

THOMASTON TREE BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

June 28, 2023

Attending: Jane Burdette Cathy Ashberry
Luke Haney - Absent Susan Formby
Levi Long Kyle McGee – Public Works Director
Oasis Nichols – City Clerk
Andrew Carroll – Upson Beacon
David Long – Ga Forestry Commission, Urban Community Forester/Arborist
Interns: Kennedy Kendall, Emma Kay Ellington, Curtney Banks

1. Meeting called to order at 11:01 a.m. by Chair Jane Burdette
2. Roll Call – Luke Haney was absent due to work issues. Lisa Salter has resigned due to time constraints.
3. Adopt Agenda – Motion: Levi Long. 2nd Cathy Ashberry. Approved
4. Minutes of the May 31, 2023 meeting approved. Motion: Cathy Ashberry. 2nd Susan Formby. Approved
5. Public Works Director Report – Kyle McGee reported that he has completed the tree health assessment on the right-of-way Dogwood trees and it was determined the trees are at the end of their useful lives and most will be replaced. There are 20-30 trees to be replaced, mostly Dogwoods but also some Maples) and it will be done in three phases: cutting, stump removal and replacement. Each tree will be marked, and a door hanger placed on the occupant/owner doors to notify them. A homeowner can request a replacement tree. It was decided that a little PR might be in order so the replacement plan

could be advertised on the Tree Board Facebook page and, perhaps in the Upson Beacon and/or on Fun 101 to properly inform homeowners of what to expect.

6. Social Media – Susan Formby posted about the most common tree in Georgia – the Oak tree. All are encouraged to contribute articles for posting.
7. Oasis Nichols advised that we currently have 17 points toward our Growth Award. She and her Intern, Kennedy, are working on submitting the application since we should qualify. Thank you, Oasis and Kennedy! We are still hoping to get our yard tree recognition program up and running. We moved a step closer with the design of a Spotlight yard sign.
8. Discussion continued about the cutting of “heritage trees” around the city, especially in Silvertown. Although our current tree ordinance seems to be adequate, it was decided that current ordinances should be reviewed. It was suggested that a Permit should be required when trees of a certain size are removed in a residential area due to heavy equipment use. Dave Long advised that Athens, Ga, has an excellent Landmark Tree Program. He also told us about incentives for developers to NOT cut trees. He mentioned ISA standards and safety canopy credits as well as a Tree Bank which is funded by developers and is used by the cities of Columbus and Decatur. How does Tree Board get into the conversation with developers?

Continuing our desire to learn more about efforts to re-establish the American Chestnut Tree, Susan informed us about the Chestnut Foundation. We let Dave Long know that we would be interested in volunteering/helping other tree/forestry/naturalist groups with local projects. We also discussed grants, workshops, arbor equity, surveys and studies.

We were informed by Dave Long that grant money to do an Arbor Equity Study would be available next year. We hope to pursue that grant.

9. Tree Board currently has 2 open positions. Oasis Nichols advised that nominations (if any) would be accepted by City Council at the July 18 meeting. Susan and Jane will reach out to the garden clubs for any interested candidates. Resumes will be reviewed by Tree Board prior to presentation to City Council.
10. Oasis showed us samples of Tree Board materials to be used at public events – a canopy cover, banner, tablecloth and yard signs. The designs were approved – motion made by Levi Long and seconded by Susan Formby.
11. Motion to adjourn made by Cathy Ashberry. . 2nd Susan Formby. Meeting adjourned at 1:12: p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jane S. Burdette, Chair