidewalk that are in dire need of repair. He also stated that the only reason the City was pursuing this project was as part of the pedestrian bridge collaboration with the City of Covington. He does not feel the City should pursue the sidewalk if Emory University is not going to pursue the pedestrian bridge.

Laura McCanless also pointed out that laying new concrete sidewalk is not environmentally friendly.

Jeff Wearing stated that this project is too far along to add conduit to the design. The funds allocated for this project can be used for conduit on the sidewalk project on the north side of Oxford.

Mayor Eady agreed that making any changes to the design at this stage would reset the project and would require another potentially protracted wait period for approval from GDOT.

James Windham made a motion to cancel the contract with Tri Scapes, Inc. and the project. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Mayor Eady asked Mr. Pepper to inform the parties involved of this decision and stated the City Council will discuss how to reallocate the funds at the March Work Session.

9. **City Sidewalk Project**

The FY2021 Capital Budget includes \$800,000 for a project to extend the sidewalk on Emory Street from Soule Street to northern city limits. Previously, Keck & Wood completed a concept study for the section of sidewalk. In addition, they will be providing a cost proposal to prepare the engineering plans, the bid documents and contract, and provide construction administration for the project. They were expected to provide the cost proposal prior to the meeting, but it has not been received.

Mayor Eady advised Matt Pepper to add this issue to the March Work Session agenda with the expectation that the cost proposal will be received before the meeting.

10. George Street Park Fencing

Jeff Wearing advised that he met with Cheryl Ready, Chair of the Trees, Parks and Recreation Board. He proposes to replace twelve (12) posts and about forty-five to fifty (45-50) rails to make it presentable along the streets that it borders. He recommends screwing the rails into the posts. Where the walk comes across from George Street, there is a four-post fence with reflectors. The four posts and rails need to be replaced as well. He estimates the cost of materials to be about \$1,000.

Mr. Wearing will provide the equipment needed. He hopes to be able to complete the project in one day with the help of citizen volunteers. The posts he proposes are made of cedar, the same as the posts currently there. Mr. Wearing needs to be reimbursed for the rails, the screws, and the reflectors. He would like to put the information out asking for volunteers on the City's social media outlets and in the utility bills. Laura Gafnea agreed to also put the word out at Oxford College for students to volunteer.

George Holt made a motion to approve the plan proposed by Jeff Wearing for repairing the fence. Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7/0).

11. Invoices (Attachment C)

The Council reviewed the invoices paid by the City of Oxford for \$1,000 or more in February 2021. Marcia Brooks advised the City Council that the item on the list for \$5,250 paid to Over and Under General Contractors for emergency repair of a power pole due to an automobile accident is being reimbursed by the driver's insurance company.

12. Executive Session

The City Council went into Executive Session at 7:33 p.m. to discuss real estate matters. The City Council returned from Executive Session at 8:33 p.m.

13. Adjourn

A motion was made by George Holt to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer

**OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
CITY HALL (VIA TELECONFERENCE)
A G E N D A**

1. Call to Order, Mayor David S. Eady
2. Invocation.
3. Motion to accept the Agenda for the March 1, 2021 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting.
4. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. * Minutes of the Regular Session February 1, 2021.
 - b. * Minutes of the Public Hearing February 1, 2021.
 - c. * Minutes of the Work Session February 15, 2021.
 - d. * Minutes of the Planning Commission January 12, 2021.
 - e. * Minutes of the Trees, Parks and Recreation Board January 19, 2021.
 - f. * Minutes of the Downtown Development Authority January 26, 2021.
5. Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions.
6. Citizen Concerns.
7. **Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails Signage** – In 2016, we approved installing signage for the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails program in three locations in the city. At the February Work Session meeting, the Council revisited the decision to install the signage. They asked the Committee on Race to provide a recommendation on the signage. Councilmember Williams will share the Committee on Race’s recommendation.
8. **Emory Street Sidewalk Project** – The FY2021 Capital Budget includes \$562,000 for a project to extend the sidewalk along the west side of Emory Street from Geiger Street to Moore Street. In 2019, the city awarded the contract to Tri Scapes, Inc. for \$561,751.13. We experienced some setbacks with moving the contract documents through the state’s system, which resulted in not receiving contract approval until December 2020. Consequently, Tri Scapes, Inc. felt that they could not hold their original bid. They are requesting a 7.5% increase in the total contract value, which amounts to \$42,131. With the increase, the new contract amount is \$603,882. Council will discuss whether to pursue the project subject to the 7.5% price increase.
9. ***City Sidewalk Project** – The FY2021 Capital Budget includes \$800,000 for a project to extend the sidewalk on Emory Street from Soule Street to northern city limits. Previously, Keck & Wood completed a concept study for the section of sidewalk. In addition, they have provided a cost proposal to prepare the engineering plans, the bid documents and contract, and provide construction administration for the project. We have attached the proposal.

10. **George Street Park Fencing** – Councilmember Wearing will provide a status update on the project to replace the existing split-rail fence at George Street Park.
11. * **Invoices** – Council will review the city’s recently paid invoices over \$1,000.
12. Executive Session.
13. Adjourn.



