

Jacksonville Tree Commission  
Wednesday March 23, 2022 – 9:30 AM  
**Approved April 20, 2022**  
Via Zoom Platform & In Person

**Commissioners Present:** Chris Flagg, Chair  
Susan Fraser  
Mike Robinson  
CM Ron Salem  
John Pappas

**Staff:** Cindy Chism

**Public:** Joe Anderson, JEA  
Kathleen McGovern, COJ  
Fred Pope, COJ  
Todd Little, COJ  
Mike Zaffaroni, Liberty Landscape  
John November, Public Trust  
Eric Palmer, Liberty Landscape  
Paul Davis, COJ

**Advisors:** Susan Grandin, OGC  
Dalton Smith, Urban Forestry

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) – Joe Regueiro
  - 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 1,058,065 remaining balance; Remove & Replace balance is 1,106,655; Level 2 balance is 2,173,911.
    - ii. The new City Arborist will start April 4<sup>th</sup>.
5. **Action Items:**
  - a) Approval of Minutes from February 16, 2022 meeting – Chair
    - i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Pappas, seconded by Ms. Fraser, none opposed.
  - b) Proposed Level 2 Project(s)
    - i. Fishweir Park Tree Planting Project (Attachment C)– Todd Little
      1. Presentation – This project was requested by the Parks Department based on a citizen request. Most of the trees will surround a newly built walking trail. Trees will also be planted along Valencia Road.

2. Public Comment

- i. Mr. November asked what size Long Leaf Pine we use and can we find them in the nurseries. Mr. Little replied we use 3" and have had no problem getting them.
- ii. Mr. M. Robinson asked about the warranty. Mr. Little responded it's a 2 year warranty.
- iii. Mr. Flagg asked if 21 trees will have enough of an impact in this area. Mr. Little said during the walk-thru with Parks Department, it was determined they wanted to leave open space for play.

3. Vote – Motion made by Mr. Pappas to approve, seconded by Mr. M. Robinson, none opposed.

ii. District 7 Tree Planting Project (Attachment D) – Kathleen McGovern

1. Presentation – There are 4 parks in District 7 which are undergoing improvements.

2. Public Comment –

- i. Mr. November asked why no trees were added to shade the playground in A. Philip Randolph. Ms. McGovern replied Oaks have actually been added around the playground it just didn't make it onto the plan.
- ii. Mr. Anderson added, Greenscape has planted trees in the past in A. Philip Randolph and on the southside there is concrete underneath the dirt. The park used to be residential and the houses were removed.
- iii. Mr. November asked why so few trees are being planted in Long Branch Park. Ms. McGovern responded, these parks are used for so many different things, to be on the safe side we didn't put the trees in, however, we can take another look and make sure.
- iv. Mr. Flagg added, there are a lot of areas which could use a lot more trees, especially Long Branch. Ms. McGovern pointed out that because the pictures are satellite pictures you are not seeing what is happening now, i.e., the fence line is moving and the whole area is going to be swaled. I could send the drawing of exactly what's going on. Mr. Flagg continued; District 7 is an opportunity we could use to help as much as we can. Perhaps we could be more aggressive in tree planting if possible.

3. Vote – Motion made by Ms. Fraser to approve, seconded by Mr. M. Robinson, none opposed.

**6. Old Business**

**a) Level 3 Program Document Revisions (Attachment E) – Susan Grandin/Fred Pope**

- i. A workshop will be scheduled to discuss these documents in detail, however here are the main points:
- ii. There are 3 documents which changed: the Application, the Instructions, and the Agreement. A lot of the changes were formatting in terms of what exhibits we want and matching the numbers between the Application and the Agreement also explaining the process.
- iii. The Instructions lay out what is required to get the \$2500 stipend and when the Applicant can start tracking time spent. After the Conceptual Plan is completed then the Scope Review meeting with the Agency you are planting the trees with, whether it's Parks or whomever, is held. Once the

Conceptual Plan is approved, then the Applicant will submit a Fee Proposal with the Schematic Plan, which has been generated from the approved Conceptual Plan, with the Application.

