

Jacksonville Tree Commission
Thursday February 25, 2021 – 9:00 AM
Approved March 17, 2021
Via Zoom Platform & In Person

Commissioners Present:

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

Staff: Cindy Chism

Public: Todd Little, COJ
Joe Anderson, JEA
Fred Pope, COJ
Jill Enz, COJ
Jeff Lucovsky, COJ
Dave McDaniel, COJ
John November, Public Trust
Mike Zaffroni, Liberty Landscape
Nichole Evans, COJ
Daniel Ashworth, Ponde & Co.
Kay Ehas, Groundworks
Bruce Williams, Zoo
Chris Dailey, Zoo

Advisors:

Susan Grandin, OGC
Richard Leon, Urban Forester Manager
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.
 - 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) – Joel Provenza
 - b) Status of Pending Tree Projects (Attachment B) – Kathleen McGovern
 - c) Fund Status of 630-CITY, Remove & Replace and Level 2 Programs– Richard Leon
 - i. 630-City has \$630,000 unencumbered to date. The Level 2 Program just received the appropriation for \$2 million which brings the total for the program to \$2.3 million with \$674,000 already encumbered for projects leaving \$1.7 million. However there are \$900,000 in pending projects which are still in development. The Remove side of Remove & Replace program has \$106,000 remaining. The replace side has \$367,000, which is always behind the removal side. This is a good time to replenish the funds for this program as we discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Grandin asked how long the current balance will last for the Remove & Replace program. Mr. Leon replied we should get started on the legislation especially with Spring and Summer coming. Ms. Grandin asked if \$2 million would last a year. Mr. Leon replied he believes so. Mr. Hart made a motion for legislation for \$2 million be appropriated from the Tree Funds for the Remove & Replace program, seconded by Mr. Pappas, none opposed.

5. Action Items:

a) Approval of Minutes from January 27th, 2021 meeting – Chair

- i. Motion made by Mr. M. Robinson, seconded by Mr. R. Robinson, none opposed.

b) Proposed Level 2 Project(s) – Kathleen McGovern

i. Emerald Trail; Model Mile Tree Planting Project

1. Presentation – Ms. McGovern reminded the Tree Commission this project is one phase of the Model Mile project which is a very large project linking together schools, colleges and parks in the area. This phase is a little over 1 mile and designated Emerald Trail between the trail and the street and will include some medians and bio-swales. This will connect Brooklyn to LaVilla and the Railyard districts.
 - i. Mr. Pappas asked if the plantings occur after the project is constructed or be incorporated into the actual construction. Ms. Ehaz said her understanding is the City's tree contractor would come in after the construction and do the plantings and the irrigation. Ms. McGovern agreed that is the plan.
 - ii. There are 120 trees listed and does not include the trees being planted for mitigation purposes. There are more palms than the 25% allowed but was waived because they are adding additional 62 shade trees which brings the number to 32% still above the allowed percentage. Ms. Grandin pointed out those 62 trees are actually mitigation trees and recommends the Commissioners not use the number to offset the palm trees. Ms. McGovern replied if that is the case then the percentage of palm trees would be 47%.
 - iii. Jill Enz added that the mitigation trees will be planted in park space or other parts of the trail layout. From a palm tree standpoint, there are several added on part of Church Street under the 95 overpass to try to green-up parts of the area which are very confined. There are extensive palms between the trail and the right-of-way and near the FDOT 95 location and other areas where there are pavement constraints and underground infrastructure.
 - iv. Mr. Pappas clarified the mitigation trees are not on this project. Ms. McGovern agreed.
 - v. Mr. M. Robinson asked about the \$140,000 difference in irrigation costs. Ms. McGovern replied the first amount included meters. Is there anything which defines what percentage of the total amount of the project for irrigation? Ms. Grandin replied no it is up to staff and the Tree Commission to decide if the amount is appropriate. Ms. McGovern replied the 2nd proposal which was distributed contained a breakdown of the irrigation plan with the meters shown separately, this illustrates the difference. Ms. Grandin clarified the irrigation plan is \$143,000, the meters are \$30,00 and the boring & sleeving are \$31,000 equaling approximately \$214000. Ms. McGovern agreed.
 - vi. Ms. Fraser asked if the irrigation quote only for the trees listed on the planting plan submitted. Ms. McGovern agreed that was true. Mr. Flagg added that for a project of this level and complexity the drawings submitted were very well done and what we should expect going forward. Ms. Fraser asked if Live Oaks were the best choice to be planted on an urban street between the trail and the curb, which are less than 10 ft in width. Mr.

Ashworth responded those areas which are constrained to 10 ft, a root barrier will be provided to encourage root growth downward. In addition they are planted in planting beds and won't be mowed. Mr. Pappas added that with the root barrier, we've had very good luck.