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, February 1, 2021 – 7:04 PM
Via Teleconference
DRAFT**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady – Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
James Windham – Councilmember
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember
Laura McCanless – Councilmember
Avis Williams – Councilmember
Lynn Bohanan – Councilmember

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Matt Pepper – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Jody Reid – Public Works Supervisor
Dave Harvey – Chief of Police
C. David Strickland – City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: Kevin Wilhite (Oxford Baptist Church), Mike Ready, Art Vinson, Laura Gafnea (Oxford College), Barbara Cole, Cheryl Ready (Chair, Trees, Parks and Recreation Board), Theresa Eady, Gwendolyn Green, Dr. Lakliesha Izzard, Anderson Wright.

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. Invocation – Rev. Kevin Wilhite (Oxford Baptist Church).
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **A motion was made by Avis Williams to accept the Agenda for February 1, 2021. Lynn Bohanan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
(Attachment A)
5. **A motion was made by Avis Williams to accept the Consent Agenda for February 1, 2021. Lynn Bohanan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).** (Attachment B)
6. **Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions**
None.
7. **Citizen Concerns**
None.
8. **2021 Arbor Day Proclamation** (Attachment C)

Mayor Eady read a proclamation designating February 1, 2021 as Arbor Day in the City of Oxford.

9. **Presentation of the Friend of Trees Award** (Attachment D)

Cheryl Ready presented this year's Friend of Trees Award to Jody Reid and his team in the Public Works Department of the City of Oxford. She thanked them for their tireless efforts and support of the Trees, Parks and Recreation Board's mission.

10. **Planning Commission Appointment**

Mayor Eady announced that Jeremy Baker has been nominated to serve on the Planning Commission.

Laura McCanless made a motion to approve the nomination of Jeremy Baker to serve on the Planning Commission. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

11. **Downtown Development Authority Appointments**

Mayor Eady announced that two currently serving appointees have been nominated for reappointment on the Downtown Development Authority: Ray Wilson and Laura McCanless.

Avis Williams made a motion to approve the reappointment of Ray Wilson and Laura McCanless to the Downtown Development Authority. Lynn Bohanan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7/0).

12. **Invoices** (Attachment E)

The Council reviewed the invoices paid by the City of Oxford for \$1,000 or more in December 2020.

James Windham asked if the new hot water at the Oxford Mail Center is a tankless model. Jody Reid stated the old one, which was leaking, was replaced with a new commercial model with a tank. Mr. Windham stated that in the future when these types of situations arise, the City should make an effort to repair/replace equipment with energy efficient solutions whenever feasible.

13. **Adjourn**

A motion was made by Laura McCanless to adjourn at 7:24 p.m. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021 – 6:45 PM
CITY HALL
DRAFT**

PRESENT: David S. Eady, Mayor; Councilmembers: George Holt, Jeff Wearing, Avis Williams, Laura McCanless, Lynn Bohanan.

Councilmembers not present: James Windham.

Staff members present: City Manager Matt Pepper, City Clerk/Treasurer Marcia Brooks, Utility Superintendent Jody Reid, City Attorney David Strickland.

OTHERS PRESENT: Stuart Swinea – Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC), Barbara Cole, Mike Ready, Cheryl Ready, Theresa Eady, Kevin Wilhite (Oxford Baptist Church), Gwendolyn Green, Dr. Lakliesha Izzard.

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM by the Hon. David S. Eady, Mayor.

Matt Pepper introduced Stuart Swinea, Project Specialist with NEGRC, who explained that the grant being applied for is a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The CDBG program is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The city is applying for CDBG funds to replace a water main along Oxford Road, Keel Street, Cat's Paw Court, Beakhead Court, and Perry Circle. Mr. Swinea presented information about the grant application requirements and application process (Attachment 1).

The maximum amount Oxford can apply for is \$750,000. This is the second year that the City of Oxford is applying for the grant, as it was not approved for 2020. The environmental review, which encompasses much of the work to apply for the grant, was completed last year. Mr. Swinea is focusing this year on bolstering the justification for the grant to increase the likelihood of its award. The deadline is normally April 1 but has been extended this year to June 4, 2021.

Barbara Cole asked why the grant was not approved in 2020. Mr. Swinea advised that he was given that information by DCA and is incorporating changes into this year's application. Essentially, Oxford's position was not as strong as other cities that received the grants.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Eady adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
WORK SESSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2021 – 6:30 PM
VIA TELECONFERENCE
DRAFT**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady – Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
Jim Windham – Councilmember
Avis Williams – Councilmember
Lynn Bohanan – Councilmember
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Matt Pepper – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Dave Harvey – Police Chief

ELECTED OFFICIALS NOT PRESENT:

Laura McCanless – Councilmember

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Ready, Cheryl Ready, Michael McQuaide, Brian Barnard, Steve Longcrier

Agenda (Attachment A)

1. Mayor's Announcements

Mayor Eady stated that the City staff has been fortunate not to be impacted much by COVID-19. There is an employee out now that has contracted the virus, but this is only the second positive exposure since the pandemic started.

2. Committee Reports

- a. Trees Parks and Recreation (TPR) Board – Cheryl Ready stated that the next meeting of the Board is February 16, 2021. Councilmember Jeff Wearing will be in attendance to discuss his findings on the split-rail fence at George Street Park. They will also be discussing their budget request at this meeting. They will also be replacing the ginkgo trees at Asbury Street Park on Monday, February 22, 2021. Ms. Ready advised that a science professor at Emory University is going to plant the seedlings in their greenhouse that were for this year's Arbor Day celebration that was cancelled, and they will be available for next year's celebration.

