



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

**OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021 – 6:45 P.M.  
CITY HALL (VIA TELECONFERENCE)  
A G E N D A**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PUBLIC HEARING – 6:45 PM**

The City of Oxford is considering reapplying to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of up to \$750,000 to fund a project to replace the water main located along Oxford Road, Keel Street, Cat's Paw Court, Beakhead Court, and Perry Circle.

The purpose of the public hearing is to gain citizen input into the development of the CDBG application. Mr. Stuart Swinnea, Project Specialist with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, will lead the discussion.

1. Call to Order, Mayor David S. Eady
2. Invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Motion to accept the Agenda for the February 1, 2021 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting.
5. **CONSENT AGENDA**
  - a. \* Minutes of the Regular Session January 4, 2021.
  - b. \* Minutes of the Special Called Meeting January 11, 2021.
  - c. \* Minutes of the Work Session January 25, 2021.
  - d. \* Minutes of the Planning Commission December 8, 2020.
  - e. \* Minutes of the Trees, Parks and Recreation Board December 8, 2020.
  - f. \* Minutes of the Downtown Development Authority October 27.
  - g. \* Minutes of the Downtown Development Authority December 1, 2020.
6. Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions.
7. Citizen Concerns.
8. **\*2021 Arbor Day Proclamation** – Cheryl Ready, Chair of the Trees, Parks and Recreation Board, will provide some brief details regarding this year's Arbor Day. After her remarks, Mayor Eady will read the 2021 Arbor Day Proclamation.
9. **Presentation of the Friend of Trees Award** – The Tree Board will present this year's Friend of Trees Award.

10. **Planning Commission Appointment** – Council will approve the nomination for a member of the city’s Planning Commission.
11. **Downtown Development Authority Appointment** – Council will approve the nominations for members of the city’s Downtown Development Authority.
12. \* **Invoices** – Council will review the city’s recently paid invoices over \$1,000.
13. Adjourn.



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING  
REGULAR SESSION  
MONDAY, January 4, 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  
Jody Reid – Public Works Supervisor  
Dave Harvey – Chief of Police  
C. David Strickland – City Attorney  
Cheryl Freeman – Municipal Court Solicitor

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Johnnetta Johnson (Rust Chapel United Methodist Church), Mike Ready, Art Vinson, Juanita Carson, Laura Gafnea (Oxford College)

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. Invocation – Johnnetta Johnson (Rust Chapel United Methodist Church).
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. C. David Strickland presided over the City of Oxford annual Organizational Meeting. Mr. Strickland administered the Oath of Office to Mayor David S. Eady and Councilmembers George Holt, James Windham, Jeff Wearing, Laura McCanless, Avis Williams, and Lynn Bohanan.
5. **A motion was made by George Holt to accept the Agenda for January 4, 2021. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**  
(Attachment A)
6. **A motion was made by George Holt to accept the Consent Agenda for January 4, 2021. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).** (Attachment B)
7. **Mayor's Report**  
The Oath of Office for Special Committees continuing to serve was administered to the following individuals. Marcia Brooks administered the oath to C. David Strickland, and Mr.

Strickland administered the oath to the other individuals. They were also approved for service to the City of Oxford in 2021.

- a. C. David Strickland – City Attorney  
**A motion was made by George Holt. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
- b. Cheryl Freeman – Municipal Solicitor  
**A motion was made by George Holt. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
- c. Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer  
**A motion was made by George Holt. Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
- d. Dave Harvey – Chief of Police  
**A motion was made by George Holt. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

**George Holt made a motion to approve the appointment of Steve Hathorn as Municipal Court Judge for the City of Oxford for the year 2021. Avis Williams second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Judge Hathorn was unable to attend the meeting. His oath will be administered at a later date.

8. **Mayor Pro-Tem for 2021** (Attachment C)  
The Mayor Pro-Tem for 2021 needs to be selected by the Mayor and City Council. A list of the Mayors Pro-Tem for the past fifteen years has been provided.

**Laura McCanless nominated George Holt for Mayor Pro-Tem for 2021. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Mayor Eady noted that this action also makes Mr. Holt the alternate delegate for Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) and Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG) meetings.

9. **Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions**  
None other than item #11 on the agenda.

10. **Citizen Concerns**  
None.

11. **Minor Subdivision Request** (Attachment D)  
The Planning Commission recommends the approval of a minor subdivision for Tony Ellis for his properties located along E. George Street as noted in the signed copy of the plat presented.

Jeff Wearing asked if it is actually a subdivision request. Mayor Eady explained that it is referred to as a minor subdivision in the Oxford zoning ordinance.

George Holt expressed concern with calling the request a subdivision because E. George Street is not a legal street. It does not meet requirements for a legal street. Mayor Eady stated there is a distinction in the Oxford zoning ordinances between a minor and a major subdivision. In this particular request, there is no further subdivision of the lots into more lots than there are now. The request is due to redrawing of the lots to make them more marketable to potential buyers. The street has been deeded over to the City and is a City street by record. Mr. Holt stated that a street sign should be placed there. He also believes that designating the property as a subdivision will place obligations on the City for this street. He asked if a fire truck can get down the street.

Jody Reid stated that the street is about 10 feet wide, and the garbage truck goes down the street every week. Mayor Eady clarified that according to the plat, there is a 15-ft. right-of-way.

James Windham asked when and how the street was deeded to the City of Oxford. Mayor Eady stated he does not have exact details, but Matt Pepper did confirm with Robert Jordan that it is owned by the City.

Mr. Holt is not opposed to what Mr. Ellis is trying to do but believes that it is being handled the wrong way. Mayor Eady explained that this is a different situation than if a landowner wanted to subdivide property that has not previously been divided. In this instance, Mr. Ellis is only trying to redraw the property lines.

Mr. Holt reiterated his belief that approval of this request will obligate the City to ensuring that there is adequate space for ingress and egress from this street for safety reasons. Mayor Eady reminded the City Council that at the December work session it was stated that the City Council would come back and review the rights-of-way and determine if any additional property is needed for this purpose.

Mr. Holt stated that normally the property owner takes care of all infrastructure for a subdivision and the City does not have to acquire any property. Mayor Eady stated that the Planning Commission worked with Mr. Ellis to ensure this request conforms to the requirements for a minor subdivision. They are not asking to develop a subdivision. They are requesting to re-subdivide the existing properties.

The status of E. George Street as a city street was confirmed by Robert Jordan as part of the right-of-way verification he completed and reconfirmed by the survey Mr. Knight completed for the plat presented at this meeting. Matt Pepper added that Mr. Jordan was able to confirm that as early as 1982 there was a 15-ft. strip of right-of-way there. He did confirm that there may be some nuances in terms of whether the City has maintained the street.

Ms. McCanless stated that she understands Mr. Holt's concerns about future obligations if a property owner wishes to subdivide one of the lots. However, she believes tonight the City Council is only approving the proposed property lines. Mayor Eady clarified that the City Council is approving the plat that represents the redrawing of property lines as certified by the surveyor, John Knight, submitted by the property owner Tony Ellis, and recommended for approval for the Planning Commission.

Mr. Holt indicated the problem he has is calling it a subdivision. He stated that this term was not used when it was previously discussed.

