

Jacksonville Tree Commission  
Wednesday April 20, 2022 – 9:30 AM  
**Approved May 18, 2022**  
Via Zoom Platform & In Person

**Commissioners  
Present:**

Chris Flagg, Chair  
Curtis Hart, Vice Chair  
Mike Robinson  
CM Ron Salem  
John Pappas  
Susan Fraser  
Rhodes Robinson via ZOOM

**Staff:** Cindy Chism

**Public:** Joe Anderson, JEA  
Kathleen McGovern, COJ  
Fred Pope, COJ  
Tracey Arpen, Scenic Jax  
Kelly O’Leary, Liberty Landscape  
Mike Zaffaroni, Liberty Landscape  
Dave McDaniel, COJ  
John November, Public Trust  
John November, Public Trust  
Buck Pittman, Pittman Landscape  
John Nooney, Citizen

**Advisors:**

Susan Grandin, OGC  
Dalton Smith, Urban Forestry  
Jose Regueiro, Finance, via Zoom

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.
  - b) For those attending in person, paper speakers’ cards are available.
4. **Reports:**
  - a) Fund balance and encumbrance report for 15(F) (Ordinance Tree Fund), 15(N) (Charter Tree Fund) and BJP (Attachment A) – Jose Regueiro
    - i. Mr. Regueiro advised the Commission he was going to revise the current spreadsheets to be more like a standardized financial packet. The new report will present the cash and liabilities in one section as a fund balance so it will show as one picture. Then revenues and expenses in another section. These will be done for both funds.
    - ii. Activity for 15305 is very low, it’s mostly a revenue collector with a few expenditures.
    - iii. Looking at the available balance summary which is what is on the Tree Mitigation page, it ties out within a couple of thousand dollars to \$22 million. But the BJP funds, \$1.7 million, have had no activity. It was funded in 2019 and is supposed to end in September of 2022, which I will discuss with Teresa Eichner. However, in reviewing these projects, there is still quite a bit of money which is authorized but not spent. Going forward if we could highlight these funds which are authorized and require no further paperwork for use, or let’s move to redeploy them for usage.
    - iv. Using trend as a tool to monitor revenues and expenses. Typically, cash is not used as a trend model in this situation. There is quite a lot of money so that presented alone is a better snapshot what the trend is going to look like going forward in the next couple of months. There will be a spike in expenses, and everyone knows why. Mr. Hart pointed out that he doesn’t know why the expenses

will go up. Currently the report is a mixture of a balance sheet and a financial statement with the budget and actuals within it to try to get to a number. It's understandable why it was initially done that way but for the Commission to get a better perspective what the financial position looks like emphasis on other aspects of the financial package will give you more tools to work with.

- v. Mr. Pappas asked is there an expiration date on the BJP funds? These funds were paid because of BJP road projects which removed trees. There should be no expiration date. Mr. Regueiro said the project module is a 3-year project.
  - vi. Mr. Hart requested less acronyms. The information on the reports should reflect how much money we have, how much did we receive in the previous period, how much have we spent, how much is committed to a project. The report should be very easy to understand and basic; money in and money out, and the obligations what's available to spend.
  - vii. Mr. Regueiro will redesign the report to reflect what has been requested and present a draft at the next meeting. Mr. Hart pointed out the BJP funds were paid into the fund for mitigation but they are not restricted perhaps these funds should be merged into either 15N or 15F. Mr. Pappas pointed out the reason these funds were noted separately was to ensure clarity for BJP project mitigation.
- b) Status of Pending Tree Projects (Attachment B) – Dalton Smith**
  - c) Fund Status of 630-CITY, Remove & Replace and Level 2 Programs– Dalton Smith**
    - i. 630-CITY has \$1,580,065 remaining, Level 2 has \$2,312,713 and Remove and Replace has \$806,000.