- iv. Generating the Fee Proposal and doing the Schematic Plan is part of the contract itself and included in the Agreement. The Agreement requires someone to get 3 bids for the actual construction.
- v. Something to think about is whether to limit the Level 3 Projects to a design fee of \$35,000 and a construction fee of \$300,000. If you don't do that then the CCNA act is triggered. So, if the project is over those amounts, because the project is going to be so big the design and construction will both have to go out to bid so there is a chance the Landscape Architect which drew the Conceptual Plan might not be the Landscape Architect chosen to do the project.
- vi. Ms. Chism will email the draft forms and specifications necessary to the Commissioners for review before the workshop.

## **7. New Business**

### **a) Cost Per Tree Analysis (Attachment F) – Todd Little**

- i. Mr. Flagg pointed out that hopefully a series of presentations to City Council Committees (Neighborhoods and Finance) will be scheduled, so keeping this information updated will be a great illustration on our progress.
- ii. Ms. Fraser said this was a great 30,000 foot look at cost per tree but what Mr. Hart was asking for was the next level down or even the one below that, detail. If this Commission is going to decide projects and possible priorities, what Mr. Hart was looking for was cost based on types of warranty periods, MOT in urban projects, do you expect a high price in urban projects because they all have MOT or maybe they don't have MOT. Attachment F is a great total cost total trees map, but what we want to see is how do we differentiate between these; what kind of trees cost X, what's the survival rate, what MOT costs are we incurring when we pick a 1 year warranty versus a 2 year warranty, does that affect the mortality of the tree or not. When do we install irrigation and what's the cost of that. This report is a good start but let's add more columns and divisions to give us more detail.
- iii. Mr. Smith agreed to try to expand the table or to let the Tree Commission know if we needed to begin collecting that data so we could complete the table next year. However, due to staffing constraints right now, no timeframe can be given for an update.
- iv. Mr. M. Robinson asked if the Level 3 projects were 2 year warranties? Mr. Smith replied, Sulzbacher was a 1 year but the Zoo was 2 year. Mr. M. Robinson pointed out that a roughly \$300 difference between per tree warranty-wise is not a lot especially when you look at the number of hours staff spent per project. Mr. Smith added that employee hours were estimated.
- v. CM Salem asked if it was difficult for staff to track their hours on these projects. It seems it adds a lot of accountability to the process. Mr. Smith replied, no we have not tracked the hours, these numbers are estimates.
- vi. Mr. Pappas suggested developing a matrix of the elements the Commission would like Staff to track. Mr. Smith and Mr. Pappas will discuss the elements, balanced against the effort it takes to track, and present the suggestions to the Commission at the meeting.

- vii. Mr. Flagg added, that the bottom line is to gauge success. We want to show a minimal loss rate of trees and what is working well relative to maintenance and sustainability. Eventually perhaps we could compare success per District. Some Districts are more difficult because of conditions. How do we enhance that to ensure success; weight projects in those Districts to get them done.
- viii. Mr. Pope pointed out that the cost totals are not all inclusive, missing are the fees involved which were significant and the staff costs as well. Mr. Flagg continued, there are multiple layers which can be added; what are we doing that is successful and how do we continue that. Is there a 3 year back check, a 5 year, to see what projects are showing the most success in survivability? Mr. Smith agreed and added Staff could spend all their time updating the spreadsheets and not get any tree planting projects done.
- ix. Ms. Fraser added when we talk about what the fund sponsors in terms of Staff, the Arborist, this is a lot of money, a realistic expectation may be that the fund pays for an administrator that does all the numbers, spreadsheets, etc. Big decisions are being made using a lot of money without a lot of facts. I would be more supportive of administrative staff support vice professional staff who could collect the data and make it available to assist in making these decisions.
- x. Mr. Zaffaroni added, if we know, in advance, what Staff is looking for, we can accumulate that data with no addition cost.
- xi. Ms. Grandin asked when the settlement was agreed upon and an Arborist was the professional position selected to be filled by this, was the idea that the Arborist would be able to do all of this alone or would they need help. Mr. Pappas said, since there had never been anyone funded through it, the start was to dedicate one individual to focus on it. There really wasn't much discussion about staffing, the suit was about putting trees in the ground. Mr. November added with what we know now, it seems like a huge job, more than one person can do. There is movement in the community to be supportive of another position funded by the Tree Fund to work towards planting trees. CM Salem asked who would make that decision, Ms. Grandin replied, City Council. We would have to have support from the plaintiffs, the City Council decides what the Tree Funds are used for.
- xii. Mr. Flagg continued, how is it initiated. Is it an ordinance? CM Salem continued we develop an ordinance and get all the players to say we want this and bring it to the Council. Mr. November added a discussion would need to be held to determine how it would serve the Tree Commission and Ms. Fraser added who is it, a Landscape Architect, a half Arborist, half statistician, there's a lot of stuff to think about. CM Salem continued; we need to have that internal discussion. Mr. Flagg added we need to continue building data and the needs will become identified. Mr. November agreed, Community Engagement is also important, to take some burden off Staff.
- xiii. Mr. Pope pointed out, if you are waiting for statistics to make this decision, this year is going to be at the current level of projects, and yet we need, as soon as possible, to increase the number of projects coming out. So, we really need to address this soon.
- xiv. Ms. Fraser reminded the Commission that there was a conversation about having a facilitated discussion about how the Commission can take a greater role in prioritizing and identifying projects, that isn't on the calendar yet due to the staff changes, is that something we want to schedule; just to give us a target to push for. Mr. Flagg said, the staff changes set us back so we