**James Windham made a motion to approve the request for a minor subdivision. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion.**

Discussion:

Mr. Windham stated that E. George Street is not a standard street for the City of Oxford. He believes it was originally created as a driveway, and it has not been maintained by the City. He urged the City Council to do what is necessary to make E. George Street conform to the City of Oxford standards for a street. The fact that the street is 15 feet wide shows that it was planned originally as a driveway.

Ms. McCanless asked if the City, in order to make the street conform to standards, would have to obtain more property, by condemnation or some other method. Mr. Holt stated this is one of his concerns, that normally the infrastructure would be paid for a subdivision by the property owner, but approving this request puts the City in a position to spend money to do this. Mayor Eady stated that increasing the right-of-way to widen the street would be a separate discussion because it involves properties not included in this request.

Mr. Holt and Mr. Windham wish to go on record that they believe there should be a proper street there if the request is approved. Mayor Eady stated that this was discussed at the December work session. Mr. Holt stated that if the request is approved, the cost to bring the street up to City standards will be at the City's expense. Mayor Eady stated that will be the case anyway.

Mr. Windham stated that he made a motion with reservations. Mayor Eady asked Mr. Windham to clarify his motion.

**Mr. Windham clarified that his motion is to approve the minor subdivision request with the understanding that the City Council will move forward with making E. George Street a standard street. He wants it to be known that he and Mr. Holt are opposed to the current condition of the street.**

Mayor Eady asked Mr. Windham if he is placing a condition on approval of the request to approve a minor subdivision based on the plat submitted, which redraws the current property lines.

**Mr. Windham withdrew his motion.**



Ms. McCanless asked if approving this request would cause the City of Oxford to lose any advantage with regard to acquiring the property necessary to expand the right-of-way to bring E. George Street up to standard. Mr. Windham stated the City would still be able to acquire the property, but it may cost more.

Mr. Wearing disagreed. He stated that Tony Ellis is only trying to redefine the property lines with this request, and it has nothing to do with the street. Mayor Eady confirmed that the right-of-way was not modified on the survey plat. He also confirmed that the City of Oxford is within its powers to engage the property owners to purchase additional land to expand the right-of-way or condemn the land if a property owner is not willing to negotiate with the City.

Ms. McCanless stated she is in favor of re-subdividing the land per the request from Tony Ellis, she just wanted to ensure that the City is not “shooting itself in the foot,” by approving the request.

**Jeff Wearing made a motion to approve the plat as presented. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried by a majority (5/2). George Holt and James Windham voted Nay.**

Mayor Eady asked Matt Pepper and Marcia Brooks to include the issue of the right-of-way for E. George Street on the January work session agenda. Mr. Windham stated he believes the City should obtain a quit-claim deed for the existing right-of-way because the City does not currently have a deed to that property. Mayor Eady advised there are multiple landowners to speak to but the City can attempt to obtain a quit claim deed. Mr. Holt stated his concern that the right-of-way property may belong to someone else.

**12. Solar Power Purchase Contract with MEAG (Attachment E)**

Mayor Eady stated the solar power purchase contract is not ready for the City Council's approval. This item should have been deleted from the agenda.

Jeff Wearing asked what percentage of the City's power will be solar once this agreement is final. Mayor Eady stated the demand for power on average is about 4 megawatts (MW) of power. The City's contract with MEAG requires the City to have 1 MW above that amount in reserve. When 4 MW of solar power is purchased, credit is given for 2 MW of power since solar power cannot be generated at night. Another portion is for Phases 1 and 2 of Plant Vogtle.

Mr. Wearing asked if the City Council has approved the contract. Mayor Eady stated the City has only approved committing to 4 MW, and the City will decide whether to approve the contract once negotiations are completed between MEAG and the solar provider. At that time, the City of Oxford will have exact rates for the contract and can vote on its approval or disapproval.

Mr. Wearing expressed concerns based on conversations he has had with other people that 4 MW is much too much to buy.

Mayor Eady stated this can be discussed at the work session. MEAG representatives can be asked to attend as well to review the numbers and answer questions.

13. **Emory Street Sidewalk Project Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)** (Attachment F)  
The existing IGA between Covington and Oxford for the Emory Street Sidewalk Project has expired due to unexpected delays at Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). It details the specific on both the contracting requirements and payment process. Staff recommends that the City Council approve the revised IGA.

**George Holt made a motion to approve the revised IGA. Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

14. **Planning Commission Appointment**

Mayor Eady advised that the Planning Commission Appointment is being tabled to allow more time to review some suggested candidates. The candidates will be reviewed at the January work session and a selection made at the February regular session.

15. **Invoices** (Attachment G)

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

James Windham asked why the City is paying to remove trees and shrubs at the cemetery. He was under the impression this was taken care of by the Oxford Historical Cemetery Foundation, Inc. Mayor Eady stated that tree removal has been in the budget and the City takes care of this. Jody Reid added that this is in the budget every year to remove old and damaged trees. Mr. Windham asked why this expense is not included in the agreement with the Foundation.

Mayor Eady advised that this topic can be discussed at the January work session. There was some discussion about this a few months ago and it was intended that the City Council revisit this arrangement. He confirmed that the Foundation contracts with a vendor to provide mowing and weed maintenance. They receive a portion of all burial rites sales, and the City supplements this with additional funds each year. They have about \$480,000 in principal and pay for the maintenance from the interest proceeds.

Laura McCanless pointed out that half of the City Council is new and is not familiar with the arrangement. George Holt asked that all City Councilmembers be provided with a copy of the agreement prior to the January work session.

Mayor Eady met with officers of the Foundation last summer and advised them the City would put the maintenance of the cemetery out for bids to see what the true cost would be. This was deferred due to the grounds being wet and more urgent business arising. The City Council will continue the discussion at the work session.

16. **Adjourn**

**A motion was made by George Holt to adjourn at 8:18 p.m. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks  
City Clerk/Treasurer



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021 – 7:00 PM  
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

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

**APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:**

Matt Pepper – City Manager  
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Art Vinson, Gwen Green, Coretta

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. **A motion was made by Jeff Wearing to accept the Agenda for January 11, 2021. Jim Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**  
(Attachment A)
3. **Planning Commission Appointment** (Attachment B)  
Mayor Eady stated that Zach May's seat on the Planning Commission is up for reappointment. Mr. May has indicated that he is willing to continue serving another term. **A motion was made by Jim Windham to appoint Zach May to a new three-year term on the City of Oxford Planning Commission. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
4. **Election Qualification Fees** (Attachment C)  
Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §21-2-131(a)(1)(A), the Oxford City Council shall fix and publish the qualifying fees for each municipal office to be filled in the upcoming municipal election and must publish the fees by February 1st of the election year. The fees are set by statute as 3% of the gross salary of the office in the previous year. The offices to be filled in 2021 on the Oxford City Council are Posts 4, 5, and 6. The salary for each of these offices in 2020 was \$4,800, and 3% of this amount is \$144. We recommend that the Oxford City Council fix the qualifying fees for 2021 for Posts 4, 5, and 6 at \$144.

**A motion was made by Laura McCanless to fix the qualifying fees for Oxford City Council Posts 4, 5, and 6 elections in 2021 at \$144. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Mayor Eady announced that the January 2021 City Council Work Session will be held on January 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. due to the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday falling on the regular meeting date.

