

Jacksonville Tree Commission
Wednesday November 17, 2021 – 9:30 AM
Approved December 15, 2021
Via Zoom Platform & In Person

**Commissioners
Present:**

Chris Flagg, Chair
CM Ron Salem
John Pappas
Rhodes Robinson
Susan Fraser

Staff: Cindy Chism

Public: Joe Anderson, JEA
Kelly O’Leary, Liberty Landscape
Fred Pope, COJ
Todd Little, COJ
Mike Zaffaroni, Liberty Landscape
John November, Public Trust
Lisa Grubba, Greenscape
Dalton Smith, COJ
Jeff Lucovsky, COJ
Dave McDaniel, COJ
Sean Jackson, Davey Tree

Advisors:

Susan Grandin, OGC
Joe Regueiro, Finance

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)
 - i. Due to 1Cloud and end of fiscal year budget, the fund status reports cannot be updated. It is hoped that the system will be accessible in time to report at the next meeting.
 - 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. Due to the end of year accounting process, fund status will be available next meeting.
5. **Action Items:**
 - a) Approval of Minutes from October 20, 2021 meeting – Chair
 - i. Motion made by Mr. John Pappas, seconded by Mr. Rhodes Robinson, none opposed.
6. **Old Business**
 - a) Status of Level 3 Program Document Revisions (Attachments C and F)– Susan Fraser/Fred Pope
 - i. This is continued from the previous meeting. The decision point which needs to be determined is when the Applicant is eligible for reimbursement.

1. Ms. Grandin introduced the revised form: the first meeting(s) an Applicant has with Staff is a very important part of the Level 3 Process whether the project is simple or complex. It may take one meeting or more. Ms. Fraser volunteered to revise Attachment F to what is now Attachment C. Ms. Fraser revised the terminology and the differing levels within the phase.
 - a. Mr. R. Robinson suggested in the first paragraph a phone number and contact should be listed. In the second paragraph, "To obtain approval *the Applicant must be prepared to provide the following minimal site data*. The Staff may require additional information for clarity." In 3. include in the parenthetical statement "ground photos may be helpful." In 6. add "Intended species to use."
 - b. Ms. Fraser said the intent of this document was to clarify the requirements for the Application submission.
 - c. Ms. McGovern added the consensus from Staff was this document was very well done. Staff would like to pull information from Attachment C to update Attachment F.
 - d. Mr. November clarified there are 2 meetings which happen before the Application gets prepared by the non-profit organization; the Project Scope Review meeting which is supposed to be very early in the process before too much time and money has been invested by the non-profit. Then the Conceptual meeting which happens. To be fair to the non-profits, don't require too much detail that takes time to develop such as easements and overhead powerlines which require professional assistance. The clock should not start running until the first Project Scope review meeting then the non-profit should be allowed to start the clock on both their time and the consultants time. The possibility of abuse is negligible because if money is spent unreasonably, there is no guarantee for reimbursement because the project has not been approved by the Tree Commission. The non-profit should not be penalized from rolling up their sleeves and developing a project.
 - e. Ms. Fraser pointed out that what's the document says. The contract work begins once the scope is approved. It's getting to that point, scope approval. Ms. McGovern added the Staff will be submitting a written response to the non-profit after that which will let them know whether they are heading in the right direction or not.
 - f. Mr. November asked what if the initial review from Staff is negative, but the non-profit wants to go forward with the project, would there be no reimbursement for time after that? There are 5 project scope meetings, if the non-profit is getting reimbursed for preparing for those meetings, that's fine. Mr. Pope added this was set up like all City projects dealing with consultants, after the project scope review meeting, the non-profit would prepare a price proposal which would include the development of conceptual plan and final plan. Staff would then look at the price proposal and determine if it's reasonable. If it was not reasonable then it would not be recommended to proceed. As for appealing a Staff decision, the non-profit would need to come before the Commission and ask for their recommendation.
 - g. Ms. Fraser continued, the non-profit is almost a grant applicant and if the non-profit wants to spend money pursuing a grant approval that's the non-profit's business. At some point, if the feed back is this will not be approved, it must stop.

- h. Mr. November suggested the price proposal not be required until the Conceptual meeting. Until the Concept has been finalized, there's no way to know. Mr. Pope replied, that's what it says, after the Project Scope meeting. Mr. November added but the time spent generating the price proposal should be reimbursed. Once positive feedback from Staff has been received.
- i. Ms. McGovern and Staff will forward suggested revisions to Ms. Grandin to update the document. Mr. Pope added also included will be a timeline for each phase.