James Windham asked what they plan to do with the ginkgo trees being replaced. Ms. Ready advised she does not have that information but hopes they will be replanted or given to someone to replant. She advised that Beryl Budd has information on the bid that was chosen, which details what will be done with the trees removed.

- b. Planning Commission – Matt Pepper stated that the Planning Commission is finalizing their recommendations for amendments to Chapter 40 of the City of Oxford zoning ordinance. He believes they will be ready to share them with the Mayor and City Council for their consideration in March of 2021.
- c. Downtown Development Authority (DDA) – Brian Barnard reported that the group has been working on some recommendations for the City of Oxford greenspace. They will present their recommendations at this meeting under a separate agenda topic.
- d. Sustainability Committee – Michael McQuaide reported that the Committee is still active. They participated recently in a conversation with John Divine facilitated by Matt Pepper and Mayor Eady. They have also been invited to join with the Yellow River Alliance so the Alliance can show them a section of the river that has already been reclaimed.

He stated that most of the committee has walked the Dried Indian Creek corridor from its headwaters to I-20, and they now have a good understanding of the threats to the corridor's health. They discovered that someone has been driving an ATV along the banks and back up around to the back of Oxford Farm. They would like to engage the City Council, the City Attorney and Chief Harvey about trying to discourage this behavior. At their next meeting they plan to evaluate their progress on the grant request and divide the remaining labor to ensure that the request is submitted on time.

Mayor Eady added that he and Matt spoke with Mayor Steve Horton of Covington on February 11, 2021. The mayor and his staff are very interested in protecting the creek and utilizing it for activity. Mayor Horton directed his team to put together a presentation for their City Council on what the City of Oxford is planning, as an invitation either to join the City of Oxford on the initial grant application or to endorse the application and join in a later phase. They also mentioned some possible funding from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) that has to do with water quality.

On Monday, February 22, 2021, the City of Oxford will kick off its project with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC). They are going to develop a Streets and Trails plan that will show how the Dried Indian Creek project will tie in with a broader plan. John Calabria with the University of Georgia (UGA) is getting ready to kick off the watershed assessment and restoration plan for the project.

- e. Committee on Race – Avis Williams reported that the Committee has a meeting on February 16, 2021 to finalize plans for their first Black History Month Even on February 28, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. The program includes music, spoken word, students doing readings, and members of the community. The information will be on the City's website and on Facebook.

Mayor Eady asked all Councilmembers to follow the City's Facebook page and to share information when it is placed there to help get news out.

3. **Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Greenspace Proposal** (Attachment B)
Brian Barnard stated that the DDA has compiled a very high-level aerial drawing of their recommendations for the City of Oxford greenspace to make it a destination without having to undertake a large development project. Matt Pepper also provided a memo to the City Council explaining the recommendations. Until a determination is made of who would facilitate the implementation of the changes, they will not recommend any specifics for styles, imagery for signs, etc. The drawing shows that they are suggesting installing some type of decorative fencing showing the area is for a designated use and making it more attractive.

Behind the Yarbrough House a couple of picnic tables are shown to suggest an area that gives a sense of place to the downtown area. The goals of these suggested changes are to enhance the appeal of the area as a farmer's market and entice more participants and more visitors.

Mayor Eady asked if the DDA has an adequate amount in their budget to make the improvements suggested. Mr. Barnard stated that there is adequate funding in their budget, but one of the points of their discussion was that the DDA does not own the land, the City of Oxford does. The question arose as to whether the City of Oxford wishes to implement the changes based on their suggestions, or if they want the DDA to make the changes. If the DDA makes the changes, should the discussion of land acquisition by the DDA be part of the discussion or will the City of Oxford retain ownership of the land.

Mr. Barnard explained the details of the drawing. The yellow area suggests a parking lot, material to be determined. This space would also be an indicator to vendors that they should enter and exit from West Clark Street rather than from Emory Street. The pink lines designate some sort of decorative fencing and signing on the two opposite corners of Emory Street. Behind the Yarbrough House they are suggesting adding some picnic tables and trash receptacles with light landscaping in a shaded area.

James Windham asked if they plan to put any type of surface on the parking area. Mr. Barnard stated they have not specifically identified any material. This decision would be dependent on which group implements the plan.

Mr. Windham suggested focusing the picnic tables more toward the U.S. Post Office. This is where the citizens gather. He had concerns about compromising the beauty of the area behind Yarbrough House.

Mayor Eady asked if the City Council supports making minimal investments in the space to formalize the purpose of the space as a City farmer's market. He knows the City Council would want the parking lot to be some kind of porous material. He also asked if the City Council would want to maintain ownership and control over the area and execute the improvements, or would it want to turn ownership over to the DDA and have them execute the changes utilizing the funds they have been allocated by the City Council.

George Holt stated he believes the City Council should maintain control over the area. Mr. Windham, Jeff Wearing, and Avis Williams agreed.

Michael McQuaide stated that there are a number of people who would be reluctant to see the City of Oxford give up the land. One way to accomplish the goal of improving the space may be for the City of Oxford to pay for the improvements.