need to regroup; Ms. Grandin, the Urban Forest Manager and I were to meet about the facilitated process and then the Commission would have the facilitated process. Mr. November added it is possible the non-profits would contribute if needed as there isn't budget for that. Ms. Fraser volunteered to take Mr. Flagg's place in this discussion. A meeting will be scheduled with Ms. Grandin and Ms. Fraser.

**b) Expanded City-Wide Tree Maintenance Calculations (Attachment G) – John November**

- i. Mr. Flagg commented we need to start with what we are planting now and ensure it is sustained and successful. Mr. Smith added this presentation is another 30,000 foot view, there is a lot more to this than what is listed here. Mr. November replied but money would help, Mr. Smith agreed and added that a lot more planning required by Staff, look at mileage, i.e., Pritchard Rd vs. Trout River, there are different canopy levels per road, not every road needs trimming on the same schedule.
- ii. Ms. Fraser asked do we think it's important, do we think more money is needed to do a better job and then the discussion becomes how do we do the better job. The big question is do we think maintenance is important, it's part of the focus of the Trust Fund and we should do more than maintain the trees we are planting with the fund. If the answer is yes, then the discussion gets into harder numbers and bigger decisions. Mr. Smith added, currently we are reactive, there is no scheduled pruning for any roads. Perhaps we could take steps for some pilot roads that need attention to get on a cycle, with another bid, per mile, which is more competitive, but we are in the beginning stages of something proactive. Mr. Flagg asked how we can model ourselves after Cities that are already using a proactive approach to pruning trees.
- iii. Mr. M. Robinson asked about Lewis Tree's \$6500 per mile, which covers both sides of the road and the median, referenced in Attachment G. Mr. November replied that number was ballpark. Mr. M. Robinson then asked what JEA's price per mile for trimming. Mr. Joe Anderson replied, JEA does 1200 miles per year trimming trees at about 5 million dollars. JEA is proactive with a 2.5-year trim cycle. It is a model which helps albeit inadvertently.
- iv. Mr. Anderson continued, a study by University of Florida storm response found that trees trimmed by utilities enhances the resiliency primarily because we are attacking the hazards within a tree. To have a sustainable and resilient tree canopy you must maximize the benefits and minimize the risk. The last 2 weeks I have been on call and every single vegetative related outage was not caused by wind on a healthy tree. It was always a dead, declining tree or defective part of the tree which could have been trimmed. They were not all on the City right-of-way, a lot were on private property which were not maintained. Trees are part of the infrastructure, it's like a vehicle, you can't just have it and not maintain it. To build the public trust you must attack their fear, regarding the tree canopy. That fear has to do with the liability and risk of those trees, falling on their cars or potentially harming an individual. The utility can be of great service here, since there is already a model, there is also the Duval County Cooperative Extension, Urban Forester Larry Figart who is connected with research at the University of Florida and there is the Forest Service which also has a dedicated Urban Forester.
- v. Mr. November suggested the possibility of a grant.

