

**City of Oxford Tree Board  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, May 7, 2026**

**Tree Board:**

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

*Not in attendance: Josh White*

*\*Ex-Officio, non-voting*

**City of Oxford:**

Ben Request, Director, Development Services – Planning  
Kate Kenwright, Development Services – Planning  
James Hirsch, Development Services - Planning  
Andy Linder, Development Services – Planning  
Allison Ferris, Development Services – Engineering

**Other:**

John Granberry, Granberry and Associates  
Brad Walsh, Attorney  
Matt Nielsen, Arborist, Green Grove  
Tympel Harrison, Mississippi Forestry Commission  
Various Citizens

**A. Call to Order**

Commissioner Cowan Hunter called the meeting to order at 11:05 A.M.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

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

### **C. Approval of March 2026 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Hunter motioned to approve the regular meeting and special meeting for March; Commissioner Howorth seconded; all in favor.

### **D. Departmental Issues and Reports**

#### 1. Landscape Services

##### a. Recent Public Assistance Requests Regarding Tree Info, Safety, etc.

Nick Matthews, Director of Landscape Services, discussed various tree removals, i.e., St. Peter's Cemetery. There was a discussion about a potential tree removal on 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

Nick discussed a citizen who desires to remove pine trees near the edge of the road near North Oxford Baptist Church at 135 CR 101. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter indicated this would be discussed further at the next Tree Board meeting.

##### b. Fall Tree Planting Plans Update

Nick discussed that the City is receiving donations for the Tree Donation Fund, as well would be focusing on replacing City Right-of-Way trees that were lost due to Winter Storm Fern amid future replanting efforts. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter asked Nick to take data on this throughout the process for the Tree City USA application process in the future.

Nick briefly discussed the debris removal process, i.e., contractors are now responsible for cleaning up trees etc they remove from homeowners' residences.

#### 2. Planning

##### c. Gary Subdivision

Ben Requet, Director of Planning, summarized the earlier request presented to the Tree Board about work within the drip line for Gary Subdivision; however, he noted there had been updates to the request.

John Granberry, Granberry & Associates, representing the Betty Jane Gary Estate for the proposed Gary Subdivision, spoke to the Tree Board. John summarized the grading approval in the past and noted that they are requesting to subdivide more of that property now. He discussed their process and mitigation plan to protect the tree found on the Dye property, i.e., moving property lines, adjusting stormwater plans, and commitment to moving all disturbance as much as possible. John noted they would be willing to have an arborist on site to watch the grading and work that could affect the tree. There was further discussion about the tree mitigation, the grading process, the historic preservation process, and addressing neighbors' concerns. Ben clarified and discussed the limits of disturbance and stormwater detention plan in place within this proposal in comparison to the earlier proposal. There was discussion. Commissioner Hunter determined he would talk with the Engineering Department regarding potential tree removals near a waterline. There was discussion. Brad Walsh, applicant and attorney, discussed house sizing and lots. Commissioner Hume Bryant inquired about tree protection fencing. There was discussion.

Commissioner Hunter inquired with Ben if the Planning Department had concerns. Ben summarized the City of Oxford's Planning Commission vote to recommend to the Board of Aldermen to deny the subdivision request. Ben noted some revisions would need to be reviewed before it would go back before the Board of Aldermen. There was further discussion.

Commissioner Hunter indicated there are people he would like to hear from in reference to this grading and drip-line issue for the champion specimen White Oak tree near the potential subdivision, i.e., arborist for the Gary Subdivision project, Ford Dye Family, before deciding. There was further discussion about the preservation efforts.

Commissioner Hunter asked the applicant to come back to the next regular Tree Board meeting in June. Ben summarized that the applicant would need to have the arborist report and potential modifications. There was discussion.

d. Current/ Pending Development Tree Issues, Mitigation, etc.

This item was not discussed.

3. Special Projects

e. Updates Regarding Proposals, Providers, Tree Inventory, etc.

Matt Nielsen, Green Grove, discussed the tree inventory project and its current progress. Matt said the end of June would be the target for completing this project and discussed various trees damaged by Winter Storm Fern. Matt discussed how he would be coordinating with Nick and Landscape Services throughout this process. There was further discussion.

**E. Business**

4. Mississippi Commission Update

Tympel Harrison discussed an upcoming event – “Saluting Branches” – on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Tympel also discussed the dry period that led to fires in other areas outside of Oxford. She also indicated the Mississippi Forestry Commission is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year. There were discussions about the MFC grants. There was a discussion about the risk assessment the city would conduct regarding trees. Tympel reported the MFC was available, as needed.

5. Early planning discussion for Arbor Day 2026

Commissioner Hunter discussed reaching out to the mayor regarding future planning for Arbor Day 2026 and that the Tree Board would work to find a date for the celebration.

Nick discussed the Tree Donation Fund and how the fund can be utilized to help citizens, potentially in connection with Arbor Day 2026.

6. Friends of the Forest update (time permitting)

This item was not discussed.

**F. Move to Adjourn**

Commissioner Hunter moved to adjourn; Commissioner Howorth seconded; all in favor.