Mr. Windham stated that he has been critical in the past of the DDA because the City deeded them some land and gave them some money. What they planned to do did not work out well and was not received well by the citizenry. He would like to hear what other proposals they have for the area that has already been deeded to them. He also has a vision for the area behind the Yarbrough House, and he is concerned picnic tables would be a detrimental change to that part of the greenspace. He believes a better location for them is closer to the U.S. Post Office. He provided an article to Matt Pepper that has some interesting ideas for these types of areas. Other than the placement of the picnic tables, he does not see anything wrong with the depiction of the proposed suggestions.

Mr. Holt stated he agreed with Mr. Windham about the placement of the picnic tables.

City Clerk Marcia Brooks stated she is concerned that the proximity of the picnic tables to the Yarbrough House may introduce a liability issue. People would naturally migrate toward the house and may get on the porch, which is not in good repair. Mr. Windham acknowledged this is a valid point.

Mr. Ready stated the picnic tables on the drawing are much closer than where they were discussed by the group. They would be further back toward the Post Office. The thought was to provide some shade for farmer's market patrons.

Jeff Wearing stated that any work done to this area should be a springboard for future development with the goal of attracting more people to the downtown area. Anything done on the property should be sustainable but not permanent. He does not object to the picnic tables and supports moving them back. People coming to the farmers market need a place to sit. Picnic tables are a good way to make such a place available without making permanent changes to the space. However, he would like to see more from the DDA before approving any changes.

Mayor Eady thanked the DDA for its suggestions and stated it is a good prompt for the City to move forward with some type of action on the space to make it more attractive for visitors to the farmers market.

4. FY 2022 Budget Calendar (Attachment C)

Matt Pepper presented the budget calendar for FY2022. The Department Heads have submitted their requests for the FY2022 budget. In the coming months the Council will be discussing the operating and capital requests during the monthly work sessions. Adoption of the budget is scheduled for the June 7, 2021 regular Council meeting. The Property Tax Digest is received after the budget is adopted, so discussions on the millage rate cannot occur until July and August.

Mayor Eady stated his intention is to make the budget process as open and transparent as possible by discussing the budget in full Council meetings rather than setting up a separate committee to discuss the budget and recommend a final proposal. The operating budget is based partly on the needs of the staff but also on economic projections. The outlook is a bit more optimistic than it was last year. The capital budget is planned out five years in advance. Most of the capital budget for FY2022 will include items that were previously deferred. He encouraged the City Councilmembers to provide their input on the budget to him and Matt Pepper.

5. City Hall Multifunction Copier (Attachment D)

City Clerk Marcia Brooks presented a proposal to enter into a lease agreement with Novatech, the City's current provider for its multifunction copier (MFC). The maintenance costs for the MFC in City Hall have increased over time since the equipment was purchased in 2012. The city currently pays for an annual maintenance plan and a fee per colored sheet of paper. The cost per colored sheet has increased over the years, as well as the maintenance plan annual cost. A 60-month lease would cost about \$100 more annually than the cost to maintain and use the current equipment for the first three years. There are also two other options for terms of 24 months and 39 months. With a 60-month lease, the cost can be locked in for the first three years.

George Holt asked if the staff could review why so many copies are being made. Ms. Brooks stated that one thing the City can do is change the settings on all equipment to default printing in black and white. He asked if the staff could be more cognizant of what they are copying and try to cut down on unnecessary copying.

Avis Williams and James Windham agreed with doing a study to evaluate what is being printed. Mr. Windham mentioned that the City might consider desk scanners as a way to reduce printing. The City is also paying for cloud storage with OneDrive and SharePoint, and he would like for the City to make more use of these media. He does not believe an agreement should be longer than five years because technology changes so fast and equipment becomes obsolete.

Jeff Wearing expressed that he does not care for leases in general. He also noted that the biggest jump he sees in cost is in the fifth year, so he is in agreement that we should not

wait much longer than five years to replace equipment. He is in favor of replacing the equipment but suggested that there might should be an approval process for printing certain items in color.

Mr. Windham added that he is not opposed to replacing the equipment but mentioned that over the last year the meetings have been conducted online and no paper has been printed. He stated that when the City returns to in-person meetings, there is no need to print any paper for the Councilmembers. He also asked that the staff expand on this change and try to find other ways to cut back on excess printing.

Ms. Brooks advised she would do some further evaluation and bring a final recommendation back to the City Council.

6. **Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails Signage**

Mayor Eady introduced Steven Longcrier of Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails and advised that in 2016, the City Council approved the installation of signs that would have been provided by his organization. There are three new City Councilmembers since this decision was made. Mayor Eady would like for the City Council to validate that this is still what it wants to do and address the sign that has already been placed across from Old Church. Mayor Eady asked Mr. Longcrier to provide some background information.

Mr. Longcrier stated he was in a previous meeting that included discussions of how to honor veterans on Memorial Day, July 4th, etc. He suggested that the City Council consider honoring the three signers from Georgia of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th.

He stated that his organization is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to history and education. He acknowledged that Oxford is unique in that it has no retail presence, is mostly residential, and has much history. He mentioned several well-known officials who have been or are currently on their board. They work with a variety of communities from large to small. They are trying to touch all bases to tell the story of what occurred in Georgia during the middle of the 19th century. They tell more than just battle stories. They tell the stories of civilians from all walks of life.