- vi. CM Salem pointed out that the budget process for next year is going on now. If something could be put together sooner rather than later. Mr. Pappas added there needs to be more detailed information, what exactly is being done to the trees. When Public Works does the work we focus on encroachment, keeping it off the sidewalk, intersections, are both sides of the tree or all around the tree involved is that the same price. What we need to show is the benefits the money will provide, clearly and well defined.
- vii. Mr. November asked if there wasn't something to be said for an adaptive iterative process. This would be the first year of doing proactive maintenance. Mr. Pappas suggested a pilot type of program is something to consider but what we are asking and the results achieved must be very well documented. Ms. Fraser added perhaps examples of Cities which have adopted these types of programs could be contacted, it may take 10 years to flesh out the benefits.
- viii. Mr. Flagg asked how we get this process started. Mr. Pappas said we must first define what we are asking for and then why will it benefit the City. Mr. Flagg added it's got to start in a strategic planning mode, what are the needs, where do we need put attention towards, I'm not sure that we have that objective highlighted per year because Staff is just scrambling to do their job. Do we determine a strategic plan for the year, maintenance is huge and costs money to get started. Mr. Pappas suggested getting research from other Cities which have done this to determine what they are paying per mile and what they get for it. What exactly is it they are doing, obviously if they've been doing it for years, it's less expensive than starting from zero. That may be the best way to start. Mr. Smith agreed, he was planning on reaching out to other Cities, it's a good starting point.
- ix. Mr. November pointed out that the budget is being defined for next year, now, so time is an issue. Perhaps the report doesn't need to be exhaustive, some key data points may be enough if they are compelling. Ms. Fraser suggested Staff identify the kind of information to look for and the Commissioners could help with the research. That may be the quickest way to get the info. Mr. Flagg continued, the reports presented every month are great but if they were embellished or more detailed it would be more beneficial.
- x. Staff will identify other City's as examples of a maintenance plan and also review what the definition of maintain/trim in the City's Continuous Maintenance Contract with Lewis Tree. Mr. November asked what would be the latest to have this information. Mr. Pappas said we are in budget now and goes to MBRC in June. CM Salem pointed out it may be too late in this cycle. Mr. Flagg added, we don't know how much to ask for, the what and the why have not been established. How aggressive is the ask? CM Salem said it would be better to have good data you can back up and be comfortable with than rush something through and it's shot down then the second ask is harder. Mr. Pappas added one of the components of this proposal is increasing the maintenance percentage so no matter what the budget is if this comes in after the budget comes through, if the increase in percentage goes up, the increase in contribution from the tree fund would take place at that time. That can happen after the budget and come later and then next year the budget increase could be addressed from general fund, which would also be reflected in the higher percentage. There's a lot that goes into the preparation of the budgets and I'm not sure how quickly this can all be vetted and detailed enough to understand to move forward.

- xi. Ms. Grandin asked Mr. November if the increased percentage was 40% what is the suggested increase from the general fund be. Mr. November replied \$300,000. Mr. Pappas added, without knowing what those numbers reflect, it's premature to look at them. Ms. Grandin is trying to determine the wording of the possible ordinance to increase the percentage. Mr. November suggested that be done after the general fund budget was increased. Ms. Grandin pointed out if the community isn't going to go along with the increased percentage unless the general fund budget is increased e.g., "so long as the general fund increases this much this can happen..." Mr. November continued as this is such a priority for a lot of community groups we may be able to help and maybe by May, have something a little more defined. This is so important for our canopy, maybe we don't do the full amount and make a pilot program to investigate what this will look like for the following year.
- xii. Mr. Pope pointed out the issue of adding a staff member and increasing the percentage could be done by ordinance and doesn't have anything to do with the budget. That's where the priority should be. Reasons need to be determined on why these things are required. Mr. Smith will reach out to Cities which have similar canopy, etc. Mr. Pappas will meet with the Mr. Smith and his team to help determine how best to move forward.
- xiii. Ms. Fraser asked if Mr. Anderson will give a presentation on what JEA's maintenance program consists of and how they prioritize next month.

**8. Public Comment –**

- a) Mr. M. Robinson asked who does the landscape maintenance of the Federal Courthouse. Mr. Pappas responded not the City. Mr. M. Robinson continued the Crepe Myrtles were just butchered.

**9. Adjournment –** the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20th, 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.