

Jacksonville Tree Commission  
Meeting Minutes June 24, 2020  
For Approval July 22, 2020

<b>Commissioners Present:</b>	Chris Flagg, Chair Curtis Hart, Vice Chair Mike Robinson John Pappas Rhodes Robinson CM Ron Salem	<b>Staff:</b>	Cindy Chism
<b>Advisors:</b>	Susan Grandin, OGC Richard Leon, Urban Forest Manager Kathleen McGovern, City Arborist	<b>Public:</b>	Dave McDaniel, Public Works John November, Public Trust Mike Zafaroni, Liberty Landscape Anna Dooley, Greenscape Fred Pope, Public Works Todd Little, Public Works Teresa Eichner, Finance Tracy Arpin, Scenic Jacksonville Joshua Rosenberg

1. **Call to Order** – Chair
2. **COVID-19 Statement** – Chair
  - a) In an effort to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus and to encourage social distancing, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-69 allowing local governments to hold public meetings using communications media technology rather than in a physical location. In keeping with the Executive Order, the Jacksonville Tree Commission meeting is being held via Zoom teleconference which allows interested persons to view and participate in the meeting remotely.
3. **Roll Call and Verification of Quorum** – Cindy Chism
4. **Submittal of Speaker's Cards** – As this was a ZOOM meeting; all requests for public comments were indicated by a raised hand or through the chat window.
5. **Reports:**
  - a) Fund balance and encumbrance report for 15(F), 15(N) and BJP (Attachment A) – Teresa Eichner. The format of the reports has changed due to the implementation of a new accounting system.
    - i. Mr. Pappas asked if the Expenditures column are what has been spent and the Purchase Orders column are what is encumbered but not yet spent, correct? Ms. Eichner replied that is correct. There were no objections to the change in format. The only request was to add a total for each of the funds.
    - ii. Ms. Grandin asked if each programs balance; (Remove and Replace, 630-CITY, Level 2 and Level 3), could be listed on the report. Ms. Eichner replied that Level 2 and Level 3 balances are listed on the PDF titled Copy of Tree Reports. However, as this is the first report using the new accounting system, Mr. Provenza and Ms. Eichner will make the revisions.
    - iii. Mr. Hart asked for an explanation of a \$3,000,000 adjustment from the last meeting. Also if we could get an accounting for the last 12 months, i.e., money in, money out, a monthly summary. Ms. Grandin replied as the amount is an even \$3,000,000 perhaps it was accounting moving the funds from a specific fund into a project fund. **Ms. Eichner and Mr. Provenza will research for the next meeting.**

**b) Status of Pending Tree Projects – Kathleen McGovern**

- i. City of Jacksonville Tree Planting Projects Active - District 8 Tree Planting projects are complete; these included Moncrief/Dinsmore, Yancy Park and Pritchard Rd. Also completed was an older project from 2017; Hammond Blvd medians including Thomas Jefferson Park. The remaining project on Moncrief Rd is in Planning & Development.
- ii. Level 2 Tree Planting Projects – Canopy Place, Sunrise Ridge and the Jax Beach Golf Park have all been completed. Also completed are the Yates Bldg, City Cemetery Planting and Baymeadows East. The upcoming projects, in addition to the 3 on the Agenda today, are Nathan Krestul Park, John Gorrie Dog Park, Atlantic Blvd/Philips Hwy and Southside Estates Park.

**c) Fund Status of 630-CITY, Remove & Replace and Level 2 Programs – Richard Leon**

- i. Due to the new accounting system this report is unavailable. As soon as it becomes available, it will be distributed.
- ii. Mr. Pope asked if the Mayor's office had requested any special tree plantings to prepare for the RNC. Mr. Pappas replied currently Public Works is evaluating the infrastructure and status of trees to determine potential requirements but nothing specific has been requested.

**6. Action Items:**

**a) Approval of Minutes from June 24, 2020 meeting – Chair**

- i. Motion made by Mr. Hart to approve Minutes from the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting; seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed, minutes approved.

**b) Proposed Level 2 Project(s) – None**

**i. AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida at Willow Branch Park**

1. Presentation - Kathleen McGovern
2. Mr. M. Robinson motioned for approval, seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed, project approved.

**ii. Cobblestone Tree Planting**

1. Presentation – Kathleen McGovern
2. Mr. M. Robinson pointed out on the Request Form the item which asked if the Council member had been notified is marked no. Ms. McGovern replied this form is completed by the Applicant. Mr. Pappas replied item 16 on the Staff Check list shows the Council member has been notified by Staff. CM Salem asked if there were records of when and how the Council member is being notified of these projects. It is recommended the notification be done in person, by phone or all 3 and documented. Ms. McGovern responded it is tracked by email and frequently the respective ECA or Council member will follow-up with questions.
3. Mr. Hart asked if the cost of warranty could be broken out of the quote, i.e., what does 'warranty' include. Ms. McGovern replied the warranty is built into that price. The cost of the tree is the lowest portion of the overall amount. Where the expense adds up is in the

watering especially just after planting when the contractor may water the trees at least once sometimes twice per week. Inspections are done every 6 months and those trees are required to look as good as the day it was planted which includes water, mulch, weeding and general care throughout the 2 years of the warranty.

