

Jacksonville Tree Commission  
Tuesday, August 11, 2020 – 9:30 AM  
Approved September 16, 2020  
Via Zoom Platform

**Commissioners  
Present:**

Chris Flagg, Chair  
Curtis Hart, Vice Chair  
Ron Salem  
John Pappas  
Mike Robinson

**Staff:** Cindy Chism

**Public:** Todd Little, COJ  
Tracey Arpen, Scenic Jax  
Fred Pope, COJ  
Jeff Lucovsky, COJ  
Anna Dooley, Greenscape  
John November, Public Trust  
Mike Zaffroni, Libery Landscape

**Advisors:**

Susan Grandin, OGC  
Joel Provenza, Finance  
Kathleen McGovern, City Arborist

1. **Call to Order** - Chair
2. **Roll Call and Verification of Quorum** – Cindy Chism
3. **Submittal of Speaker’s Cards** – Chair
  - a) A raised hand icon as well as waving at the screen will be acknowledged by Chair or Ms. Chism.
4. **Reports:**
  - a) Fund balance and encumbrance report for 15(F) (Ordinance Tree Fund), 15(N) (Charter Tree Fund) and BJP (Attachment A) – Joel Provenza
    - i. \$3,000,000 adjustment and 12 month accounting – the expenditure budget will reduce the overall balance. A report which lists all legislation and the amounts allocated, which reduced the available balance. Mr. Hart requested the name of the legislation be provided. **Ms. Chism will amend the report to reflect what the legislation was.**
    - ii. Ms. Grandin pointed out on the report there is a balance for the Zoo and the Parks Department. The contract for the Zoo is void. **A teleconference will be scheduled to discuss how the monies in these 2 accounts could be moved.**
  - b) Status of Pending Tree Projects (Attachment C)– Kathleen McGovern
  - c) Fund Status of 630-CITY, Remove & Replace and Level 2 Programs– Richard Leon will report on this once all issues have been worked out with 1Cloud, the new procurement system.
    - i. Project status for 630-CITY – Todd Little; 290 open requests. It’s taking a maximum of 6 weeks, usually closer to 4 weeks. There is approximately \$715,000 left in the fund. There are 140 trees confirmed but not yet sent to the contractor and 500 trees which have been sent to the contractor for planting.
5. **Action Items:**
  - a) Approval of Minutes from July 22, 2020 meeting – Chair
    - i. Motion to approve minutes Mr. John Pappas, second by Mr. Hart, none opposed.

- b) Equestrian Center Level 3 Application – Greenscape - Deferred

## 6. Old Business

- a) Commission member vacancy – Criteria: Urban Planner or Attorney, should reside in At-Large Council District 1, 2, 3, or 5 - Cindy Chism
  - i. Applications have been sent out, waiting for approval. Ms. Chism will check with Public Affairs if the volunteer opportunity has been listed on the City’s page and if we could post this on social network sites.
- b) Revisions to Level 3 documents per Commission direction (Attachment D)– Susan Grandin
  - i. There was a vote at the last meeting which allowed the Applicant’s the option to communicate with Commission members. As the Tree Commission is not quasi-judicial so it is not required consider evidence etc. in their decision, but for transparency’s sake it is recommended to do an ex parte disclosure; who the discussion was with, when and what discussed. This would take place before public discussion after the Application presentation.
  - ii. No comments from the Commission, the language will be adopted.
- c) Landscape Code Revisions – Susan Grandin
  - i. The next meeting is scheduled for this week. Mr. Hart want’s to make sure a comparison copy will be available once the revisions are ready for review by the Commission. Mr. Pope pointed out a lot of the changes are to make the Code more user friendly and understandable. Ms. Grandin agreed and added there are layers and layers of things you have to look through to determine what the law is. The changes are limited to the suggestions from the Shade Tree and the Over-pruning subcommittees. There are some other things, for example, there have been 2 appeals filed for the decisions about the mitigation of the trees, which has never happened before. The Ordinance Code in Section 656.1208 says that the appeals should go to the Planning Commission which has no knowledge about trees. It’s been suggested the appeals come to the Tree Commission, but even that may not be correct because the standard of review for any appeal of what the Chief or the Planning Dept. in that section does is, “was the decision clearly erroneous?” Many think the Tree Commission is a better appellate route than the Planning Commission.

