

Jacksonville Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes December 13, 2018
Approved January 10, 2019

Commissioners Present: John Crescimbeni, Chair
John Pappas
Aaron Glick

Staff: Cindy Chism

Public: Dave McDaniel, COJ
John November, Public Trust
Mike Robinson, Greenscape
Tracey Arpen, City Beautiful Jax

Advisors: Susan Grandin, OGC
Richard Leon, Urban Forest Manager

A. Meeting was called to Order by Chair at 12:15

1. All present introduced themselves for the record.
2. Submittal of Speaker's Cards
3. As there was no quorum, the vote on the November 8th meeting minutes is deferred until the January 10th meeting.
4. Fund balance and encumbrance report for 15(F), 15(N) and BJP (Attachment A). Read into the record by Ms. Chism.
5. Status of Pending Tree Projects (Attachment B) - changes are in green. Read into the record by Mr. Leon.
6. Status of Countywide Tree Planting Contract
 - a. Mr. McDaniel reported seven bid packages were picked up but only one bid was received, which was from Davey Tree. It was 500-700% higher than the previous contract. After several discussions within Public Works, the consensus was not to accept the bid because it was so high. Mr. McDaniel said he asked the contractor about the large increase in the bid. Their response was that planting a single tree here and there throughout the City with no irrigation (also requiring a two year warranty) was too many man hours.
 - b. A meeting was held with the Director and the Operations Director of Public Works as well as the Director of Procurement to determine if the Ordinance Code allowed for negotiations. Mr. McDaniel said the Ordinance Code does not allow for negotiations because of the large gap between the fees from the previous contract and the new bid.
 - c. A brainstorming meeting has been scheduled with the Director and Operations Director of Public Works next week. Also included will be Mr. McDaniel, Ms. McGovern, Mr. Leon and Mr. Pope.
 - d. Mr. McDaniel reported that he asked the owner of Sun State Nursery why he did not submit a bid. His response was that many of the City's projects are not irrigated. If it isn't irrigated, he doesn't bid; especially with a warranty requirement.
 - e. Some of the ideas being discussed are reduction of warranty, no warranty, or possibly one or two year warranties. There will be no warranty requirement on the single or double tree plantings in the right-of-way in front of a business or residence.

- f. CM Crescimbeni asked if the submitted bid broke down the unit price into cost of planting the tree, then warranty. Mr. McDaniel replied they didn't ask for that; they only asked for a single tree cost, then entered their estimated quantities and asked for an extended total. For that bid, it was approximately \$14 million. CM Crescimbeni suggested that if they put out another RFP, they request a breakdown of tree cost, maintenance, planting cost, warranty cost, and then one final total. Mr. Pappas agreed it would be a good idea to break down the costs.
- g. CM Crescimbeni asked if the feasibility of watering internally will be part of the upcoming brainstorming discussions. Mr. McDaniel confirmed it would. He has considered purchasing a water truck and assigning staff two days a week to water. Contracting the watering has also been suggested.
- h. Mr. Leon agreed that no warranty option with the one or two years as alternates for special projects may make the contract more attractive. For the residential plantings in the right-of-way, they do ask the resident to water the tree once per week in time of drought. They leave a tag that advises the resident how to take care of the tree. **Mr. Leon will bring one of the tags to the January 10th meeting.**
- i. Mr. November pointed out that Plan-It GEO has a module which may be added to the City's current system for moderate cost to manage a watering schedule. However, it does not include weather data. This module is a maintenance tool that uses GIS to track the watering schedule. CM Crescimbeni suggested using a paper-based system for economical purposes. Mr. November added that the module interfaces with GIS and could send reminders but would require staff entry when an area has been completed. However, if a paper system would take less time for staff, perhaps that is the way to go. CM Crescimbeni opined on if there was some type of sensor which would monitor rain fall and tell staff when a tree is "thirsty."