5. **Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks  
City Clerk/Treasurer



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING  
WORK SESSION  
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 – 6:30 PM  
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

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

**APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:**

Matt Pepper – City Manager  
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer  
Jody Reid – Utility Superintendent  
Dave Harvey – Police Chief  
David Strickland – City Attorney  
Robert Jordan – City Engineer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mike Ready, Cheryl Ready, Michael McQuaide, Art Vinson, Laurie Vinson, Melissa Hage, Steve Longcrier.

**Agenda** (Attachment A)

**1. Mayor's Announcements**

**2. Committee Reports**

- a. Trees Parks and Recreation (TPR) Board – Cheryl Ready discussed several items the Board has been working on:
  - i. The ginkgo trees in the park were placed there before the ordinance revision listing approved plantings on City property was passed. They need to be replaced with some type of tree on the approved list that provides better shade.
  - ii. The Board has decided not to hold its traditional Arbor Day celebration due to concerns about large gatherings. They want to have their proclamation read at the February 1<sup>st</sup> regular City Council meeting, and also announce their selection for the Friends of Trees award during the meeting. Mayor Eady agreed with this plan.
  - iii. The Board has been unable to find a contractor to complete the split-rail fence replacement at George Street Park. Matt Pepper stated that the requirement for liability insurance in the City's contracts is a deterrent for contractors who would otherwise be willing to take on a small job.

Mayor Eady asked David Strickland if the insurance is a legal requirement or something the City Council has decide to require. Mr. Strickland advised that it is a City Council requirement, and it could be waived if the City Council so desires.

Jeff Wearing proposed that the City purchase the materials and that the work be completed by City staff and volunteers. Mayor Eady asked Mr. Wearing to coordinate this effort.

James Windham asked Cheryl Ready if it would be possible to place tree markers at various trees in the parks and along the trails. Ms. Ready stated that such markers were placed in the past, and squirrels had chewed them up. The only ones that are still present are those carved in rock or stone. The Board would be happy to consider this request if a material can be used that is squirrel-proof.

- b. Planning Commission – Matt Pepper stated that the Planning Commission plans to take up the issue of changing the zoning designation for certain properties along the east side of Emory Street to decrease the permitted density of these properties in their February meeting.
- c. Downtown Development Authority (DDA) – Mike Ready reported that the focus of the DDA at this time is to work with City staff on plans for increasing interest in the Farmer’s Market on the green. Their meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> will continue this discussion.
- d. Sustainability Committee – Melissa Hage reported that the Committee continues working with John Devine of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission to apply for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for restoration of the Dried Indian Creek Corridor, and that they are waiting for input from Mayor Eady and John Devine on their overall Sustainability Plan for the City and their Streets and Trails Plan. Mayor Eady advised that he will be in touch with Dr. Jon Calabria regarding the status of the evaluation being conducted by the University of Georgia. He also will be setting up a meeting with Mayor Steve Horton to discuss a possible partnership with the City of Covington on the Dried Indian Creek Corridor project. Mike McQuaide thanked Mayor Eady for moving forward on these tasks because the Committee was not sure how to proceed from this point to keep the effort moving.
- e. Committee on Race – Avis Williams reported that the Committee includes Anderson Wright, Amma Lou Gaither, Hurenza Lewis, Chaplain Lyn Pace (Oxford College), Pastor Charlie Williams (Mt. Zion First Baptist Church), and Rev. Johnnetta Johnson (Rust Chapel United Methodist Church). They have had a meeting in January and plan to have a meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Williams announced that they are planning a Black History Month commemorative program on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. This will be a virtual celebration. The national theme for Black History Month this year is The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity. Plans for the celebration will be finalized at the meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Details will be announced on the City website and by word of mouth.

Ms. Williams also reported that she and Mayor Eady were interviewed last week by one of the committees that is part of the Emory University task force that is looking at contributions of former slaves in and around the Oxford community to Emory University. She is on the committee responsible for naming and determining procedures for two scholarships.

Mayor Eady advised he spoke to Dean Hicks and let him know the City is interested in coordinating with Oxford College if there is a joint project that can be done that would memorialize the contributions of enslaved persons to the college and the town. He thanked Ms. Williams for her participation on this task force which is making recommendations directly to the President of Emory University.

### 3. E. George Street Right-of-Way

The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss acquiring additional property for right-of-way designation where E. George Street is located. This matter arose during discussion of a request for approval of a plat for a minor subdivision along this street. The street as shown on the plat is only a 15' right-of-way. Mayor Eady asked Robert Jordan of Jordan Engineering to provide his findings when he was mapping out that right-of-way during his right-of-way survey project.

Robert Jordan stated that there is a 15' strip of land that has identified as E. George Street at least since 1964 on a City of Oxford Address Map and again on a right-of-way map in 1983. He discussed the documents he has used as a basis for his platting that were the mechanisms that created E. George Street:

- In 1988, one of the Ellis family members deeded 3.4 acres at the end of George Street to another family member. It identifies a strip of land 15' in width going back several hundred feet from North Emory Street as an alley.
- In other documents it is referred to as E. George Street. In one document it is shown as 10' but in the other documents it is shown as 15'.

There are two mechanisms for creating a street:

- Prescription – used to access homes over a number of years, as well as access for delivery trucks and the public in general; and
- Intent to dedicate – an off-record, non-expressed method of conveying land.

The plat that was prepared in 1988 on behalf of F. Clifford Ellis clearly shows the strip of land as an alley. When the property was later transferred, it was shown as a public way. He believes that most of the evidence points to the strip of land being a public way. There is some evidence to the contrary, for example, the properties along the strip are not addressed.

Mr. Jordan quoted a court case as follows, “The usual burden of proof placed on the party asserting public dedication is reversed. An intent to dedicate the roadway to the public is presumed.” The court cases he has read indicate that if there are equal amounts of evidence on either side, it should be presumed that the dedication was intended to occur.

George Holt stated he was under the impression that if a property owner builds a subdivision, the property owner must deed the street and infrastructure to the city in order for the city to maintain it. He does not see any evidence that E. George Street has been



deeded to the City of Oxford. None of the houses on the street have an E. George Street address. The addresses for the houses are on Emory Street. He considers the property as a piece of property on Emory Street going back to Dried Indian Creek.

The property owners decided to build houses on the property, so they cut a right-of-way through the property to have an easement to get to the properties they were building. Mr. Holt considers this an illegal subdivision and does not understand why the City should have to buy property to make a street for someone who decided to build houses on their own property.

Mayor Eady asked David Strickland for his assessment on the issue. Mr. Strickland stated that a right-of-way can be dedicated expressly when the dedication language is on a plat for a subdivision or when a property owner conveys the property over in a right-of-way deed. It can also be by implication as described by Mr. Jordan when the landowners and members of the public treat it as a public road.

He believes it would be difficult to deny access to this property if it has been maintained as a public road.

Mr. Holt stated he does not want to deny access to the property. He just does not think the City should buy more property to cut a proper street through the property.

Mr. Strickland advised that there is a good argument to change the existing strip of land from a public road by implication to a platted expressly dedicated roadway in the width desired. Hopefully, it would increase the value of the properties that are located on E. George Street. They may be willing to donate the land or convey it to the City for less than the appraised value. He recommends trying this approach first to obtain the additional land needed for a proper street.