## **5. Action Items:**

- a) Approval of Minutes from March 23, 2022 meeting – Chair**
  - i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Pappas, seconded by Mr. M. Robinson, none opposed.
- b) Proposed Level 2 Project(s)**
  - i. District 5 Tree Planting Project (Attachment C)– Kathleen McGovern
    - 1. Presentation – This project does have a lot of trees but isn't very complicated. It began with the playground construction at Crabtree Park, then residents requested trees in Verona Park. The project then expanded to other playgrounds, trails, and walks. Working with Parks Maintenance Staff in District 3 who oversees these parks.
      - i. Ms. Fraser commented this is a great way to maximize efficiency in getting all these installed at once. When it comes to pricing, was there an all-at-once mobilization or will they be done sequentially, how can we make that work for us.
      - ii. Ms. McGovern said the project will go out to bid for 1 year warranty and lowest bidder will be selected. The Commission will be informed of the selection and costs. Mr. Hart suggested getting costs for 1 year and 2 year. Ms. McGovern agreed and added Mr. Pope is working on a continuous contract for 1 year.
      - iii. Mr. Pappas asked if the Inwood Terrace Pond project was run through our maintenance group? Ms. McGovern said no it has not. Mr. Pappas continued, please speak with them,

and make sure what you are proposing will not be a problem for maintaining and accessing the pond. Ms. McGovern agreed to speak with them.

- iv. Ms. Grandin asked Mr. Pappas if there was some distance from the water which shouldn't be mowed? Mr. Pappas said the Public Works safety standard is a 5 foot buffer to letting it grow naturally in an effort to stop children from playing or getting near the water. Ms. Grandin asked if planting trees which grow in water would help. Mr. Pappas said we still need to get to the water to clean the pond as necessary.
  - v. Ms. Fraser asked about planting 4" trees versus 3". Ms. McGovern said the 4" gives a much larger tree to begin with, the price difference is not that much and because a lot of the trees are being planted in playgrounds, there will be shade sooner rather than later. When it goes out to bid, the numbers may be reasonable and it won't make much difference between the usual 3" and 4". Would the Commission like to address it when the numbers come in? Ms. Fraser asked if we should include 3" in the bid? Ms. McGovern agreed to do so.
  - vi. Ms. Fraser asked about the trees being planted in the ROW, which are DOT Specs which means they have 6-8 foot clear trunk depending on the travel lane, are these that specification or more for parks. Ms. McGovern said that specification is not required.
  - vii. Mr. Flagg asked if there was a staking detail, any issues related to it and maintenance? Ms. McGovern said the over the root ball staking is what is being used, it is unseen and biodegradable and works very well.
2. Public Comment
- i. Mr. Pope said Ms. McGovern would set up the bid for 3" and 4" and then select which to use.
  - ii. Mr. November asked about the use of Redbud and Flowering Dogwood, they struggle somewhat. Ms. McGovern agreed but said in this particular park in which they will be used there is canopy already so they will be understory. It is also damp which is beneficial. Mr. Flagg asked for a report back on how these trees are doing.
3. Vote – Motion made to approve the Project with the caveat to include 3" and 4" caliper trees as well as 1 year and 2 year warranties to be brought back to the Commission for final approval, by Ms. Fraser, seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed. Mr. Hart suggested if the bids come back before the next meeting to email them to the Commission.

## **6. Old Business**

- a) Level 3 Program Document Revisions Workshop is scheduled for Thursday April 28<sup>th</sup> to be chaired by Mr. M. Robinson – Susan Grandin/Fred Pope
  - i. Ms. Grandin asked if there is a quorum at the workshop should we not just vote and be done. Mr. Hart pointed out that workshops typically do not take action. The vote can be taken at the next Tree Commission meeting.
  - ii. Ms. Grandin suggested making it a Special Meeting instead of Workshop. If the people understand that something may get voted on at a Special Meeting and not a Workshop, we should call it that.

Mr. Flagg pointed out that at a workshop, you work through issues and items. If it's a Special Meeting, the target is to vote on something.

