

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

Minutes of Meeting **October 10, 2017**

Community Room, Oxford City Hall

At 5:00 p.m. Chairman Ready called the meeting to order.

Attendance

Present – Members Cheryl Ready, LaTrelle Oliver, Sallie Robinson, Anderson Wright
City Manager Matt Pepper
City Superintendent Jody Reid
City Arborist Beryl Budd GUFCA
Planning Commission Vice Chairman Guest Jeff Wearing
Groundskeeper Tom Collins

Absent – Members Laura McCanless, Andrea O'Toole, Glenda Stewart
GUFCA Community Forester Seth Hawkins
Oxford College Senior Manager of Operations Kendra Mayfield

Agenda for meeting: motion to approve by Sallie Robinson; second by Anderson Wright.
Unanimous approval.

Minutes of meeting August 8, 2017: motion to approve by Sallie Robinson; second by Anderson Wright. Unanimous approval.

Yarbrough Oak replanting discussion:

1. Operational consensus: An existing young Yarbrough Oak could be replanted near the site of the original if an appropriate place in the comprehensive city center plan is determined.
2. Idea originated during August 2017 meeting when Arborist Budd reported that Newton County resident Sandy Morehouse has offered a second generation offspring grown from an acorn produced by a seedling he purchased from Oxford's 1990 propagation project.
3. Oxford resident Jeff Wearing has three of the original seedlings. He is offering one to be transplanted onto city property if the City provides the labor and expertise for that move and also for moving another to the front yard of historic Haygood House where three grand trees fell during Hurricane Irma.
4. Mr. Budd will visit the Wearing site and assess the possibilities.

Reports and updates:

A. Maintenance concerns

1. Continuation of privet control along Wesley and Fletcher Streets - Jody: The final spraying is due, after which the designated areas will be mowed.
2. Replacement trees for Emory Street - Beryl and Jody: Mr. Budd advises that City should "work with" the specimen currently there but not add new plantings. He and Chairman Ready will research the *Neighborwood* program, which may be a viable avenue for cultivating Oxford's tree canopy on private and public lands.
3. Kiosk repair in George Street Park: One bid has been received (\$135.00 John McElroy) to be constructed identical to frames in kiosk behind Old Church. Motion to proceed made by Mr. Wright; second by Mrs. Oliver. Discussion followed that frame should be enlarged to fit the background space and new Plexiglas installed. Motion passed.
4. Trail issues - funding for repairs needed:
 - a. Erosion problems along Clark Street - Soil has washed from tree roots onto trail and needs continual removal. Mr. Budd will look at the situation.
 - b. Determination of damaged/dead trees - attention? Mr. Budd suggested we apply for a Georgia ReLeaf grant, a program of the Georgia Urban Forest Council.
 - c. Document and display appreciation for landowners who gave easements for trail system. Suggestion: Some sort of public display in City Hall or kiosk in George Street Park, or granite block with metal plaque attached.

B. Mitchell Street Park (Rosenwald School Memorial): Mr. Wright requests that larger, more substantial dogwood specimen be used rather than the small fragile seedlings.

C. George Street Park (Murdy Arboretum): No decision has been made on a replacement for the Jack Atkinson memorial tree. Mr. Budd will consider a new selection and its proper site.

D. Asbury Street Park ad hoc committee's recommendations for park: seek approval from TPR and recommendation to present to City Council: The official designer has not been in contact with decisions on further plans. Project is on hold. Mr. Pepper will see that engineer Robert Jordan proceeds with construction plans using the existing design plans. The TPR Board will meet with Asbury Park Committee for the purpose of reviewing final plans before they are presented to Council for approval to initiate construction. No dates have been set at this time.

E. George Street Trail extension - report on progress: Initial cut-through and rough grading are complete. Recent rains have stalled further action until the soil dries sufficiently to accommodate heavy machinery.

Pruning Issues: Review of August decision restated here in full - Recommendation to update exiting inventory of City trees that Arborist Connie Head directed years ago, documenting trees that have been removed, mature trees that have been maintained by crown pruning, and identifying mature trees remaining to be pruned. Risk assessment of these trees recommended. Seth will prepare a letter recommending a budget for updating our tree inventory. Following preliminary discussion of TPR's current annual budget, the following motion moved forward:

Motion #1 by Laura McCanless and seconded by Sallie Robinson - to include Arborist's identification and risk assessment of mature trees. **Unanimous approval.**

Motion # 2 by Laura McCanless and seconded by Sallie Robinson - to split the FY 2018 TPR budget with two-thirds to crown pruning and one-third to planting new trees after required amounts for Arbor Day expenses and Arborist fees. **Unanimous approval.**

Community Forester Seth Hawkins promptly submitted the letter to Council described above. Beryl and Jody will determine a new list of maintenance pruning priorities. An updated inventory of all trees on public property is needed also.

Arbor Day in Oxford, Saturday, February 3, 2018:

Cousins Middle School students will read *The Giving Tree*.

Poetry writing contest will be open to Flint Hill Elementary students. Teachers will cull 10 best.

Prizes will be gift cards from Chick-fil-A and one other business.

Beryl has reserved seedlings for distribution to attendees.

Emory Street Revitalization Plan:

In order to establish a fund for this long proposed project, Chairman Ready proposed the idea of a tree sculpture in relief, mounted inside City Hall, that would exhibit names of donors giving money in memory or in honor.

Oxford College's interests and concerns: Discussion tabled due to limited time remaining for meeting and College representative's absence - (a) plans for tree loss along Pierce and Whatcoat (b) list of prose additions for interactive arboretum trail.

Ordinance regarding planting on right-of-way:

Matt will research what other municipalities may have established.

Concerns and announcements:

Cheryl handed out *Arbor Day Foundation's 2017 Tree City USA document A: Education and Public Relations*. She requested input on our participation in the activities, information she will use in preparing her annual report for the Growth Award.

Motion to adjourn made by LaTrelle Oliver; second by Anderson Wright. Adjournment 6:20 PM.

Next meeting December 12, 2017

LaTrelle Oliver, Secretary