Avis Williams asked if the property owners have been approached about donating the land for the increasing the right-of-way.

Mr. Holt asked why all the houses are addressed on Emory Street if the street is E. George Street.

Mr. Wearing stated when they built the houses on the properties along this street, the addresses worked off Emory Street because it was never any type of street at all. By virtue of the City sending garbage trucks and other vehicles down the street, it should be City property in his opinion, because the City is not allowed to go on private property.

James Windham recommended asking the property owners if they will donate the property to the City. If they refuse, the City of Oxford will advise the property owners that the garbage truck will no longer leave Emory Street to go down E. George Street. No other City vehicles other than the city's power utility vehicles that normally go on private property should go down the street.

Mr. Wearing agreed with Mr. Windham that the City should not buy the property. Mr. Windham further stated that if the property owners are not willing to donate the property,

the City should stop its services on the street because it is private property. There is nothing other than the continued use of it to prove it belongs to the City of Oxford.

Mr. Windham named two other properties with similar situations, where City vehicles have gone down private roads in the past. Mr. Holt stated that just because City vehicles go down them does not make them City streets. Mr. Windham stated that Newton County ? has paved private property in the past but they cannot do this anymore.

Laura McCanless asked for clarification on how much property is being discussed for possible purchase. Specifically, she asked if the City would have to purchase the 15' strip that is currently identified on the plat, in addition to the amount of property needed to create a standard street.

Mayor Eady asked Mr. Strickland if the implication that E. George Street is a public road adequate to give the City of Oxford ownership rights to it. Mr. Strickland stated that according to caselaw a right-of-way by implication is whatever minimum width is required for the public to travel up and down the road. The City of Oxford would have to prove in court that the existing feet belongs to the City. He recommends Mr. Jordan developing a plat showing the original 15' by implication plus the additional property on one or both sides of it that shows what the City will ask the property owners to donate if the City Council wishes to pursue this option.

Mr. Wearing asked Jody Reid if the City of Oxford installed water lines going down E. George Street, or if the property owners installed their own water lines. He also asked if any repairs have been made if there are water lines on the street.

Ms. McCanless asked where the meters are and stated if the line is on the house side of the meter it is the property owner's responsibility, and if it is on the street side of the meter it is the City's responsibility.

Mr. Reid stated the City installed a 2-inch main all the way down the driveway at some time before he came to the City. Each house has its own tap and meter off this main. As far as he knows the City has always maintained them. He stated that they have made repairs along the line and have tapped one of the houses onto the line since he has been with the City of Oxford.

Mr. Strickland stated that the presence of the City water main and the ownership of the line on each side of the meter do not necessarily speak to the presence of a road there. A line could be extended across private property. He does not know if any easements were ever signed by the instant property owners, but the presence of this line does not make it a public road.

Mr. Wearing disagreed with Mr. Strickland's analysis.

Mr. Windham stated that the City has run water lines on private property in the past without obtaining easements. He stated that the point of this discussion is that the E. George Street public way does not meet the City's right-of-way standard width. There is not adequate room for two vehicles to travel on the road at the same time and place.

Mr. Jordan stated that the biggest drivers for minimum width on public streets is access for public safety and utility vehicles. The smallest minimum width he has seen in ordinances is about 50 feet.

Mayor Eady summarized the recommendations for moving forward as follows: To pursue designation of E. George Street as a standard City street, the City would have Mr. Jordan draw up a plat using the existing right-of-way as the center of the roadbed and establishing a fifty-foot-wide roadway. The City would then begin negotiations with the property owners and determine the cost to acquire the property necessary to accomplish designation of the street as a standard City street. Mr. Jordan and Mr. Strickland concurred with this approach.

Ms. McCanless stated she thought Mr. Strickland stated the City would need to go to court to secure the 15' section that is presently acknowledged as a right-of-way.

Mr. Strickland stated if negotiations took place between the property owners to relinquish additional property for the right-of-way, they would also be asked to relinquish the existing portions of the right-of-way adjacent to their properties through quit-claim deeds.

Ms. McCanless asked if the City will proceed with the work to bring it to standards once the City has the full 50 feet as a right-of-way.

Mayor Eady stated Mr. Jordan's drawing would serve as the basis for determining the cost to make improvements to it. The City would then make a decision based on that information on whether to complete the improvements.

Mr. Holt reiterated that the City would not put in a street if someone decided to put in houses on a deep plot of land; this would be the property owner's responsibility. He stated that the City should not pay for a street in this case.

Ms. McCanless agreed with Mr. Holt and also expressed concern about liability as soon as the City takes ownership of the 15' right-of-way. If a fire were to occur at the end of the street and fire vehicles could not get there or get water there soon enough, the City could face liability for the loss. The moment the City claims ownership of the right-of-way, it is responsible for providing adequate public safety services.

Mr. Windham, Mr. Wearing, and Ms. Williams agreed. Mr. Windham stated the City should disavow any claim to the existing right-of-way and stop sending vehicles down the street except for purposes the City would send vehicles onto any private property.

Mayor Eady asked if the City would be within its rights to disavow any claim of ownership and direct Latham Sanitation to stop collecting garbage along the street. Mr. Strickland advised that if the property owners countered that the street has been treated as a public way by implication for a number of years and they wanted it to continue to be treated as such, it would be a matter of evidence both sides could produce.

Mr. Holt asked if a public way is always owned by the City. Mr. Strickland indicated that it is not.

Mr. Windham stated that the street is essentially a driveway that is generally known as E. George Street. It is in the best interest of the property owners for it to be a City street because common addresses on Emory Street reduce the appraised and market value of the properties. The City should not be doing any maintenance there and should be doing any repairs there, including what has already been repaired at their request.

Mayor Eady stated that he is not hearing any interest in taking action on the property at all. Mr. Windham stated that is correct unless they are willing to donate the property. Mayor Eady stated that he discussed earlier that the City could have a proposed drawing done and approach the property owners, but that Ms. McCanless had raised the issue of liability for protection and maintenance of the street the moment ownership by the City is finalized.

Mr. Windham agreed and stated that the City should stop any services that are typically not done on other properties by the City. If the property owners ask why this action is being taken, they can be advised that it was discovered E. George Street is not a City street when they brought their request before the Planning Commission for a minor subdivision. If they want to discuss it further, they can approach the City Council about the decision.

Ms. McCanless asked how much it would cost to put in a street that meets standards. She knows that it would require a cul-de-sac for a fire vehicle to pull around.

Lynn Bohanan stated that a cul-de-sac would take a lot of some driveways and land from the property owners.

Mayor Eady stated that an estimate was obtained for the proposed development of E. Clark Street. It was in excess of \$200,000. He advised that the City is not going to take any action at this time on the issue, and the City will instruct Latham Sanitation not to drive down the street to pick up garbage.

#### **4. Naming of Items at Asbury Street Park**

The City has recently been approached by a resident of Oxford about wanting to memorialize their family by donating money to have a plaque installed on a park bench at Asbury Street Park. This is a good opportunity to include the TPR Board in a discussion so there is a procedure for this process in the future.