4. Mr. Hart continued is there a difference in the cost of a tree planted through the 630-CITY program versus a Level 2 project planting. Ms. McGovern replied the 630-CITY program uses 3 month warranty prices and this Level 2 Project uses the 2 year warranty price. Liberty Landscape's pricing is quite competitive. Mr. Hart replied the cost is not an issue, the information being requested is a running analysis of what the average cost of a tree and 2 year warranty are on a running basis so we can look back in a year and determine if the cost of a tree planting for a Level 2 Project has gone up significantly, stayed the same or something else. Mr. Leon added the prices with Liberty Landscape are locked in for the next 6 years with the exception of annual CPI increases so the prices will not fluctuate. One of the reasons the cost seems so high is the trees are professionally installed and guaranteed for 2 years. There are 5 years left on this contract.
5. Mr. McDaniel added this contract was competitively bid through the City's Procurement division. Even though it is a contract for 6 years, if, for some reason we see a large drop in market prices, we have the option to renew the contract or not.
6. Mr. Arpen said it appears there is a large disparity in what we are paying for installation and what we are collecting in mitigation. Mr. R. Robinson commented there should be statistics which show the cost of mitigation and the number of trees. Divide the number of trees removed versus the revenue that should give you a cost per tree which can then be compared to what we're getting back. This may determine if our mitigation costs are adequate to replace what is being lost.
7. Mr. Hart responded that every year the City determines the amount they will charge the Development community for removing trees. It's a negotiated number agreed upon by all parties. However, remember what is being removed is what grows naturally, what is being planted, according to Commission requirements, is a much better tree and comes with a 2 year warranty. There's no comparison in what it costs to plant a Florida #1 with a warranty and removing a tree for a development.
8. Mr. Hart made a motion to approve the Cobblestone Project, seconded by Mr. M. Robinson, none opposed, project approved.

iii. Ed Austin Regional Park Tree Planting

1. Presentation – Kathleen McGovern
2. There are 2 species of tree, not on the approved tree list; Southern Red Oak and Dawn Redwood, being tested at this park. These trees are.
3. Mr. M. Robinson made a motion to approve the Ed Austin Tree Planting project including the 2 trees not on the Approved Tree Planting List the Southern Red Oak and the Dawn Redwood. Seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed, project approved.

## 7. Old Business

- a) Transferring the Tree Planting Programs (Remove and Replace, 630-CITY, Level 2) into separate accounts. – Susan Grandin
  - i. The funds do not necessarily need to be transferred to separate accounts. The Tree Commission just needs a way to monitor each programs funds. **Teresa Eichner and Joel Provenza will revise the current fund reports to reflect the balances in these programs.**
- b) Bylaws have changed – Ms. Grandin
  - i. The change reflects the decision by the Commission to restrict any Commissioner from being a representative for a Project presented to the Commission.
- c) Bulletin L-01-20, Use of Arborist Letters for Tree Removal – Ms. Grandin
  - i. The Bulletin issued by Josh Gideon didn't specifically reference commercial properties. The bulletin only pertains to commercial properties.
- d) Revisions to Level 3 Documents – Susan Grandin
  - i. CM Salem sponsored legislation to appropriate \$1,000,000 from the tree fund for Level 3 Projects. This alleviates the necessity and cost to go before City Council for each project. The project still will be approved by the Commission and then MBRC.
  - ii. There are also changes in the Level 3 documents (a redlined copy was provided). Removed was the scoring requirement, deemed cumbersome and unnecessary by the Commission. The Priority list is not eliminated just waived at this time. **A Priority List is required by ordinance so a strategic planning style of discussion will need to be scheduled at a later date.**
  - iii. Mr. November suggested a **definition of a conceptual or schematic drawing be added to the Level 3 Application.**
  - iv. Mr. November pointed out a memo from Susan Grandin states there can be no communication with Commissioners after the initial meeting with Staff. Perhaps this could be changed from initial to once the final application has been submitted and approved by Staff. Ms. Grandin responded as any conversation with a Commissioner is about a specific piece of property and is a type of executive function therefore it would be a quasi-judicial consideration. Mr. Flagg replied that any ex-parte discussions would have to be disclosed to the Commission. Mr. M. Robinson pointed out as he works with Greenscape designing plans would that mean after the initial meeting with Staff he could not discuss the respective project with Greenscape? Ms. Grandin replied he would have to disclose all communications. **Ms. Grandin will determine if Mr. November's request is possible.**
- e) Schedule Landscape Code Revision meeting – Ms. Grandin will schedule a Zoom meeting with Fred Pope, Jeff Lucovsky and/or Steven Davis from Planning Dept. to continue working on the revisions.

## **8. New Business**

- a) Commission vacancy announcement for Urban Planner or Attorney. Ms. Grandin pointed out Aaron Glick was At-Large District 5 and there are already 2 Commissioners for Zone 4. Please forward recommendations from any district but 4 to the Mayor's office. Mr. Pope asked if the district is the residential or business address. Ms. Grandin will clarify.

## **9. Public Comment**

John November – The Sulzbacher Village and & Huguenot Projects are progressing well. The Huguenot plantings may happen as quickly as July because they are replacing sod. A Possible ribbon cutting for both projects may be scheduled for late August or early September.

Mike Zaffaroni – As the relationship with his company and the City grows it has resulted in 18 new jobs. Thank you to Dave, Kathleen and Richard who worked very hard to keep us busy so none of my staff had to be let go.

## **10. Adjournment** – the next meeting is March 18<sup>th</sup>.