- iii. CM Salem pointed out we've been calling it a workshop all along, if we change the name, the optics aren't good.
  - iv. Mr. Hart added, we've been doing this for 3 years, what's 1 more month. No reason to be in a hurry on the last leg.
  - v. Mr. Arpen pointed out that there will be final language to be worked out, it's doubtful there will be document in front of the attendees at the end of the workshop.
  - vi. Mr. Flagg suggested leaving it as a workshop, in person only a vote to be taken at the appropriate Tree Commission meeting.
- b) Update on Proactive/Preventative Tree Maintenance Program – Dalton Smith**
- i. Mr. Smith did reach out to other cities on what their maintenance programs are. 3-4 cities did respond, Savannah, Palm Coast, and Atlanta. All the cities have some sort of preventative maintenance, e.g., all of Savannah falls under preventative cycle pruning.
  - ii. The questions then asked were regarding how they handled it per mile, or per hour. So far it sounds like a combination of both with the cities that responded so far. Most bid out or have a cycle based on the size of the trimming & pruning they do. Savannah had different size categories, their squares, thoroughfares, different roads. It appeared that's how it was set up across the board.
  - iii. Perhaps we could do 2 pilots; a 1 mile pilot to see what can be accomplished and bid that out and see what price we get back. Which road hasn't been determined yet, perhaps use Trout River blvd., but the details need to be ironed out. We would use before and after pictures, something we can do a direct comparison to say this is what we can get for proactive preventative maintenance on this whole mile for X dollars.
  - iv. Mr. Pappas asked if the cities which responded provided the standards they use for their proactive effort. Mr. Smith said, not specifically, which was something to follow-up with. There are ANSI standards which can be used in our bid which we will put together in the next few weeks. Mr. Pappas continued, did the cities that responded give the timeframes they used; were they once every 2 months, once per quarter, once per year.
  - v. Mr. Smith said Savannah prunes every city tree every 6-7 years, which is the highest standard to follow. Since they have been maintaining their trees for years, it's less expensive than just beginning a maintenance plan.
  - vi. Mr. McDaniel said the grid we use for collecting debris from the hurricanes is a good way to track the tree trimming as well. There is a meeting with ETM to discuss giving us a shape file with a proactive tree trim layer within cardiograph. There is a plan we just need work out the details. We would like to see it get in the budget if we can get numbers fast enough. Mr. Pappas pointed out the grids need to be prioritized.
  - vii. Mr. November pointed out Jacksonville has so much variety will 1 mile be an accurate sample. Mr. McDaniel said the plan is to do 2-3 different areas for the pilot to ensure as much variety as we can. Mr. Smith said he wants to do a pilot of a square area which needs trimming anyway, there are a lot of neighborhoods which need trimming to give us number of what that would cost versus a main road like Trout River Blvd. The main part is the tracking, we don't know what to do unless we know what we have. The tracking system we are going to set up will be a huge help in measuring where we've been, what we need to do and how vast the area is. Hopefully we can extrapolate some kind of timeline every 10 years; main roads every 6; some number we need to find a baseline.