A large part of their funding comes from government agencies such as Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) but these grants require community participation. They worked with Newton County Historical Society and the Oxford Historical Society. A proposal was put together for and approved by the Newton County Commissioners. They paid \$5,000 toward having markers put on the square in Covington and at Old Church in Oxford. The remainder of the money came from fundraising, out of their own pockets, and from other sources, but none from the City of Oxford.

They wanted the people of Oxford to tell Oxford's story. They worked with Erik Oliver, Jim Watterson, and a number of other groups and individuals that provided information including Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Sites Division, several college professors, and Michael Thurmond who is an accomplished historian to come up with the correct wording. They want to work more closely with the African American community,

and if the marker at Old Church needs to be revised, they want to make the changes needed to make it accurate.

The proposal originally brought before the City Council included the marker at Old Church plus three additional signs that would take people along the trail. Mayor Roseberry and Bob Schwartz requested that the signs be reduced in size from those originally proposed. Mr. Longcrier agreed with this request due to the uniqueness of Oxford. The signs proposed in 2016 were about half the size of the original ones, and Mayor Roseberry asked that they be double-sided. He also asked that they be designed to hang on cantilever posts rather than standard DOT signs.

The Oxford City Council voted in December 2016 by a 6 to 1 majority to approve the signs. GDOT had them on a very aggressive schedule to install markers and signs throughout the State of Georgia, so it was about two and one half (2½) years before the signs were manufactured. They were delivered about one and one half (1½) years ago and Mr. Longcrier assumes that Jody Reid has them stored. The signs cannot be used anywhere else. They cost an additional \$1,095.00.

Avis Williams thanked Mr. Longcrier for meeting with her recently. She asked if the City Council votes again and changes its vote, does that action set a bad precedent that paints the City Council in a negative way. She also wanted to know why the signs were not put up.

George Holt stated that he thinks the City Council had some second thoughts and decided that perhaps the sign at Old Church was adequate. However, he stated that this is a new Council, and a sitting Council cannot bind a future Council to decisions.

James Windham agreed with Mr. Holt's statements. He stated that he was on the City Council when the vote was taken in 2016. Since that time, his thoughts and feelings have evolved tremendously on this issue. He has a problem with it being a Civil War heritage trail. The City of Oxford is trying very hard to do what's right by all of its citizens, recognizing who was responsible for building Emory University and trying to correct wrongs that have previously been done. He feels that proceeding with this project now would send the wrong message from the City Council.

Mr. Holt stated he has also changed his mind since the vote and agrees with Mr. Windham.

Mr. Windham asked that the Committee on Race review the proposal and the current sign and provide their recommendations.

Mayor Eady expressed appreciation to Mr. Longcrier for the willingness to make changes to the existing sign if needed. He wanted to make clear that he did not bring this issue back to the City Council because his was the lone dissenting vote in 2016. He feels that there is elevated awareness and sensitivity to things that have not been considered in the past. He wants the City Council to look at this issue through the lens of 2021 and not 2014-2016. If

the Council wishes to move forward, that is what will happen. If the City Council chooses not to move forward, he would recommend reimbursing the organization for the cost.

Lynn Bohanan expressed agreement with the statements that had been made by the other City Councilmembers.

Jeff Wearing stated that people learn from history. We have to take it for what it is and forgive and forget. But one cannot hide from what has happened. It is not all good but it happened, and he disagrees with some of the feelings that have been expressed.

Mr. Holt stated there is a difference between hiding something and putting it in everyone's face. Mr. Windham stated such things should not be celebrated.

Mr. Wearing stated nothing would be celebrated. The history would be told as it happened.

Mayor Eady thanked the City Councilmembers for their honest and open dialogue.

Mr. Longcrier stated that their organization does not do monuments. Their markers contain the same type of content that the Georgia Historical Society has placed around the state about the Civil War. He is willing to be flexible on the directional signs and appreciates Mayor Eady's offer to reimburse them if they are not used. He stated that he has been working with Matt and Jody ever since the signs were delivered, and COVID-19 has impacted the City's ability to work on the project as well as other priorities that were competing with this project.

Ms. Williams stated that she has this issue on the agenda for her committee meeting tomorrow.

Mayor Eady stated that the Committee on Race would come back with a recommendation for the City Council regarding the Trail Blazer directional signs. He also reiterated his belief that the City Council should at a minimum reimburse their organization for the cost if the decision is not to put up any other signs. The Committee will also provide its recommendations on any wording changes needed for the marker at Old Church.

Mr. Longcrier mentioned that the marker and one directional sign was approved in 2013, but Mayor Roseberry had some reservations about the design of the directional sign, and he was willing to be flexible about that matter. He is willing to make any changes to the marker the Committee recommends.

7. Sanitation Services for E. George Street

Mayor Eady reminded the City Council that at the last City Council Work Session a discussion took place about a driveway in common that has come to be referred to as East George Street. The City Council discussed the pros and cons of purchasing additional right-of-way and spending funds to improve the public alleyway in order to make it adhere to City requirements for public streets. The conclusion of the City Council was to take no action. There was also discussion about whether the City-contracted garbage truck should

be going down the common driveway, or if the citizens who own these properties should be required to bring their roll carts to Emory Street for sanitation service.

