

Jacksonville Tree Commission  
Meeting Minutes December 18, 2019  
Approved January 23, 2020

<b>Commissioners Present:</b>	Chris Flagg, Chair Curtis Hart, Vice Chair Mike Robinson Rhodes Robinson Ron Salem Aaron Glick John Pappas	<b>Staff:</b>	Cindy Chism
<b>Advisors:</b>	Susan Grandin, OGC Kathleen McGovern, City Arborist Richard Leon, Urban Forest Manager Joel Provenza, Accounting	<b>Public:</b>	Fred Pope, Public Works John November, Public Trust Tracey Arpen, Greenscape Mike Zafaroni, Liberty Landscape Courtney Wilson, Greenscape Anna Dooley, Greenscape Dave McDaniel, Public Works

1. **Call to Order** - Chair
2. **Roll Call and Verification of Quorum** - Chair
3. **Submittal of Speaker's Cards** - Chair
4. **Reports:**
  - a) Fund balance and encumbrance report for 15(F), 15(N) and BJP (Attachment A) – Joel Provenza
    - i. Ms. Grandin asked Mr. Provenza about putting the funds for the Tree Commission programs into a separate account. The Countywide Tree Program Right of Way (PWOD15FROW in the middle of Attachment A) is where the 2 million dollars will be deposited from the legislation which just passed. As there is a program wouldn't it be easier to see because the Commission didn't start out with \$6,979,980 in the account. **Mr. Provenza said he would discuss it with the Comptroller.**
  - b) Status of Pending Tree Projects (Attachment B)– Kathleen McGovern
  - c) Program Status (Attachment C) – Richard Leon
5. **Action Items:**
  - a) Approval of Minutes from September 18, 2019 meeting – Chair
    - i. Mr. Hart made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Glick, none opposed.
  - b) Proposed Level 2 Project(s)
    - i. Baymeadows East Tree Planting (Attachment D)
      1. Presentation - Kathleen McGovern
        - a. CM Becton has received several requests from the Sweetwater Home Owners Association to spruce up the medians and right of ways on Baymeadows Rd, Skinner Pkwy and Sweetwater Pkwy. There is a lot a filling

in required. In addition, on Point Meadows Ln there is a sound wall which could use some screening or buffer trees. Finally the last area was very close to Fort Family Regional Park. After meeting with the Parks Department, several areas which could use trees were noted.

- b. Mr. McDaniel asked the Commission to not defer this project as CM Becton has been working on this project closely with the Division. There has been a lot of research put into this project. CM Salem suggests moving forward on this project.
- c. Mr. Flagg pointed out that if Staff sees something which the Commission should pay more attention too, please point it out, which will help going forward with reviews.
- d. Mr. McDaniel added there is one area which we did not include on Baymeadows Rd which is on an FDOT ROW between Southside Blvd and 295. There are several subdivisions there but FDOT has their own resources to plant, we omitted that area from the package.
- e. M. Robinson asked about the replacement of previously planted trees noted in the package, by whom were they planted and why were they lost. Mr. McDaniel responded that the original trees were planted by the Sweetwater Developer decorating the area when it was being developed. Then another development came in added roads and did damage to a lot of the medians and trees. The trees were not planted with City funds and did not require mitigation.
- f. Mr. M. Robinson continued, the cost of the Live Oaks from Davey in comparison to Liberty, \$2600 vs. \$2100. Ms. McGovern pointed out that was with a 1 year warranty. Mr. M. Robinson added but for a 2 year warrant, Liberty is \$500 cheaper. Mr. Flagg asked if the trees were inspected and approved before planting. Mr. Leon responded that all the deliveries are inspected. In the specifications we require Florida Fancy and field grown B&B trees which is why they are more expensive. The trees are grown in the field so when our order is called in, the trees are dug out, wrapped in burlap, hardened off and then planted. They are high quality trees.
- g. On the drawing for the Fort Family Park, a Chinese fan palm is listed in the legend but in the Description of Services from Davey it's listed as a Washington Palm. **Ms. McGovern responded, it should be Washington Palm. We'll get that corrected.**
- h. Finally, Mr. M. Robinson asked if the area where the Red Maples are to be planted moist enough for those trees? Ms. McGovern said they were matching what is already on-site and doing well.