- vii. Mr. Hart asked if there was a long term maintenance plan in place? Ms. Ehaz responded that once the trail is constructed it will be classified as a park. The idea is the Parks Dept. and Groundworks Jax would jointly provide maintenance. Groundworks is currently developing a program called Emerald Trail Storage Program to hire and train people which live in the neighborhoods the trail will go through to help with trail and creek maintenance and plant green infrastructure throughout the 2 watersheds. These folks will be trained to do the more intricate work than the City could do. Mr. Pappas added that Public Works Mowing & Landscape Maintenance Division will work with Parks & Rec Dept. as always to ensure that plan is in place and that the funding is in place during the annual budget. Beyond the 2 year warranty period it would then be incorporated into the annual budget with the established maintenance criteria.
- viii. Mr. McDaniel asked if the maintenance plan being discussed referred to maintaining the grounds where the trail is or maintaining the new trees we are planting. Mr. Flagg responded yes to both. Mr. McDaniel asked if we were fertilizing, keeping free from pests and fungus, etc. The City maintains Baldwin Trail which involves mowing the grass and if a tree falls on the trail it is removed, not fertilization of trees planted after the warranty expired. CM Salem added that it was very important to have a written agreement so Groundworks knows what they are to do on a monthly/weekly basis, what the City is going to do on a monthly/weekly basis so there is no confusion. Mr. McDaniel agreed and pointed out there is currently an agreement between the City and San Marco Preservation and San March Merchants Association which delineates exactly what the City's responsibilities are and what the other 2 entities responsibilities are. This may be a good base to model the agreement on.
- ix. Mr. Pope suggested we make sure there is a detailed description of what the maintenance entails during the 2 year warranty period. Mr. Ashworth replied there is a maintenance specification in the plans in the general notes as well as the landscape specification. In addition, the extensive specification worked out by the City is included in the Bid package. Mr. Pope also asked if the irrigation shouldn't be pro-rated between the tree irrigation and other irrigation. If all the beds are being irrigated, the Tree Fund can only pay for irrigation of trees, so should the total cost of the irrigation be prorated to cover only what is being used to irrigate the trees? For instance, the meters are being shared by trees and shrubs. Ms. Grandin that is a legal issue but we cannot spend tree fund money on things not directly related to a tree we planted. Ms. McGovern replied it has been made clear the irrigation is only meant for each specific tree on the plan. There are the main lines but the irrigation listed on the invoice is specific to the trees. Mr. Ashworth continued, all the trees are watered by bubblers and the remainder is drip irrigation. The expense derives from installing the infrastructure. Ms. Fraser asked about irrigation maintenance. Ms. Enz replied the irrigation maintenance will be handled by Park irrigation staff or contractors.

2. Public Comment –
 3. Vote – Motion to approve the Emerald Trail Planting Plan with the irrigation specific to the trees by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. R. Robinson, none opposed. Mr. Hart made a motion for the requirement of a maintenance plan/agreement within 12 months from the approval of the project, seconded by Mr. R. Robinson, none opposed.
- c) Blue Cypress Park Restoration Tree Planting Project – Deferred to March**
- i. Presentation
 - ii. Public Comment
 - iii. Vote
- d) Proposed Level 3 Project – Chris Dailey, Jacksonville Zoo**
- i. Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens – Visitor Parking Lot Tree Planting Project
 1. Presentation – This is a 15 acre visitor parking lot which will have 246 trees. This is phase 1 of the new rebuilding of the Zoo and Gardens to accommodate increased visitation. The work and maintenance would be done by the permanent Zoo staff of 14 horticulturists.
 - i. Mr. Flagg said the digital copy of the planting plan was a very poor scan. Ms. Grandin pointed out because the scan was so poor and the Commission does not have a complete Application package to hand the vote should be postponed; it would set a bad precedent. It is recommended either a special meeting be held to vote or wait until the next scheduled Tree Commission meeting.
 - ii. Mr. M. Robinson pointed out on the Application item 3.b total amount requested is \$100,000 but the total cost of the project is \$209,000. Where is the difference? Mr. Dailey responded it should read \$209,000; we will get this corrected.
 - iii. Mr. Flagg remarked on the outstanding efficiency of the project due to using in-house staff for planting and maintenance.
 - iv. A vote was taken, which was unanimous, to postpone voting of on this project to allow the Commissioners time to review a better copy of the plan drawings. A special meeting will be scheduled for next week to vote on this project.
 2. Public Comment - None
 3. Vote – Deferred. A special meeting will be scheduled.

6. Old Business

- a) Report to Commission on Level 3 Workshop – Susan Grandin
 - i. This report was deferred to March due to time constraints. However the Commission would like another workshop be scheduled.

7. New Business

- a) None

8. Public Comment –

a) Joe Anderson, JEA – Mike Robinson was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Florida Urban Forestry Council. Serving on the Tree Commission was one of the contributing factors for this award.

9. Adjournment – the next meeting is Wednesday, March 17th and will be a Hybrid Zoom meeting in Ed Ball Building, 10th floor, Public Works Office, conference room 5,