Since that meeting Mayor Eady asked if Latham had made any complaints about access to the homes and was advised they have not. At the end of the driveway there is a large concrete driveway that goes to a large shed. It provides ample space for the garbage truck or a fire engine to turn around. His recommendation is to go with the status quo. If Latham Sanitation is willing to go down the driveway to pick up garbage, we should continue this practice. The people who created this situation are either deceased or no longer live on the properties. If the current residents wish to come to the City Council and negotiate about improving the driveway to make it a public road, that issue can be addressed separately.

George Holt advised he did view the large driveway Mayor Eady described and agrees with him. He does not want to impose a punitive decision on the current residents. His only concern is that the residents know it is not a city street and the City of Oxford is not responsible for any repairs to the driveway caused by Latham Sanitation.

Avis Williams, Lynn Bohanan, James Windham and Jeff Wearing agreed with Mr. Holt.

Mayor Eady advised he already needs to discuss some issues with the property owners and will make sure they are aware that the City of Oxford bears no responsibility or liability for the condition of the driveway.

Mr. Holt stated that if the property owners wish to have the driveway upgraded to a public street, they should bear responsibility for all of the cost.

8. **City Cemetery Committee** (Attachment E)

Mayor Eady announced that Lynn Bohanan has agreed to chair the committee to work on the City Cemetery agreement. James Windham will also serve on the committee. He advised them to feel empowered to recruit additional members to work with them as appropriate. The goal of the committee is to come back with a recommendation to the City Council of what the agreement with the Oxford Historical Cemetery Foundation should be moving forward.

The old agreement has expired, and a new agreement is needed. They should get a sense of the sentiment of the Foundation as well as other stakeholders, recognizing that the Foundation was established because the City was not doing anything to maintain the cemetery. About twenty years ago a disparity issue was raised regarding certain sections of the cemetery, and the City and the Foundation tried to address that issue.

Ms. Bohanan stated that she needs a starting point for the discussion. Mayor Eady recommended that she contact Anderson Wright, who knows a great deal about the history.

9. **Work Session Meeting Review**

- a. DDA greenspace proposal – the City likes it in concept but wants to retain ownership of the property. The City will come up with more formalized plans for the area.

- b. FY2022 Budget Calendar – City Councilmembers should provide input to Mayor Eady and Matt Pepper
- c. Multifunction Copier – Marcia Brooks, Mayor Eady and Matt Pepper will come back to the City Council with a final recommendation.
- d. Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails Signage – The Committee on Race will bring a recommendation to the City Council on the status of the proposed and existing signs.
- e. Sanitation Services for E. George Street – No change to current services. The City will communicate to the residents that they are responsible for repairs to the driveway.
- f. City Cemetery Committee – Lynn Bohanan chairing, James Windham serving

10. Adjourn

Mayor Eady adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer

OXFORD PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes – January 12, 2021

MEMBERS: Jonathan Eady, Chair; Zach May, Vice Chair; Juanita Carson, Secretary; Mike Ready and Mike McQuaide.

STAFF: Matthew Pepper, City Manager and Zoning Administrator.

GUESTS: David Huber; Brian Barnard.

OPENING: At 7:04 PM, Mr. Eady called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

MINUTES: Upon motion of Mr. Ready, seconded by Ms. Carson, the minutes for the meeting of December 8, 2020 were adopted as amended. The vote was 5-0.

ELECTIONS: This is the first meeting of 2021, so it is time to elect officers for the next year. The officers are: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Upon motion of Mr. McQuaide, seconded by Mr. Ready, Mr. Eady was elected as Chair, Mr. May was elected as Vice-Chair, and Ms. Carson was elected as Secretary. The vote was 5-0.

BRIAN BARNARD DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (1112 Asbury Street): The Commission reviewed the development permit application to include interior renovation work to the kitchen. The work includes new cabinets, an island and pantry, and new flooring. Mr. Barnard confirmed that he will not modify any mechanical services as part of the kitchen renovation. It will be a part of the renovation work on the home located at 1112 Asbury Street that was approved by the Planning Commission in November 2020.

Upon motion of Mr. McQuaide, seconded by Mr. Ready, the Planning Commission approved the development permit application to complete interior renovation work on the kitchen as described above. The vote was 5-0.

DAVID HUBER AND DANA PAYNE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (1102 Emory Street): The Commission reviewed the development permit application to include the following work to the property located at 1102 Emory Street: the construction of a 6' tall wrought iron fence in the backyard; the completion of an outdoor shower; and the laying of a brick paver apron surrounding a shallow fishpond on the east side of the back patio. The Commission confirmed that the proposed fencing would be contained on Mr. Huber's property.

Upon motion of Mr. May, seconded by Mr. Ready, the Planning Commission approved the development permit application to include the work at 1102 Emory Street as described above. The vote was 5-0.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 40: The Commission continued their discussion on the amendments to Chapter 40 Zoning, specifically Sections 40-575, 40-712, 40-713, 40-841, 40-842, and Division 16 – Residential Infill Overlay District. Prior to the meeting, Mr. Eady shared a summary of the proposed amendments with the Commission. Mr. Eady asked that the Commission review the summary and provide any feedback on the proposed amendments. The Commission will then review the feedback at the February meeting.