2. Public comment - None

3. Vote – Motion made by Mr. Glick for approval as amended regarding the Washington Palms, seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed, Approved.
- ii. City Cemetery Right of Way Tree Plantings (Attachment E)
  1. Presentation – Richard Leon
    - a. This is 18 Winged Elm trees surrounding the periphery of Old City Cemetery in the right of ways requested by a neighborhood advocate for beautification.
  2. Public comment - None
  3. Vote – Motion made by Mr. Hart to approve this project, seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed, Approved.

## **Old Business**

- c) Level 1 (630-CITY) Additional Fund Appropriation – Susan Grandin
  - i. Ms. Grandin thanked CM Salem for sponsoring legislation 2019-886 for additional \$2,000,000. Henceforth this program will be referred to as 630-CITY, not Level 1.
- d) Level 2 Additional Fund Appropriation – Susan Grandin
  - i. CM Salem also sponsored legislation 2019-880 for \$2,000,000 for Level 2.

## **6. New Business**

- a) How to score a Level 3 Application (Attachment F) – Richard Leon/Fred Pope
  - i. Mr. Flagg pointed out that there have been some internal discussions related to why the projects are scored. Mr. Pope responded that the original intent of the scoring was the assumption that there would be a number of projects so a priority list would be required especially if funds were limited. As that isn't the case, yet, perhaps scoring of the projects could be deferred. Mr. Flagg agreed and suggested we not delete it completely but somehow defer it, as Mr. Pope suggested.
  - ii. Ms. Grandin added that if the Commission wanted to remove the scoring at this time, a vote would need to be taken to amend the instructions. Also, perhaps the scoring should be done by the Staff and come before the Commission with a recommendation to either, approve, approve with conditions, or deny.
  - iii. Ms. Grandin also pointed out the Commission also wanted to make another change to the instructions requiring a pre-application conference with staff for Level 3 Projects. Mr. Flagg agreed.
  - iv. Mr. Hart suggested changing the by-laws to say a member of the Commission is not allowed to present a Level 3 Project; someone else from their organization should do it. Mr. Pappas

made a motion to revise the by-laws with this change, seconded by Mr. Hart, none opposed, Approved. **Ms. Grandin will change the by-laws to reflect this.**

- v. A motion was made by Mr. M. Robinson to change the language in the Level 3 documents which would eliminate the necessity for scoring but the criteria will be reserved for future use if it becomes necessary for competition for funds. Also language will be added to require a Pre-Application conference with Staff. Seconded by Mr. Hart, none opposed. Approved. **Ms. Grandin will make the above changes.**

**b) Level 3 Application process suggestions (Attachment G) – open discussion**

- i. Mr. Pope pointed out that Attachment G should assist with the Pre-Application conference.
- ii. Mr. Arpen reiterated his concerns for requiring scaled drawings pointing out 2 projects were just approved from City Staff using only aerial drawings. If a project is simple enough it shouldn't require a scaled drawing. Mr. Flagg responded that there is no reason there could not be a small bar scale and a north arrow. It doesn't have to be a "scaled drawing." Mr. November pointed out the instructions require a drawing drawn to scale by a design professional. Mr. Arpen added that it may be an unnecessary design cost if the project is simple enough.
- iii. Mr. Pope added that during the application phase there is a lot of flexibility, once the project has been funded then a more detailed drawing is required. Mr. Arpen questioned why should citizen groups be held to a higher standard than City Staff? If an aerial drawing was good enough for the Commission to review and approve from City Staff, why isn't that good enough for a citizen group? Mr. McDaniel responded we are going to be paying a private citizen group a fee for a product. Mr. Arpen pointed out funds used for design services would be better spent putting trees in the ground.
- iv. Mr. Hart's response to Mr. Arpen; the public should be held to a higher standard than Staff. Staff does this every day, it's their job. However, If Staff is happy with a sketch, after meeting with the group, then the Commission would be happy with a sketch as long as the project has enough detail to satisfy Staff.
- v. Mr. November asked if it didn't depend on the project. If the project was a park planting there wouldn't be a strong need for exact drawings but for a Right-of-Way project, there are a lot of factors that having a design professional do the drawing makes a lot more sense. CM Salem suggested the citizen group should contact Staff and ask how detailed a drawing is required. Mr. Glick agreed, perhaps the discretion should be given to the Staff.
- vi. Ms. Grandin reminded the Commission what the current instructions say: "Submission of Application and Application Materials; 4. Schematic planting plan including the following information (Exhibit 4) a. North arrow and graphic scale shown on each sheet; b. project boundaries; c. Location of all plant material; and d. Location map." Then there is a plant schedule listing which is the species, size, and associated notes, plant quality.