- viii. Mr. Arpen pointed out there are some types of tree maintenance required which don't fit into the per mile category, parks, public buildings. Perhaps these also should be included in the pilot as well. Mr. Smith added the biggest thing to nail down is what exactly we mean when we say preventative maintenance before we send anything out for bid.
  - ix. Ms. Fraser summed up the purpose of the pilot projects are to allow us to extrapolate those costs and apply them city-wide to like projects; to get a ball-park. When you start these projects, if you can set up the metrics of what you want to monitor be sure they are applicable city-wide. Because we are going from zero, the initial costs are going to be high but then in 5 years it should be lower and in 10 lower still. Using a 1 year cost to project far in the future, may not be wise, but the more information the better.
- c) Urban Forestry Funding – Dalton Smith**
- i. Change Level 2 legislation to allow Staff to submit Tree Planting Projects, OR
  - ii. Design another Tree Planting program solely for Staff use.
    - 1. Mr. Pappas said what the intent here is for staff to have access to funds to design a project to bring to the Tree Commission for authorization with no need to go through City Council for fund approval.
    - 2. Mr. Smith pointed out that City Staff cannot utilized the funds allocated to Level 2 projects unless they get a sponsor. If there was funding, staff would approach it like a Level 2, and bring it before the Commission for approval. City Staff cannot be a Level 2 Applicant.
    - 3. Mr. McDaniel said he has discussed with Ms. Grandin modifying, via ordinance, the Level 2 Program language to allow staff to apply for Level 2 projects. Staff would do it just like the applicant does now. Mr. Arpen agreed, revising the criteria to allow City Staff to propose projects seems smart.
    - 4. Ms. Grandin pointed out that the Parks Department brought a Level 2 project to the Tree Commission for approval, so this has already been done. If the legislation says "Agency" then the language may not need revision. Ms. Grandin will investigate. CM Salem volunteered to be the sponsor for any Level 2 Projects City Staff would like to propose.

## **7. New Business**

- a) Pittman Letter re: Palm Trees (Attachment D) – Buck Pittman**
- i. Ms. Grandin said this subject is included in the re-write of the Landscape regulations currently in progress. If you would like to get a Councilmember to sponsor just this change, we already have the language. The boots on the palm make the measuring inaccurate, what you said in your letter is correct. We still need to complete the revisions of the landscape regulations.
  - ii. CM Salem would like to meet with Ms. Grandin and Mr. Pittman for an explanation. Mr. Hart suggested after the meeting with CM Salem, the Commission should decide if we want to ask CM Salem to sponsor this change to the Landscape regulations at the next meeting.
- b) JEA Maintenance Plan (Attachments E & F) – Joe Anderson**
- i. Mr. Anderson said if anyone would like more detail, he would be happy to meet with them and share what they have learned.
- c) Introduction of Proposed Plan to Implement Project Priority Duty of the Tree Commission (Attachment G) (Action-May 2022) – Susan Fraser**

- i. Ms. Fraser volunteered to frame procedures to set project priorities for the Commission to sponsor projects. To set parameters for projects the Commission may want to pursue so Staff can work towards fulfilling that.
- ii. Page 2 of Attachment G are the duties of the enabling legislation grouped into objectives. So far, we are doing Objective 6 but not much of any of the others. Rather than try to do all at once, let's start with Objective 1. We are on target but to begin working on Objective 1, page 3 breaks down actions to begin.
- iii. Please review Attachment G and be prepared to discuss it at the May Tree Commission meeting.

**8. Public Comment –**

- a) John Nooney – Compliments to the Public Works crew who cleaned the drainage ditches on Pottsburg creek. I came to the Tree Commission regarding the clear cutting of the 3000 block of Parental Home Road at Pottsburg Creek. Also went to Environmental Protection Board, on the agenda was Anne Coglianese, the City's new Resiliency Officer. Groundwork Jacksonville, Kay Ehaz, has just planted many plants at Hogan's Creek, which floods all the time. It will be flooded out after the next big rain. Coordination with the groups must be done. Mr. Flagg suggested asking the new Resiliency Officer to come and speak with the Tree Commission.
- b) Ms. Fraser pointed out that educated programs are necessary; if there are flood plain management programs looking for trees to suck up water, we need to find those ways to use the funds to get "2 bangs for the buck." Do we make resiliency into a separate, larger thing and also incorporate it into this longer term vision. Mr. Flagg suggested keeping it to an introduction so Ms. Coglianese is aware of the Commission. Mr. Smith added, Mr. Leon had spoken with her right before he left.
- c) Ms. Chism will work on scheduling Ms. Coglianese to meet with the Tree Commission.

**9. Adjournment –** the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 9:30am and will be a Hybrid/Zoom meeting in Ed Ball Building, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Public Works Office, conference room 5.