## 7. New Business

- a) Review of Commission Intent, Purpose and Duties (Attachment E)– Chair/Susan Grandin
  - i. The Tree Commission was created as a result of a settlement agreement between Public Trust and the City. In addition a City Arborist position was created and filled, the Public Trust provided a computer modeling program for the City and other things. There’s a website for transparency in monitoring funds, etc.
  - ii. 94.105.a – *“To study and make recommendations to the City Council, Mayor’s Office, City Staff, and community stakeholders with respect to the planting of trees and the health of the City’s tree canopy.”* Ms. Grandin asked the Commission if Remove & Replace and the Levels 1-3 Tree Plantings Programs satisfied that requirement. Mr. Pappas believes that the programs developed by the Commission satisfy this requirement.

- iii. 94.105.b – *“To formulate an overall plan for the planting of trees and the health of the City's tree canopy and thereafter to annually review the plan and report recommendations to the Mayor's Office.”* Ms. Grandin suggested the plan referred to does not have to be planting of trees, it could be education, maintenance of trees, programs. The plan we annually prepare and report to the Mayor's office could be pretty broad. CM Salem added the CPACs are an avenue the Commission should take advantage of in disseminating information on the tree planting programs.
- iv. 94.105.c – *“To act as a motivating and coordinating body to encourage joint public and private participation in the planting of trees and the health of the City's tree canopy.”* Ms. Grandin added the CPACs would also be a good avenue for this as well.
- v. 94.105.d – *“To review and make recommendations, if necessary, to the Council concerning the City's tree protection and landscape regulations.”* Mr. M. Robinson requested the Plan-it-GEO City Tree canopy survey be broken down into Council Districts to keep track of the Tree planting projects which have been completed and how they affected the existing canopy. This will help determine the percentage of canopy which has been increased.
- vi. Mr. Flagg agreed with Mr. M. Robinson and continued with a chart which shows the existing canopy with the deficiencies to help in targeting areas which need improvement. Perhaps a digital version which could be updated monthly or more often. Does this information exist and who would maintain it? Mr. Little responded that would be something pretty easy to do especially since there is already a filter for City Council district. Mr. Flagg requested a graphic to show a baseline and/or progress at least a framework. **Mr. Little agreed he would make a graphic broken down by City Council District or possibly CPAC.** Mr. Pappas agreed, by CPAC would be wonderful especially if you took that graphic to the respective CPAC and showed them what it was and what we've done and also where the deficiencies are. Mr. November added that when they built Plan-It GEO it was done on census blocks and City Council Districts. **Mr. Little should go to the GIS Division of IT and the City and request the CPAC layer be sent to Plan-It GEO who could lay that layer down for us.** CM Salem suggested laying the CPAC layer over the Council Districts so you would be able to see both layers.
- vii. Ms. Dooley wondered if the trees Greenscape plants shouldn't also be included in the chart. Greenscape planted 1200 trees last year. In the realm of public and private contributions. Mr. Flagg added that the Commission needs to focus on what we've accrued and planted and for Greenscape to be a parallel graph which will also show how they have supported the efforts of what the City is working towards. Graphics are the way to go, we need the Council Districts, the CPACs, identify the canopy deficiencies are, there was a report a year ago which illustrated this, and then add where we have improved the canopy. Mr. Flagg will be happy to help Mr. Little.
- viii. Mr. Pope said Council Districts can have very needy neighborhoods and very well to do neighborhoods, so the demands would be very different but in the same Council District. CPACs can be just as broad. What is the best separation of the areas to analyze. Mr. Pappas added if CPAC members were able to see a graphic of their area which showed here's where things have been planted, here is where the deficiencies are, hopefully the representatives for those areas would say that's X neighborhood with all those deficiencies, let's reach out to them and have them look into a tree planting projects. **Mr. Flagg proposed himself, Mr. Little and Ms. Grandin take the lead on making this graphic.**