The Commission discussed the relationship between the city's development and building permits. They discussed amending Section 40-842 to include specific permits for structures like pools, decks, and fences. Prior to the February meeting, Mr. Pepper will send the Commission a list of permits that the city approved when it contracted for third-party building inspection and permitting services.

In addition, the Commission discussed making minor amendments to Division 16. – Residential Infill Overlay district to reduce the designation’s flexibility. For instance, the district contemplates that a north/south artery on the east side of Emory Street/SR 81 should be included in subdivision plans. This would be difficult to implement given the size of existing lots and available space to build.

The Commission will continue their discussion on amendments to Chapter 40 during future meetings. They will share their recommendations with the Mayor and Council.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Pepper reported to the Commission that the Mayor and City Council approved Mr. Ellis’s minor subdivision request at the January Regular Session Meeting. In addition, he reported that the city is still working on filling the vacant seat on the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Eady adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Submitted by:

Juanita Carson, Secretary

Trees, Parks and Recreation Board (TPR) – City of Oxford, GA

Minutes of Meeting January 19, 2021

Community Room, Oxford City Hall (Via Video Conference)

Call to Order: At 5:02 PM, Chairman Ready called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

Attendance

Present – Members: Cheryl Ready, Mike McQuaide, Nakeisha Cummings, Anderson Wright, Theresa Eady, and Michael Rogers.

Laura Gafnea, Director of Community Relations, Oxford College

Beryl Budd, City Arborist

Seth Hawkins, GFC Community Forester

Laura McCanless, City Councilmember

Matthew Pepper, City Manager

Jody Reid, Utility Superintendent

Agenda for Meeting: Upon motion of Mr. Rogers, seconded by Ms. Eady, the agenda for the January 19, 2021 meeting was adopted. The vote was 6-0.

Minutes of Meeting held December 8, 2020: Upon motion of Ms. Eady, seconded by Mr. Rogers, the minutes for the meetings held December 8, 2020 were adopted. The vote was 6-0.

Status of Work Plan, FY2021, Beryl Budd: The Board agreed to discuss FY2021's tree pruning project later in the meeting.

Approval of FY2021 Budget: The Board reviewed the document listing their proposed FY2021 budget. The categories included the following: 2021 Arbor Day, Tree Planting, Pruning (Crown & Structural), Educational Costs, Donations, and Arborist Fees. The Board discussed possibly adding a category for recreation-related activities. The Board discussed beginning work on their budget request for FY2022.

Upon motion of Ms. Eady, seconded by Mr. Rogers, the Board approved the proposed allocations for the FY2021. The vote was 6-0.

Mission Statement and Vision Statement: The Board reviewed the final draft of the document containing their mission and vision statement. The Board agreed to send it to the Mayor and City Council for their review.

Maintenance Concerns:

1. Bench at Mitchell Street Park: Ms. Ready shared that she met with Mr. Pepper and Mr. Reid at the park to identify a couple locations to install a park bench. Before installing the bench, Ms. Ready will contact Mr. Wright for feedback on the proposed locations.
2. George Street Park (Split-rail fencing bids): Mr. Pepper reported to the Board that staff has had difficulties finding a fence contractor that meets the city's insurance requirements and is

interested in completing a relatively small fence project. He will continue to look for a fence contractor.

3. **Asbury Street Park – Replacing Ginkgo Trees:** The Board discussed with Mr. Budd possible replacements for the existing Ginkgo trees at the park. Two of the options discussed were hornbeams and black gums. Mr. Pepper shared that Mayor Eady requested that the recommended trees have a large enough canopy to provide shade for visitors, especially for those using the playground. Mr. Budd will provide the Board with his recommendations, which Mr. Pepper will then share with the Mayor and City Council.
4. **Tree City/Growth Award –** The Board discussed documenting different projects undertaken by the Board to include in the Growth Award application.

Pruning Issues – Tree Selection: Mr. Budd received three (3) proposals for this year’s pruning project. The bids were as follows: Caldwell Tree Care (\$9,388); Rayfield Tree Care, Inc. (\$4,450); and Arbor Equity \$4,320. The Board reviewed the bids. Mr. Budd recommended that the Board award the contract to Arbor Equity.

Upon motion of Ms. Eady, seconded by Mr. McQuaide, the Board awarded the contract for FY2021’s tree pruning project to Arbor Equity for \$4,320. The vote was 6-0.

Arbor Day, 2021: The Board discussed the city’s upcoming Arbor Day event. Ms. Eady expressed her concern with hosting a city-sponsored event during the pandemic. As positive cases have continued to rise in Georgia, the Board agreed that it would be difficult to safely host Arbor Day at Asbury Street Park. Ms. Ready recommended that the Board request that Mayor Eady read the city’s Arbor Day Proclamation at the February 1st City Council Meeting. In addition, the Board would present the Friends of Trees award to the city’s maintenance crew at the meeting.

In addition, the Board discussed ideas on how to best plant about fifty (50) seedlings that Mr. Budd had received in anticipation of the event. They decided that many of the seedlings could be planted in the wooded area at Asbury Street Park, others potted, and the remaining given to Oxford College to be used in a joint-planting effort.

Upon motion of Ms. Eady, seconded by Mr. Rogers, the Board suspended the city’s Arbor Day event for 2021 due to the safety concerns presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The vote was 6-0.