Avis Williams asked what the City's practice has been in the past if such requests have previously been honored. The task force she is on at Emory University is also considering some naming projects.

Matt Pepper stated there are currently two locations at Asbury Street Park where something has been placed. A plaque under the pavilion recognizes the Joiner family as a condition for allowing the City to purchase the property for the park. The Lions Club installed a plaque on the back of a bench in the park because they donated it to the City. These are the only two he is aware of.

Laura McCanless asked about benches on the Oxford Trail. She knows of one bench that has a dedication plaque on it. Mr. Pepper advised he would have to check on that one. Ms. McCanless believes those benches had to be paid for by donations to have plaques on them.

James Windham stated the trail was built by Newton Trails, and purchases of benches and bricks for the trail would have been handled by them. He is not opposed to allowing people to pay for benches but recommends that standards should be developed. For example, there should be a few benches to select from. There may be other options, such as trees. He generally thinks it is a good idea.

Mr. Pepper advised that the TPR Board had similar thoughts. At this time, they would like to focus on the benches already in place, and possibly expand to other items such as trees later on.

Mr. Windham stated they could start with the bench that was damaged by would-be thieves. There is also a bench facing the playground that sits right in the sun. Some kind of covering for that bench would be a welcome addition and provide park patrons some relief from direct sunlight.

Mr. Pepper asked if the current requestor could have a plaque placed on a bench if a donation is made to pay for it. Mr. Windham advised the TPR Board should be consulted about the standards they would prefer that people can buy for donation and present these recommendations to the City Council.

Mayor Eady asked Mr. Pepper to take this issue to the TPR Board for their recommendations, and in the short term the current requestor can make a donation to have a plaque placed on a bench.

##### 5. **City Cemetery Agreement** (Attachment B)

The agreement between the City of Oxford and the Oxford Historical Cemetery Foundation is due for renewal. Mayor Eady asked if there are any recommendations for amendments. He acknowledged that there has been a lot of discussion about grounds maintenance at the cemetery, management of the cemetery, and the relationship between the City and the Foundation.

Laura McCanless noted that the maintenance agreement includes spreading fire ant treatment over the entire cemetery. The City Council is advocating spot treatment, so she recommends changing that aspect of the maintenance.

Mayor Eady stated that when he met with the trustees of the Foundation a few months ago, they indicated that another part of the maintenance contract, cleaning the headstones, is also problematic because pressure washing the stones could damage them and they had been advised not to do that.

Jeff Wearing stated that if pressure washing is performed correctly, damage would be very minimal, but it would need to be done by someone who knows what they are doing. Mayor Eady stated the Foundation was concerned about liability for irreplaceable stones as well as collateral damage to plants and grounds due to splashing of chemicals.

James Windham expressed frustration that the City is expected to do the research if they (the Foundation) are charged with keeping the stones clean.

Mr. Wearing stated this is one of the considerations in drawing up the new agreement.

Avis Williams stated that damage to one stone would be one too many. The City needs to do the research and include this information in the renegotiated agreement to ensure that the correct chemicals and procedures are used.

Mr. Windham asked if it would be possible to have some of the stones re-engraved.

Ms. McCanless stated that doing so would probably reduce the historical significance of them.

Mr. Windham pointed out that some of the oldest ones are difficult to impossible to read, complicating attempts to perform genealogical and historical research.

Mayor Eady discussed organizing a group of volunteers with a couple of City Councilmembers to work with the Foundation and come back with a recommendation on the path forward. It is not clear from recent conversations whether the City Council desires to continue its relationship with the Foundation. If the relationship is severed, the Foundation would be required to return the principal they have to the City.

Mr. Windham asked if liability for the cemetery extends to the City with the Foundation in place.

Mr. Strickland advised that if the City is inherently liable for an action, it would be responsible anyway. If the Foundation contracted for a service for the cemetery then walked away from it, could not pay for it, etc., unless the City signed as a guarantor it would not automatically inherit the liability of the Foundation for something they signed to do.

Mr. Windham stated that the agreement says the City assumes liability for all debts of the Foundation that it is unable to meet. Part 7 of the agreement states that if the Foundation is unable to meet the cost of maintenance, the City shall make a direct contribution to the Foundation.

Mr. Windham feels that the idea of a committee is a good idea.

Mayor Eady asked Councilmembers to let him know if they would like to serve on the Committee to come up with a recommendation for an agreement with the Foundation.

## 6. **FY2021 Budget Status**

Matt Pepper shared information concerning the status of the City's fiscal year budget at the midpoint of the year FY2021. His analysis shows that the City is in good shape financially due to revenues being higher than anticipated. Oxford College's decision to return to campus for the Fall 2020 semester, the passing of legislation in 2020 to require collection of sales taxes for online purchases, and the receipt of CARES Act Grant funds have helped cover the shortfalls in revenue that were anticipated when the budget was developed last spring.

Mayor Eady and the Councilmembers thanked Matt Pepper and Marcia Brooks for their work on the financial records of the City.

## 7. **July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade**

Mayor Eady requested input from the City Council on the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. Given the current environment, it may be possible to still have the parade with limitations and restrictions on participants in the parade. Perhaps a community event is needed, and this might could be accomplished by asking participants to bring their own picnic basket to the park and draw circles to socially distance small groups of people.

Laura McCanless liked the idea of a socially distanced picnic because it would allow the City to “walk the walk,” in terms of the need to socially distance in public. She does not believe the City can conscientiously have a parade that is effectively distanced. She does not have faith that everyone will be vaccinated by then.

James Windham pointed out that the City must make an application with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to close Highway 81. His recommendation is to have some type of commemorative display on the City green. One possible idea is to display a small American flag for every person from Newton County who has died in a war. He believes something like this could make a strong statement about the people who gave their lives for the country, the way of life, and the cost of war.

Ms. McCanless pointed out that a major reason there are so many participants in the parade is so that they can distribute their political announcements, advertisements, etc. Handouts would not be possible in a parade in the current pandemic environment. There are also crowds clustered along the side of the road and on vehicles, and the City would be condoning public gatherings.

George Holt, Avis Williams, and Mr. Windham stated it is too soon for them to gather.

Mayor Eady wanted to suggest a socially distanced gathering. He does not advocate a potluck dinner at the Old Church. The Asbury Street Park is much more accessible and is a good space to socially distance.

Mr. Windham agreed that a gathering at the park is a wonderful idea, but he does not see how the social distancing requirements can be enforced if 300-400 people are there. He recommends that the City not plan a public gathering.

Mayor Eady understood Mr. Windham’s concern. He wanted to open the discussion so that planning could start for whatever the City decides to do. Honoring those who have lost their lives due to war is more suited for Memorial Day. His suggestion is to honor those who have lost their lives in Newton County due to COVID-19. Several Councilmembers concurred with this idea. He asked the staff to bring a couple of ideas to the Council for ways to commemorate the holiday.

## 8. **Altitude Valve at Water Tank** (Attachment C)

The FY2021 Capital budget includes \$33,138 to replace the altitude valve at the City’s water tank. Jody Reid explained that the altitude valve controls the level of water in the water tank. It cuts off when the tank is full and opens when the water level in the tank is lower.