B. New Business

1. Community Tree Planting Programs – Levels 1, 2 and 3

- a. Level 1 is part of Bill 2018-0775 which just passed City Council. Mr. Glick asked if there would be any type of announcement to the public regarding this program. CM Crescimbeni said he was working with the Mayor's office in generating a brochure which will include all three levels.
- b. Ms. Grandin created a Level 2 Form (Attachment C) and requested the Mowing & Landscape Division's input. This level is wholly administered by the City. **The updated form will be provided at the January 10th meeting.**
- c. The Level 3 Application form has been generated based on the instructions (Attachment D) which passed at the last meeting. One of the most important parts of the application form is the grant contract. This contract specifies all the warranty requirements, the specifications for plant material, how and when to plant, etc. and will include many of appendices. **Ms. Grandin will bring a copy of the whole Application, which should be completed, to the next meeting.**
- d. Mr. November was concerned with the delay in the Countywide Planting Contract; the Level 3 application was not going to be ready in time for this planting season. CM Crescimbeni pointed out that Level 2 is ready if he wants to get trees in the ground as soon as possible. The Level 3 instructions and application is completed except for the grant contract, which should be done by the January 10th meeting. Mr. November asked if a decision has been made regarding allowing the applicants to utilize the City's countywide planting contract. Mr. McDaniel said yes, the applicants will be able to use the contract. CM Crescimbeni added that if the bids are higher than the countywide planting contract, some discussion will be held regarding the same.
- e. Mr. McDaniel suggested that applications could be accepted even though they don't have the Countywide Planting contract yet; the price comparisons could be based on the unit prices they are

getting for the Mandarin, Springfield, or Riverside projects. CM Crescimbeni said there is nothing preventing Greenscape from coming up with a project and going out and getting bids, just ensure the bids are good for 90 days. There is quite a bit of legwork which needs to be done before the application is even started, there is no reason this “legwork” cannot be in progress in preparation for the Level 3 application approval.

2. 2019 Meeting schedule will be voted on at the next meeting. CM Crescimbeni suggested two meetings for January, then upon approval by the Tree Commission, one per month beginning in February to be held on the second Thursday.

C. Public Comment

Mr. Tracey Arpen – There were some discussions at previous meetings regarding appropriate penalties for trees removed without a permit. Attachment E is a picture of a Burger King on Old St. Augustine Rd. The owner illegally removed (with no permit) ten large oak trees, three of which were in the City right-of-way. Obviously, these cannot be replaced with a 3-5” Live Oak. Perhaps the Tree Commission could investigate different scenarios where there are large trees removed with no permit, maybe there should be a requirement for replacement with the largest size which can be transplanted maybe even an escalating penalty based on the size of the tree. CM Crescimbeni pointed out that this was addressed in the settlement; the permit fee is doubled and the mitigation rate is doubled. Mr. Arpen doesn’t feel that is an adequate sanction for removing very large trees that will take decades to restore the canopy.

Ms. Grandin will look up the language from the settlement which discusses penalties. CM Crescimbeni suggested the Tree Commission offer some additional language which would assess the penalty to be shared by both the property owner and the contractor.

Ms. Leslie Pierpont – There are wireless soil moisture sensors. The depth at which they are buried depends on the soil type. The information can be accessed via computer. There are several companies which exist that offer these products. **Mr. Leon will do some research on these products and present it at the next meeting.** Currently Mr. McDaniel tracks the weather with the Fawn Weather Center in MacClenny, operated by UNF.

Mr. John November will investigate the watering module for Plan-It GEO. CM Crescimbeni asked Mr. November to report back to the Tree Commission on how it works. Mr. November also asked if the Bird of Paradise tree could be evaluated; it is not on the current list. The City of Atlantic Beach is developing a licensing program to manage tree cutting companies which will include penalties for the contractors. Once it is finalized, Mr. November will share it and let the Commissioners know how they were able to do it under the law.

D. Action Items

Mr. Leon will bring one of the Tree Care tags to the January 10th meeting.

The updated Level 2 form will be provided at the January 10th meeting.

Ms. Grandin will bring a copy of the completed Level 3 Application to the January 10th meeting.

Ms. Grandin will look up the language from the settlement which discusses penalties.

Mr. Leon will do some research on wireless soil moisture sensor products and present it at the next meeting.

Mr. John November will investigate the watering module for Plan-It GEO and report to the Commission.

Mr. November will update the Commission on Atlantic Beach’s licensing program for tree cutting companies once it is finalized.

E. Adjourned – 1:08pm