City of Oxford Tree Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 4, 2026

Tree Board:

Cowan Hunter, Chairman
Mary Hartwell Howorth
Hume Bryant
Ed Croom, *via Microsoft Teams*
*Nick Matthews, Director, Landscape Services

Not in attendance: Josh White
**Ex-Officio, non-voting*

City of Oxford:

James Hirsch, Development Services -Planning
Allison Ferris, Development Services – Engineering
Mark Levy, Director, Special Projects
Garrett Black, Special Projects

Other:

Tymple Harrison, Mississippi Forestry Commission

A. Call to Order

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

B. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Hunter noted changes to the agenda. He indicated there would be a re-ordering of the Departmental Issues section to begin with Landscape Services, then Special Projects, and then Planning.

Commissioner Hunter noted a correction of spelling on the agenda as it relates to "Special Projects" being the correct heading instead of "Social".

Commissioner Hunter noted the removal of an agenda item from Section D regarding the Gary Subdivision, due to John Granberry, Engineer, requesting to move this item to the July 2026 meeting.

Commissioner Hunter moved to approve the agenda with these changes; Commissioner Mary Hartwell Howorth seconded; all in favor.

C. Approval of May 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hume Bryant motioned to approve the May 2026 minutes; Commissioner Howorth seconded; all in favor.

D. Department issues and reports

1. Landscape Services
    a. Recent Public Requests for Information or Assistance Regarding Trees.

Nick Matthews, Director of Landscape Services, noted there had not been any major public requests recently outside of trimming requests.

b. Progress Report Regarding Tree Work/ Debris in Parks, Right-of- Ways, etc.

This item was not discussed.

c. Consider Removals, Mitigation, etc. Regarding Pine Trees Across from Oxford Muffler (135 Cr 101).

Commissioner Hunter discussed his observation of this area. Nick discussed the origin of this request regarding trees within the City Right-of-Way at this location and the owner's possible intentions, i.e., construction. James Hirsch, Development Services -Planning Department, recommended that if trees are cleared for the purpose of development, this request should follow the site-plan process as it relates to development and tree mitigation. James discussed the land development process further. Commissioner Hunter noted the owner needed to clarify his intentions and communicate with the Planning Department.

2. Special Projects, Mark Levy
    d. Progress Report on Tree Inventories, Assessments, Planting Plans Post Winter Storm Fern.

Mark Levy, Director of Special Projects, discussed the current progress of the tree inventory project and indicated Matt Nielsen, Green Grove, should have the inventory completed by the end of July. Mark also discussed his attempts to meet with Eocene. Mark indicated he hoped to have a recommendation for re-planting efforts by the end of August. Mark also introduced Garrett Black, who would be working with him in Special Projects.

e. Time frame, Plans for FY 26 Tree Projects Already Budgeted.

Mark discussed current projects, i.e., landscaping at Development Services. Mark indicated that money would be requested from the Tree Escrow fund. Mark also discussed the planting that occurred at a mTrade Park as well as their efforts after the storm-related losses. Mark discussed how the roundabouts at University Avenue and Hwy 7 should have trees planted in the future. There was a discussion regarding landscaping. Tymple Harrison, Mississippi Forestry Commission, mentioned possible funding options. There was further discussion regarding addressing this in August.

Commissioner Hunter and Mark discussed how Winter Storm Fern has impacted other projects due to storm-related efforts, i.e., Pickleball Courts.

3. Planning

f. Arborist Report Regarding Specimen White Oak, Gary Subdivision, etc. – this item was removed.

Commissioner Hunter briefly discussed why this item was removed, i.e., more information needed, and that it will be moved to the July 2026 meeting.

g. Current or Pending Issues Regarding Development, Construction.

James discussed the scheduled Planning Commission meeting on Monday, June 8th, at 5:00 PM. James discussed a project for an office building on Slack Road that involves tree mitigation. He discussed the mitigation efforts and noted that this area would be heavily landscaped and that the developers would be contributing to the tree escrow fund. James discussed the parks and trails public meeting, and the presentation would take place on Monday, June 8th, at 6:30 PM at the Oxford Conference Center.

E. Business

4. Discussion Regarding Parking Lot Tree Growth Issues, etc.

Commissioner Hunter discussed information received from Matt Nielson, Green Grove, regarding parking lot trees. There was discussion regarding areas of concern, i.e., Kroger, Mid-Town, as well as how trees were planted in certain areas. Commissioner Hunter indicated the Tree Board would hear from Matt regarding his recommendations in the future and said he would like the Planning Department to discuss/review parking lot concerns. James discussed landscaping and the land development code in relation to existing sites, as well as development as it relates to site restoration and tree mitigation. James also highlighted the limitations due to private property. There was discussion. Commissioner Ed Croom expressed his desire to figure out what is working and what is not working in the current process. There was more discussion.

5. MFC Updates

Tymple Harrison, Mississippi Forestry Commission, indicated she did not have any updates outside of the possible funding previously discussed.

Saluting Branches Event – Tymple reported that Matt Nielson and Hill Country Roots met regarding this event and further discussed the planning process for the event.

Tymple highlighted different grants/projects in other areas that are moving forward, i.e., Keep Mississippi Beautiful. There was further discussion.

F. Move to Adjourn

Commissioner Hunter moved to adjourn at 11:50 A.M; Commissioner Bryant seconded; all in favor.