Public Works staff have been manually opening it, but in the last three or so months it has quite working completely, causing the tank to overflow when the level is too high. The valve on the tank is 34 years old. It has been rebuilt two different times. Replacing it will stop the overflow. The price to replace the valve includes and additional 10-inch valve to allow for a place to cut off the water to the altitude valve.

Bids were obtained for the valve and related supplies and the labor to install the valve. Staff recommends that the City Council award the purchase order for the valve and related supplies to Consolidated Pipe and Supply Co. for \$18,498.90 and the contract for labor to HCS Services, LLC for \$9,850.00, for a total cost of \$28,348.90.

James Windham recommended that the City proceed with this work because it is undermining the nearby trail and will cost the City more the longer it is delayed.

George Holt agreed, stating that this item has already been approved in the Capital budget, and the estimate is less than the amount approved.

Jeff Wearing and Avis Williams agreed.

Mayor Eady advised Matt Pepper and Mr. Reid to execute this project.

#### 9. **FY2021 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG)**

The FY2021 Capital budget includes the receipt of \$25,000 from the GDOT LMIG program to complete resurfacing and milling work on Longstreet Circle. GDOT has awarded the City of Oxford \$25,190.00. The City of Oxford will add a 30% match (\$7,557.27) for a total of \$32,190.90. The FY2020 award will also be added to the total to complete this work.

In the past, the City of Oxford has executed an intergovernmental agreement with Newton County for the city to provide the materials and for the county to provide the equipment and labor to complete these types of jobs. Most of them are one-to-two-day jobs. However, this job is going to take about one week to complete. Newton County is unable to help with this project, so the work will be put out for bid.

James Windham stated that when Longstreet Circle was built, the streets were not paved to standards that would allow them to last as long as they should have lasted. He recommends that the Planning Commission develop some paving guidance that would ensure that future subdivisions meet strict standards.

George Holt agreed with Mr. Windham.

Mayor Eady asked if there are any other issues to be discussed.

James Windham asked about the status of the planned crosswalk with traffic signals at Asbury Street Park on Highway 81.

Mayor Eady stated the crosswalk had been discussed in conjunction with the sidewalk from Soule Street going north. The crosswalk was planned for midblock between Emory Way and Mitchell Street. The GDOT standard for this type of crosswalk is a midblock crossing, not an intersection crossing.



Mr. Windham stated a sidewalk would be needed on both sides of the street at the crossing to allow access to the park. Mayor Eady clarified that it would continue due west to the park.

Mr. Windham expressed his concern that people are crossing Highway 81 at that point without any assistance to get to the park, which he does not think is fair.

Ms. McCanless asked if the crosswalk could be installed with the anticipation to put in the sidewalk later. She agreed the crosswalk is a priority.

Mr. Windham recommended installing a sidewalk at least from Soule Street to the park on the west side of the street. There is not currently complete access to the park.

George Holt asked which side the sidewalk is planned for. Mayor Eady advised the previous consensus was to build the sidewalk on the east side of the street because that is where residents on the north side of town would be better served, since right now they have inadequate access to Asbury Street Park. This plan included the crosswalk. It was also discussed that it takes too long to obtain grant funding for this project, and the City does have funding to cover the estimated cost.

Mr. Holt asked if the City could afford to put a sidewalk on the west side of Highway 81 between Soule Street and the park.

Ms. McCanless stated that park patrons could walk west one block to use sidewalks to get to the park on the west side, but that it is not an option on the east side of Highway 81.

Mr. Holt agreed.

Mr. Windham stated that ideally, sidewalks should go all the way to the city limits. For now, he believes the best way to spend the money is to go to Richardson Street on the east side because most of the foot and bike traffic originates from there or points south. He would also like to go ahead and install sidewalk on the west side from Soule Street to the park. The remaining sidewalk installation could wait until a grant is obtained.

Mayor Eady stated the engineers can draw plans for this design and bids can be obtained to determine the cost. Mr. Windham stated the City could also work with GDOT on the crosswalk. He also mentioned that a bridge could be installed on the west side connecting the crosswalk to the trail to provide safe access.

## 10. Adjourn

Mayor Eady summarized the discussion and action items:

- a. E. George St. – no action by City Council; Latham Sanitation will be asked not to drive down the street to pick up trash anymore. Any additional action will be triggered by the property owners.
- b. Naming of Items at Asbury Street Park – allow donation for current request; Matt Pepper will work with the TPR to come up with recommendations for procedures and standards for review by City Council.
- c. City Cemetery Agreement – Mayor Eady will set up a committee to work on a revised agreement or desired path forward.

- d. July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade – no July 4<sup>th</sup> parade or picnic.
- e. Altitude Valve at Water Tank – consensus from City Council to move forward.
- f. FY2021 LMIG – complete work on Longstreet Circle.
- g. Northside Sidewalk and Crosswalk – Mayor Eady and Matt Pepper will work with Keck & Wood to update the design, get bids, and start the permitting process with GDOT.

Mayor Eady adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks  
City Clerk/Treasurer

# OXFORD PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes – December 8, 2020

**MEMBERS:** Jonathan Eady, Chair; Zach May, Vice-Chair; Mike Ready, and Kibbie Hatfield. Mike McQuaide and Juanita Carson were absent.

**STAFF:** Matthew Pepper, City Manager and Zoning Administrator.

**GUESTS:** Lynn Bohanan; Anthony Ellis.

**OPENING:** At 7:01 PM, Mr. Eady called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Ms. Hatfield, seconded by Mr. Ready, the minutes for the meeting of November 10, 2020 were adopted as amended. The vote was 4-0.

**LYNN BOHANAN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (202 Fletcher Street):** The Commission reviewed the development permit application to remove an existing storage shed on her property located at 202 Fletcher Street. It sits on a concrete slab. Ms. Bohanan confirmed that the concrete slab will remain on the property.

*Upon motion of Mr. May, seconded by Ms. Hatfield, the Planning Commission approved the development permit application to remove an existing storage shed on her property located at 202 Fletcher Street. The vote was 4-0.*

**ANTHONY ELLIS MINOR SUBDIVISION REQUEST:** The Commission reviewed Mr. Ellis's request for the review and recommendation for approval of a plat for a minor subdivision. During the discussion, the Commission reviewed the "final plat procedure" and "final plat specifications" as listed in Sec. 30-50 and 30-51 of the Oxford Zoning Code, respectively. In addition, the Commission discussed potential sewer access for Lots 1, 3, 4, and 5. Mr. Ellis confirmed that Lot 2 has sewer service, but the remaining four lots have septic systems. Mr. Ellis further confirmed that the topography falls from Emory Street east towards the sewer main located in Dried Indian Creek. The Commission advised Mr. Ellis that the final plat would need to include a sewer easement to serve the four lots.

The Commission agreed to recommend approval of the final plat to the Mayor and City Council subject to Mr. Ellis completing the following modifications:

- Indicate the building setbacks on each lot.
- Shade the driveways that serve the individual lots so that they can be distinguished from the dwellings and/or accessory structures.
- Remove the reference to lots 2B & 2C on the final plat and vicinity map.
- Identify potential sewer easement to serve Lots 1, 3, 4, and 5.