- ix. Mr. Pappas added the warranty period included with these plantings should really be touted, never before has the warranty really been a big deal, now we have the 3 different lengths which ensures the trees planted are well established and remain healthy. Also we should tout we have flexibility in tree requests, getting the residents buy in to help support the tree and keeping it healthy.
- x. Mr. Flagg asked how we create a list of facts & figures which we need to tout. Is it a strategic plan or matrix that we're checking boxes? Ms. Grandin said it could take a graphic form such as the one described above for the tree canopy, or a matrix. The Ordinance code lists the duties and some of those cross over, so perhaps a matrix would be best. What is the plan going to do, is the plan just for planting, is it also for education, is it also for maintenance for the trees that are dying soon and need replacement. A time of year should be selected when we give this plan to the Mayor's office, not during budget. The items need to be specific. Mr. Pappas suggested speaking with Mr. McDaniel and the Urban Forest Staff to generate these specifics. Mr. Flagg would like to come out of this with a graphic and a matrix document which get updated every year. **Ms. McGovern will discuss with Mr. McDaniel to develop a base model for the Commission to evaluate.** Ms. Grandin suggests using the Ordinance Code (Attachment E) as a baseline. Mr. M. Robinson volunteered to work with staff to assemble the criteria for the matrix. Mr. November reminded the Commission about the Remove & Replace program which also needs to be advertised.
- xi. Mr. Pope reminded the Commission there was a consultant which did an inventory of the City canopy. It would be very helpful to have this re-done every year to determine where we have improved and where we have declined. However, this cannot be accomplished by staff and there are no funds budgeted for this survey. Mr. Flagg agreed the survey is a great idea, even if it was only repeated every few years it would still give us a good idea of the progress of the deficiencies. Mr. November pointed out there is a deficiency in the amount of general funds allocated to the Mowing & Landscape Division for maintenance of the tree canopy as this data is developed, as a Commission, if we can look at the data and make a strong recommendation to Council, to have more general funds going towards general maintenance. CM Salem requested information from Mr. Pappas on what Mowing & Landscape Division is spending on maintenance today for the tree canopy, how many trucks we have, and how many people are involved. **Mr. Pope and Mr. Pappas will work together to get this information to the Councilman.**
- xii. 94.106.a – *“To act as a coordinator for programs, projects, and activities related to planting projects and the health of the tree canopy between all public and private entities.”* The tree planting programs fulfill this.
- xiii. 94.106.b – *“To review expenditure proposals and plans for planting projects.”* This is done with Level 2 and Level 3 Planting Programs.
- xiv. 94.106.c – *“To prioritize, with the input of District Council members, proposed planting projects based on established criteria for recommendation to the Council, and, when requested, the Commission may also make recommendations on other proposed tree planting projects.”* This combines the Councilmembers ability to do a tree planting project through their own legislation, it wouldn't go through Level 2 or Level 3 but there is also Level 2 and Level 3 which is what the Tree Commission looks at. This should probably be part of the plan with Plan-it GEO.

- xv. 94.106.d – *“To formulate a recommended priority project list, including an estimated implementation cost for each item, for tree planting and canopy maintenance, and to thereafter annually review the priority project list and report recommendations to the Mayor's Office.”* This is the same as 94.105.b, the Plan-it GEO graphic and the matrix should cover this. Mr. Pappas suggested this referred to ensuring trees are not being lost in the canopy. Mr. November added the Plan-It Geo graphic and the matrix should answer this. However, Ms. Grandin pointed out that education, i.e., how to trim a crepe myrtle, could be included in this.

**Commissioners please review the remaining Duties listed below and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.**

- xvi. 94.106.e – *“To help coordinate the maintenance of an inventory of the urban tree canopy with an emphasis on historic trees, exceptional specimen trees and other unique environmentally significant trees within the City.”*
- xvii. 94.106.f – *“To assist in the establishment of educational and outreach programs to encourage proper management and maintenance of trees on private property in the City.”*
- xviii. 94.106.g – *“To conduct research studies, collect and analyze data and prepare maps, charts, and plans for the accomplishment of its purposes.”*
- xix. 94.106.h – *“To identify issues relative to the health and protection of public trees and recommend solutions to problems identified.”*
- xx. 94.106.i – *“To recommend to and help develop opportunities for the City's grant writing office for grants and solicitation of donations to support the City's tree canopy.”*
- xxi. 94.106.j – *“To perform an annual audit of funded projects, the status of the inventory, and tree permits submitted to the City to be included in an annual report to the Mayor's Office and City Council.”*
- xxii. 94.106.k – *“To develop and maintain a tree canopy and existing tree inventory.”*

**8. Public Comment**

- i. None.

**9. Adjournment** – the next ZOOM meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21.