Naming Rights at Asbury Street Park: Mr. Pepper shared that a resident recently approached the city about having a bench at Asbury Street Park named in honor of their family. They are willing to make a donation to the city in exchange for the naming opportunity. Mr. Pepper explained that during the park’s construction, the Oxford Lions Club donated a bench. In return, the city installed a plaque on the bench stating that it was donated by the Lions Club. In addition, the city installed a plaque honoring Ms. Helen Griffin’s family as a condition of acquiring the property. Other than those two instances, the city has not named any other equipment or area after a specific person or family.

The Board discussed several naming option ideas including planting honorary trees, installing bricks, and a donation wall. They also discussed redirecting residents to the existing city trail. Mr. Pepper will research similar programs offered by other cities. The Board also discussed focusing on allowing individuals to name a bench while they work to develop a broader program.

Arbor Day Foundation Donation: Ms. Ready reported that the Board plans to make a donation to the Arbor Day Foundation.

Discussion on Filling Vacancy: The Board discussed the existing vacancy. Mr. McQuaide will contact Ms. Barbara Cole to discuss with her the possibility of joining the Board.

Concerns and Announcements: Mr. Hawkins reminded the Board about the Tree City USA Virtual Conference that will take place on February 10th, 17th, and 24th. Board members can attend the conference for free using a promotional code.

Adjournment: At 6:29 PM, Chairman Ready adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting will be at 5 PM on February 16, 2021.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OXFORD

Minutes – January 26, 2021

MEMBERS: Mr. Brian Barnard, Chair; Mr. Mike Ready, Vice-Chair; Mr. Jonathan Eady, Ms. Danielle Miller, Ms. Laura McCanless, and Mr. Art Vinson. Mr. Ray Wilson was absent.

STAFF: Michelle Middleton, Associate Clerk; Marcia Brooks, City Clerk; Matthew Pepper, City Manager and DDA Secretary/Treasurer.

GUESTS: No guests were in attendance.

OPENING: At 7:02 PM, Mr. Barnard called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion of Mr. Eady, seconded by Ms. Miller, the minutes for the meetings held on October 27, 2020 and December 1, 2020 were approved. The vote was 6 – 0.

THE CITY GREENSPACE: The DDA continued their previous discussions on how to implement low-cost capital improvements to help cultivate commercial activity on the city-owned greenspace. The DDA focused on the city's revival of the farmer's market. The DDA reviewed their previous ideas for parking including developing a designated parking area located off E. Clark Street. The DDA also discussed approaching the City Council about receiving the deeds to the greenspace properties as part of the process to implement the recommended capital improvements.

Mr. Barnard will develop the visual component for the proposal and Mr. Pepper will develop the written description. The DDA will share the proposal with the Mayor and Council prior to the February 15th Council Meeting.

Mr. Pepper introduced Michelle Middleton, the city's new Associate Clerk. He explained that Ms. Middleton will be responsible for managing the market's operations. He stated that she would be attending the next few DDA meetings as the city prepares for the opening of the market in the spring.

OTHER BUSINESS: Ms. Miller shared with the DDA that Oxford College is beginning work on a feasibility study for the Forney Property (102 Pierce Street). Ms. Miller explained that the garden would be preserved as part of the renovation of the home. Ms. McCanless asked whether Oxford College would consider developing a botanical garden at the site. Ms. Miller responded that she would share that idea with her team.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion of Mr. Vinson, seconded by Mr. Ready, the Authority adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM. The vote was 6 – 0.

Submitted by:

Matthew Pepper, Secretary/Treasurer

City of Oxford
Invoices >=\$1,000
Paid in February 2021

VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
RECURRING CHARGES		
City of Oxford	Utility Charges – January 2021	1,886.83
Newton County Board of Commissioners	Water Purchase January 2021; Invoice #2794	12,098.00
Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority	Sewer Treatment Fees, 12/30/2020 – 1/28/2021	6,164.17
City of Covington	2020 E-911 Surcharges	16,112.88
Georgia Municipal Association	GMEBS Life and Health Insurance Billing for February 2021; Invoice #307880	12,173.66
Georgia Municipal Association	GMEBS Retirement Trust Fund Employer Contributions January 2021	5,681.33
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA)	Monthly Payment on Loan 2016L06WQ January 2021	4,556.05
Southeastern Power Administration (SPA)	SEPA Energy Cost (January 2021) Inv. #B-21-0914	2,982.03
Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG)	Monthly Electric Purchases for January 2021	88,811.93
IRS	Federal Payroll Taxes, February 2021	11,504.35
Latham Home Sanitation	Commercial Waste Removal Services January 2021	7,361.18
VC3 (formerly Sophicity)	February charges for software and hardware support; invoice #58341	2,057.31

VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
PURCHASES/CONTRACT LABOR		
McNair McLemore Middlebrooks & Co.	January 2021 professional financial services	2,548.00
Covington News	January 2021 ads – election notice, police officer ad, CDBG public notice	1,110.00
Over and Under General Contractors	Emergency call – replace power pole damaged during automobile accident	5,250.00
Southern Water Service, LLC	Submersible grinder pump for generator at Victoria Station	2,290.00
Georgia Hydrant Services	Repairs to fire hydrant on 1/29/2021	1,000.00