*Upon motion of Mr. Ready, seconded by Mr. May, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the final subdivision to the Mayor and City Council subject to the modifications discussed. The vote was 4-0.*

**DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 40:** The Commission continued their discussion on the amendments to specific sections of Chapter 40 Zoning:

- Section 40-575 (Nonconforming Use): The Commission reviewed the repair criteria for a nonconforming structure from their September 8<sup>th</sup> discussion. The criteria included the following three categories:

- Repair from Casualty: significant repair work caused by a natural disaster or an act of God.
- Repairs and Maintenance: minor repairs caused by natural wear and tear.
- Significant Modifications and Improvements: major interior and/or exterior renovations.

During the discussion, the Commission agreed that significant improvements could be made to a nonconforming structure if the total cost of the improvements did not exceed 50% of the fair market value of the structure. In addition, the Commission agreed that normal wear and tear of a structure would not implicate the significant modifications and improvements provision. They discussed some exemptions including floor covering, windows, and other minor repairs.

- Section 40-841 (Development Permit): The Commission discussed the breadth of the type of development activity that requires a development permit. They discussed amending Section 40-841 to provide exceptions for minor work including painting, repairing a roof, replacing a few boards of siding.
- Section 40-842 (Building Permit): The Commission concluded that Section 40-842 of the Oxford Zoning Code should clearly state the relationship between the development permit and building permit. The Commission also considered recommending an exception for trade permits (plumbing, power, natural gas, and HVAC) for applicants replacing or making significant repairs to utilities and appliances.
- Minor Variance Amendment: Earlier in the year, the Commission recommended to the Mayor and Council to approve the inclusion of a minor variance ordinance. The Council did not approve the amendment. The Commission agreed to propose the amendment for a second time as part of this more comprehensive review of Chapter 40.
- Final Plat Specifications: Upon preparing for the discussion on Mr. Ellis’s minor subdivision request, Mr. Eady noted that the graphic scale required for the final plat is one-inch equals 200’ or larger. He recommended that the requirement should read that the graphic scale should equal no more than 200’.

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:** The Commission did not discuss items related to other business.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Eady adjourned the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Submitted by:

Juanita Carson, Secretary

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

Minutes of Meeting December 8, 2020

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

Matthew Pepper, City Manager

Jody Reid, Utility Superintendent

Absent –

Laura McCanless, City Councilmember

**Agenda for Meeting:** Upon motion of Mr. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Wright, the agenda for the December 8, 2020 meeting was adopted as amended. The vote was 6-0.

**Minutes of Meetings held October 13, 2020 and November 10, 2020:** Upon motion of Ms. Eady, seconded by Mr. Rogers, the minutes for the meetings held October 13, 2020 and November 10, 2020 were adopted as amended (October 13, 2020). The vote was 6-0.

**Status of Work Plan, FY2021, Beryl Budd:** Mr. Budd shared his pruning list for FY2021. The list included 28 trees, which are mostly younger trees requiring crown raising for clearance and structural pruning. In addition, the list includes about 10 larger trees requiring crown cleaning and deadwood removal. Mr. Budd further explained that he planned to issue the Request for Proposals (RFP) soon with a goal for the work to be completed no later than February 19<sup>th</sup>. The Board reviewed the pruning list. Mr. Budd estimated the cost to complete the pruning work between \$4,000 and \$5,000 dollars.

In addition, the Board asked Mr. Reid on the status of mulching trees around the city. Mr. Reid stated that the city crews have begun mulching trees this week.

**Mission Statement and Vision Statement:** Ms. Eady shared the first draft of the Board's mission and vision statements and purpose. The Board recommended that the draft include more information on their role related to parks and recreation. The Board discussed how the city's trail systems fits within the parks and recreation framework. Before the next meeting, the Board will review the draft individually. They will revise the draft before presenting it to the Mayor and Council.

## Maintenance Concerns:

1. Bench at Mitchell Street Park: The Board discussed the status of cleaning up the limbs at the park and installing a bench. Mr. Reid stated that he just hired an additional groundskeeper to

help the city catch up on landscape maintenance work. The new groundskeeper will clean up the limbs. Ms. Ready stated that she has not been able to meet with Mr. Pepper to choose a location inside the park to install a bench. They will set up a time in the coming weeks to meet at the park.

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. Mr. Pepper stated that he spoke with a fence contractor this week, but they did not meet the city's insurance requirements. He will continue to look for a fence contractor.

**Pruning Issues – Tree Selection:** The Board reviewed Mr. Budd's FY2021 list of trees to be pruned. Mr. Budd reported that he included the ivy-laden tree on Asbury Street in the RFP. Mr. Budd expressed concern regarding the overall health of a declining tree near 1207 Asbury Street. Mr. Budd and Mr. Reid will continue to monitor the tree.

**Budget Review:** The Board discussed Mr. Budd's estimate of \$4,000 to \$5,000 for pruning work and how it impacts the remaining budget for planting. The Board stated that Mr. Budd may need to reduce the number of trees listed on the RFP for pruning to save more money for planting. Mr. Pepper will share the Board's FY2021 budget estimates for expenditures with Mr. Budd.

The Board discussed their goal to replenish the tree canopy within the city. As part of that goal, the Board discussed how they could engage with private homeowners to encourage them to allow the city to plant a tree on their property. The Board discussed how they engaged homeowners along Emory Street as part of the Emory Street Revitalization Project. The Board further discussed analyzing different properties throughout the city to determine where to plant additional trees.

The Board discussed revisiting Emory Street as a potential location to build up the tree canopy. Ms. Ready and Mr. Budd will work to follow up with homeowners along Emory Street to gauge interest in receiving a tree from the city. Mr. Pepper will send the homeowner's contact information to Ms. Ready.

In addition, the Board discussed hiring a contractor to help plant trees throughout the city. In past discussions, the Board estimated that purchasing a tree and hiring a contractor to plant costs about \$750 per tree. They discussed looking for cost savings by asking the city crews to plant the trees. Mr. Reid stated that the city crews could handle planting between five (5) to ten (10) trees a year.

**Status of Tree City Application:** Ms. Ready reported that she has almost completed the 2021 Tree City Application. She will submit the application later this week.

**Arbor Day, 2021:** The Board discussed the city's upcoming Arbor Day event. Ms. Ready stated that Arbor Day will be held at Asbury Street Park. As an extra precaution, the Board will not invite children to participate this year. Oxford College will provide snacks and the sound system for the event. In addition, Mr. Budd will bring seedlings to distribute to participants. The Board will also share information about the city's recently passed native vegetation ordinance.

Also, the Board discussed the possibility of selling trees for individual homeowners to plant. Mr. Hawkins stated that the City of Jefferson operates a similar program. He will find out more about Jefferson's program to share with the Board.

**Mr. Budd's Recommendation to Council regarding Replacing the Ginkgo Trees in Asbury Street Park:** Mr. Budd will share his recommendation at the Board's January meeting. The Board shared with Mr. Budd that his recommendation must include native trees. Mr. Pepper will share with Mr. Budd the list of

approved native trees that the Council adopted concurrent with the native vegetation ordinance. Mr. Pepper will send the Council the Board's recommendation.

**Meeting Date Preferences for 2021:** The Board discussed their meeting schedule for 2021. They agreed to meet at 5 PM every third Tuesday of the month. For the foreseeable future, the Board will continue to hold their meetings via video conference.