7. New Business

a) Tree Commission Tenure (Attachment D)

- i. Ms. Grandin said appointed Commissioners serve until replaced. Ms. Chism will update the spreadsheet with information from the Ordinance(s).

b) Liberty Landscape Progress Report (Attachment E) – Mike Zaffaroni, Liberty Landscape

c) Report on City Council Presentation – Chris Flagg

- i. Thank you to all the Staff who contributed to the presentation, Todd Little, Dalton Smith, Richard Leon, Kathleen McGovern. Thanks also goes to the Commissioners for volunteering their time and CM Salem for his continued support. Overall, both Committees were appreciated of what the Commission is doing. Going forward we need to continue to educate our City Council and our Committees on the importance of the canopy and what it can do for our community on multiple levels.
- ii. CM Carlucci asked about education opportunities, perhaps on Arbor Day, or in the elementary schools? CM Pittman asked about a strategic plan for districts. Perhaps a meeting could be arranged with the district representative, Mr. Flagg and Ms. Grandin to be more proactive in proposing projects. Get the Council members more involved, early in the process.
- iii. CM Salem suggested doing a presentation to Committees once per year. Meeting with the Council members to say we are here to help you with your district, perhaps a meeting early in their tenure could be a future goal, with a few new Council members assigned to each Commissioner.
- iv. Mr. Pappas added there are Council members which have corridors in their district that are significant and sitting down with them with a general proposal on what could be done with the Tree Commission funds is a wonderful plan. Ms. McGovern agreed it is a great idea.
- v. CM Gaffney and CM Pittman asked about maintenance especially of the interstate on and off ramps. Mr. Pappas and Mr. McDaniel said they belonged to FDOT and the way FDOT handled their maintenance contracts was on a grading scale. Public Works does not want to assume the responsibility for those ramps. Mr. Pappas also told the Council members the Mowing & Landscape Division receives 25% of whatever the overall tree maintenance budget is, from the Tree Fund.
- vi. Ms. Grandin added that the larger the overall tree maintenance budget is, the larger the 25% will be. However, we want to be careful we don't end up having to defend the mitigation ordinance from spending 50% of the tree fund monies on maintenance. The best way to increase the maintenance budget, then increase the overall budget and the amount of the 25% will go up accordingly. John November commented the 25% was arbitrary. When the figure was determined in 2000 when the

Charter Amendment was passed, the situation was a complete unknown. Now it is apparent more money for maintenance would serve the canopy especially if it is contingent on the City raising the overall maintenance budget.

- vii. Mr. McDaniel said the 25% works out to be approximately \$365,000. The Ordinance says the funds are to be used for tree planting and maintenance. The canopy is old, there are water oaks which are 70+ years old, which we are always having to remove. CM Salem added Mr. Pappas must sell the administration on increasing the overall maintenance budget. However, taking care of the tree canopy, planting trees and maintaining those trees but that needs to be separated from the edging and mowing. Mr. McDaniel responded the funds are separated now. Ms. Grandin added, it requires an ordinance to increase the percentage. CM Salem volunteered to introduce the Ordinance as long as the Tree Commission determined the percentage and approve it.
 - viii. Mr. November added that the overall budget should be increased as well. Especially for those who fought so hard to get the 25% and may be worried about increasing the percentage. Ms. Grandin added the 25% is referenced in the Trust Fund which is section 111.760. Perhaps the wording should be greater than 25% so long as it's not more than X percentage of the overall annual budget of the Tree Fund, a maximum upset figure. CM Salem added it would be great if the number could gradually increase in relationship to the Mitigation fund so this process will only have to be done once. Ms. Grandin will develop some language to bring to the next meeting for further discussion.
 - ix. Mr. Joe Anderson suggested work force development challenges and contract costs for tree maintenance are going to increase, it is highly recommended to prepare for both of these.
- a) Shade Shortage (Attachment G) – Rhodes Robinson
- i. There is a direct relationship between the tree canopy and the economic status of a community and vice versa. Therefore, if we plant more trees, we will be raising the quality of life in communities. As much as we can direct funds to the communities without trees, the better the City will be. Ms. Grandin pointed out part of the duties of the Tree Commission included a priority list. Perhaps the priority project list isn't a specific project but something this, be at the beginning, suggesting projects.

8. Public Comment –

- a) Ms. Grandin told the Commission that Lori Boyer, head of DIA, asked her about getting more trees downtown. One of the largest challenges is underground utilities. Structural soil has been tossed around like a cure all but is it really. Is there anyone who could investigate how more trees could be planted downtown, which are the right trees and what would be the circumstances. Also downtown, the requirement in the overlay for downtown there is a volumetric requirement instead of just 4' x 4' a certain amount of cubic feet of soil is required. Mike Zaffaroni pointed out Ed Gilman lives in his community and though he recently retired, he remains active in the tree planting community. Perhaps he could be consulted or even be a guest speaker for the Commission. Mr. Zaffaroni will provide contact information to Ms. McGovern.

9. Adjournment – the next meeting is Wednesday December 15th and will be a Hybrid/Zoom meeting in Ed Ball Building, 10th floor, Public Works Office, conference room 5,