

Trees, Parks, Recreation Board (TPR) – City of Oxford, GA
Minutes of Meeting April 11, 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, Andrea O’Toole, Anderson Wright,
Laura McCanless, Sallie Robinson
City Manager Bob Schwartz,
Oxford College Senior Manager of Operations Kendra Mayfield

Absent – Member Glenda Stewart
City Superintendent Jody Reid
City Arborist Beryl Budd GUFCA – but emailed report referenced herein
GUFCA Community Forester Seth Hawkins

New Members introduced to the Board. At the City Council meeting of April 3, 2017, Mayor Roseberry appointed Laura McCanless and Sallie Robinson as new members to the TPR Board. Council approval was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes of October 11, 2016, January 10, 2017, February 14, 2017.

Motion to approve by Andrea O’Toole. Second by Laura McCanless.

Unanimous approval.

Reports and Updates

1. Fire in forest on west side of trail between Clark and Soule, Friday evening, April 6, 2017 on undeveloped property of the Chaney family, who no longer reside in Oxford. **Access onto this private property was from the public trail; hence, see City Ordinance Chapter (?) I, Article V, Sec. 31-506.** Apparently the blaze resulted from an unauthorized “campsite” set up by unidentified parties. Newton County Fire Department and City of Oxford PD responded to an apparent 911 notification made by a non-publicized caller. Neighbors and Board Members Laura McCanless and LaTrelle Oliver reported their direct experience of the incident. Discussion included the need for a program for controlling/eradicating invasive Japanese privet throughout our town forests, as well as the imperative to communicate meaningfully with Oxford College regarding possible student responsibility. The McCanless family photographed the campsite debris: burn barrel, grill, beer bottles, an apparently new water bottle.

Action taken: Documentation should be collected.

- A. City Manager Schwartz will contact Newton County Fire for their report (to file together with City PD’s).
- B. Oxford College Senior Manager of Operations Kendra Mayfield will consider options for communicating with College personnel.
- C. **Motion** made by Mrs. Oliver, seconded by Mr. Wright requesting that copies of the McCanless photographs be forwarded to the City Manager.
Unanimous approval.
- D. Consensus emerged informally that rather than pursue removal of downed logs which can provide access into secluded areas and thus result in unfortunate disturbance of the forest floor, direct communication through signage and discussion would be more effective.

2. Continuation of privet control along Wesley Street – Chairman Ready suggested we put this item on the work plan so that Arborist Budd can facilitate action. Engineer Jordan has now completed the survey of Wesley Street right-of-way, which establishes the interface of public and private property lines.

3. Replacement trees for Emory Street – What’s the plan?

The October 11, 2016 Minutes state that Seth Hawkins said he will inspect the “condition of the young trees along Emory and dogwood in City Hall Park.” Arborist Budd’s report for today’s meeting: “When I return I will do an evaluation of the planted trees along Emory St. Several of these are in poor shape and should be removed and some are in need of pruning. Additionally many trees are in need of mulching.”

4. Completion of Old Church crosswalk extension

Soil has been added to connect concrete to grass area, but as yet no grass has “taken.” City Manager Schwartz will follow up. He acknowledged that no TPR representative was involved with the decision to design and monitor this area, which manifests itself as a “mini pocket park” because of its elements (historical marker, bench, shrubs) and thus its apparent intended uses (rest, education). See City Ordinance Chapter 39, Section 101 Definitions # 3 Parks, Trails, and Gardens.

5. Mitchell Street Park – Anderson Wright

The City crew mows. Mr. Wright continues to remove fallen sticks and limbs. The poles which are in the way have not been removed even after many months of reminders. Benches are still needed and should be budgeted. A drainage culvert/entrance access has not been yet been installed, though long requested. City Manager Schwartz will address.

6. George Street Park – Jody Report

Mrs. Oliver noted that the huge aging pecan has been crowned-cleaned. She also observed that the Jack Atkinson memorial “Sunrise Red Bud” has suffered repeated damage and perhaps should be removed and replaced with a more substantial specimen. Arborist Budd will examine and determine action.

7. Asbury Street Park ad hoc committee’s recommendations for park; seek approval from TPR and recommendation to present to City Council

City Manager Schwartz delivered three helpful hand-outs to each person present: (1) Park Planning Process; (2) Construction Cost Estimate (received 4/10/2017); and, (3) the latest Preliminary Site Plan (received 4/1/2017). A hard copy of each one is attached to the official minutes. Bob and Cheryl made note of a few ideas. Conversation was limited due to the late hour, but no general reservations were expressed. There was no discussion of naming or of an interpretative marker that would tell the history of the family and community who lived there. There was general consensus that the project should move forward according to plan.

8. Pruning issues – status and concerns

Arborist Budd reports: “Pruning completed last month on 15 large trees by North American Tree. The pruning was primarily crown cleaning and several were raised for clearance. Two additional trees were approved for clearance and crown cleaning and this work should be completed soon.”

Oxford College's Interests and Concerns

Kendra Mayfield introduced an intriguing idea for developing and enhancing relationships in the two communities by telling the story of trees in the "Oxford Arboretum" – College Quadrangle and City's George Street Park (currently identified as Murdy Arboretum). Limited only by imagination, the project could be available broadly via multi-media as well as on site. The scope could include not only visual and descriptive identification, poetry, and site maps locating the current trees, but also information about them. There are currently two local models for this concept: The Yarbrough Oak and The Oxford Oak.

Arbor Day, 2018 – will be discussed during a later meeting.

Concerns and Announcements

- Sallie Robinson reported multiple loose boards on the trail causeway near Clark Street. Others concurred.
- Chairman Ready reported that a large tree on the corner of Haygood and Moore may be dead.
- City Manager Schwartz will see that these issues are addressed.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 6:45.

Next Meeting – June 13, 2017

LaTrelle Oliver, Secretary