*Upon motion of Ms. Eady, seconded by Mr. Rogers, the Board approved their monthly meetings for every third Tuesday of the month at 5 PM. The vote was 6-0.*

**Concerns and Announcements:** The Board discussed the existing vacancy. The Board members will discuss their nomination at the next meeting.

**Adjournment:** At 6:08 PM, Chairman Ready adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting will be at 5 PM on January 19, 2021.

# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OXFORD

Minutes – October 27, 2020

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

**STAFF:** Matthew Pepper, City Manager and DDA Secretary/Treasurer.

**GUESTS:** No guests were in attendance.

**OPENING:** At 7:03 PM, Mr. Ready called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Eady, seconded by Mr. Vinson, the minutes for the meeting on September 22, 2020 were approved. The vote was 6 – 0.

**FY2021 BUDGET REVIEW:** The DDA discussed their FY2021 budget allocation. The city budgeted \$30,000 for the DDA's allocation for FY2021. In addition, the city budgeted \$200,000 for design costs for the town center development. The DDA discussed requesting this year's \$30,000 allocation from the city. In addition, the DDA agreed that they would need to approach the city during the FY2022 budget preparation to re-negotiate the \$200,000 budget request for the town center development. Mr. Pepper will discuss transferring the \$30,000 allocation with Mayor Eady.

**THE CITY GREENSPACE:** The DDA discussed how to implement low-cost strategies to help cultivate commercial activity on the city-owned greenspace. The DDA focused on the city's revival of the farmer's market. Mr. Pepper reported to the DDA that Melissa Pratt left the city. Consequently, he, along with the staff, will work to continue to manage the farmers market until the city can hire someone for her position. The DDA and Mr. Pepper agreed that the city will focus on the operational side of the market while the DDA will develop a proposal for making low-cost improvements to the city greenspace. To that end, the DDA discussed the following items:

- Orientation of the Market – The DDA discussed ideas on how to lay out the market to maximize the space and visibility of the vendors. The DDA recommended that the vendors set up their tents adjacent to the existing sidewalk on Emory Street. The DDA also discussed parking for visitors to the market. They agreed that the visitors could park in the City Hall parking lot or on the section of greenspace adjacent to E. Clark Street.
- Signage – The DDA continued discussions on appropriate signage for the farmers market and where to locate a sign on the greenspace. The DDA considered a hanging sign as an option, similar to the existing post already located on the greenspace. The city could also use it to advertise for different events. In addition, DDA discussed the idea of installing, at some point, a permanent, decorative sign for the farmers market on the property. The DDA also discussed possible locations for the sign including at the corner of E. Clark Street and Emory Street.
- Barriers (fencing) – The DDA discussed different types of barriers that could be installed to enhance the property including shrubbery, a split-rail fence, or granite bars. The DDA agreed that they would not recommend installing something that would obscure the view of the market and greenspace. In addition, the DDA discussed installing a split-rail fence on the north and south corners of the property with a section fence in the middle.



- Seating – The DDA discussed installing picnic tables under the large shade trees near the Yarbrough House (107 W. Clark Street). Near the picnic tables, the DDA would install some trashcans.

The DDA will present their proposal to the Mayor and Council for approval.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** The DDA rescheduled their meeting at 7 PM on Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> to 4 PM on Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. The purpose of the December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting is to conduct an on-site visit of the city greenspace. In addition, the DDA cancelled their December 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The DDA will meet again on Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pepper will notify Mr. Barnard of the changes to the meeting schedule.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Ready adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM.

Submitted by:

Matthew Pepper, Secretary/Treasurer

# **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OXFORD**

Minutes – December 1, 2020

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

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

**GUESTS:** No guests were in attendance.

**SITE VISIT THE CITY GREENSPACE:** The DDA made a site visit to the city greenspace. During the site visit, the DDA discussed the follow items related to the farmer’s market: the orientation of the market on the greenspace, locations for potential signage and barriers along Emory Street/SR 81, traffic flow and parking along E. Clark Street, and locations to install picnic tables. Prior to the meeting, Mr. Wilson took aerial photographs of the greenspace. He will send the photographs to the DDA. The DDA will next develop a proposal for making low-cost improvements to the city greenspace. They will present their proposal to the Mayor and Council for approval.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Ready adjourned the meeting at 4:45 PM.

Submitted by:

Matthew Pepper, Secretary/Treasurer



**Whereas,** In 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and

**Whereas,** the first Arbor Day in Oxford was celebrated by the students of Emory College by planting a tree on February 27, 1891, and

**Whereas,** Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and

**Whereas,** trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife, and

**Whereas,** trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and

**Whereas,** trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and

**Whereas,** trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

**Now, Therefore,** I, David S. Eady, Mayor of the City of Oxford, Georgia, do hereby proclaim Saturday, February 1, 2021 as

# Arbor Day

in the City of Oxford, and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and

**Further,** I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

**Dated** this 1<sup>st</sup> day of February 2021.

BY: \_\_\_\_\_



David S. Eady, Mayor

**City of Oxford**  
**Invoices >=\$1,000**  
**January 2021**

VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>RECURRING CHARGES</b>		
City of Oxford	Utility Charges – December 2020	1,450.84
Newton County Board of Commissioners	Water Purchase December 2020; Invoice #2782	14,551.00
Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority	Sewer Treatment Fees, 11/30/2020 – 12/30/2020	6,002.41
City of Covington	Quarterly Sewer Fees – Oct-Dec 2020	9,774.00
Georgia Municipal Association	GMEBS Life and Health Insurance Billing for January 2021; Invoice #306986	15,329.20
Georgia Municipal Association	2021 Membership dues	1,438.30
Georgia Municipal Association	GMA Workers’ Comp Self Insurance Fund Estimated Annual Premium	14,091.00
Georgia Municipal Association	GMEBS Retirement Trust Fund Employer Contributions January 2021	5,681.33
Georgia Municipal Association	Telecommunications & ROW Management Service Subscription 2021	1,313.76
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA)	Monthly Payment on Loan 2016L06WQ December 2020	4,556.05
Southeastern Power Administration (SPA)	SEPA Energy Cost (December 2020) Inv. #B-21-0643	2,982.87
Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG)	Monthly Electric Purchases for December 2020	102,801.49
IRS	Federal Payroll Taxes, January 2021	9,280.37
Latham Home Sanitation	Commercial Waste Removal Services December 2020	7,361.18
VC3 (formerly Sophicity)	January charges for software and hardware support; invoice #57449	2,057.31
Cintas	Uniform cleaning, December 2020 (Public Works)	1,096.90
Courtware Solutions	Licensing, support and maintenance – citation processing, December 2020	1,004.78

VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>PURCHASES/CONTRACT LABOR</b>		
Treadwell, Tamplin & Co.	Auditing services for FY 2020	5,000.00
Kraft Power	Replace element in generator on sewer pump at Victoria Station	1,149.84
Enviroprobe, LLC	Mold inspection and remediation at City Hall and Emory-Oxford Mail Service building	1,950.00
Rockdale Plumbing and Drain	Replace hot water heater at Emory-Oxford Mail Service building	1,160.50
Utility Service Co., Inc.	Quarterly water tank inspection	3,122.62
Woco Pep Oil Co., Inc.	Fuel purchases – Public Works	3,218.42