- vii. Mr. Pope added that on the conceptual side there could be more leeway in the drawing but on the funding side, there needs to be more detail. So once the funding has been approved, a more detailed design may be required. However, it could be left up to Staff's discretion, i.e., if the project is simple a drawing done by a design professional may not be required but if the project is very complex, then Staff may require drawings done by a design professional.

c) Jean Motney Memorial Tree

- i. Ms. Montney was known as the Lady of the Trees in the 70s for all the trees she had planted throughout the City. A cedar tree was planted in her honor and in 1972 she was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Mayor. There is a plaque but the tree has since died and we have removed it. When it was removed, Mr. Leon contacted a local woodworker who wanted the wood. He is going to make something special out of this wood for Ms. Montney. On Ms. Montney's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, December 19th, we will be planting a new tree for the Lady of the Trees. Public Affairs has been notified and local news has been contacted. This has all been done using the Remove and Replace program.

7. **Public Comment – General**

**Anna Dooley, Greenscape** – I was sorry to miss last month's meeting. I was in Cleveland at the National Urban Forestry conference. I've been attending this conference for almost 20 years. It is national, sometimes international and what it does is celebrate partnerships. As we all know, the main quality of a good partnership is communication. Unfortunately we did not experience that during this last exercise. We have attended these meetings since the onset of the Commission as things were trying to be resolved, we've been questioned about how we've done business for all of our 45 years and we've been very successful. We've never had any questions about our abilities, we've always performed as agreed to by all parties, and we've been funded not only by City Councilmen but also by DOT for \$3,000,000 in DOT projects. We've changed the landscape of Jacksonville. So to say that when I got word that our request had been deferred was heartbreaking, shocking and just astounded me. Part of that is because there has not been very much communication. I stand by my previous remarks that we did have a pre-cursory review with a member of Staff, came to our office, looked at our entire presentation, the forms, the application, and we were told at that time "this looks great, no problems." We got our application in on time, by September 1. Apparently it was not reviewed until the beginning of November. I was never contacted about any problems which existed. The rules seem to have changed from the day that we filed our application to the day it was reviewed. We have had a meeting with Public Works and the Parks Department and people from the Equestrian Center and the product of that meeting is we are moving forward. We will generate some internal procedures so that we are better prepared and we will then meet again with Public Works. I applaud having some procedure rules because we were flying blind with what we had initially. We are going forward, we are still here to support the Tree Commission and we're hoping that we can get this project passed in time to get these trees planted for the Equestrian Center; they have been waiting for 2 years now. I felt a lack of professional respect but we're moving forward and we'll build that back up again. Thank you.

Mr. Hart responded that no one on the Commission questioned your abilities. There were a lot of other issues. The project wasn't deferred because the Commission didn't try to pass it, we did everything we

could to pass it and it didn't work out. I don't think the professionalism of Greenscape was ever in question. Mr. Flagg agreed. On behalf of the Commission, I apologize, because there was no disrespect intended in any way. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the system gets streamlined so organizations do not have to go through the level of frustration which occurred.

**John November, Public Trust** – Yes there are growing pains but I am very proud of where we are. If you look at the big picture, the amount of programs which have been developed and the amount of trees which are going in the ground now is vastly improved. Yes, there is work to be done to streamline the process but it is a work in progress and in the next round things will be better. Perhaps we should have stopped talking and started doing, sooner.

**Dave McDaniel, Public Works** – I would like to thank the Director of Public Works, Mr. John Pappas for helping the Forestry group in my Division by getting our intern hired permanently. Mr. Pappas responded it's because of what we are seeing in this Commission and work being done that it was a very easy sell to get another full-time position to support that effort.

**Meetings will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month for 2020 except for January.** The time will not change, nor will the location.

8. **Adjournment** – the next meeting is January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30am.