

Nature Centers Commission

Charles Pedersen, Chair

PO Box 490, Station 30 Gainesville, FL
32627

December 16, 2015

Re: December 17th City Commission Agenda Item Regarding Greenspace Acquisition Fund

Dear Gainesville City Commissioners,

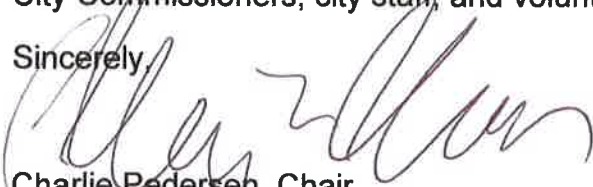
Greenspace acquisition is a vital component for future park planning in Gainesville. Purchasing conservation land and active park sites is complex and can be expensive. The Nature Centers Commission (NCC) is eager to take any steps helpful to the City Commission to build confidence in this program.

For instance, NCC works with staff to review their priority list of potential conservation land purchases. Also, in 2011 NCC worked with staff to develop the Disposition of Conservation Lands Policy. When the "Review of Greenspace Acquisition Fund" item comes up in the December 17, 2015 City Commission meeting, please remember NCC and our willingness to address these issues.

During the discussion on this topic at the last NCC meeting, the board agreed that this frugal land acquisition program, working with willing sellers, has been a great success. Of course conservation land acquisition is ongoing, most recently using Wild Spaces money to purchase such gems as the upland property that expanded Palm Point Nature Park from 16 acres to 169 acres. In the past, having a dedicated trust fund has been quite helpful when providing a match for grant money or expediting the sale when a willing seller becomes available for property on the priority list. Either of these mechanisms may be instrumental to buy current priorities, such as Glen Springs. Looking to the future, any acquisition projects on the 2020 Master Plan would also be helped by having an acquisition trust fund.

The City of Gainesville has established an amazing network of nature parks. Thanks to all the City Commissioners, city staff, and volunteers who have worked on these over the years!

Sincerely,



Charlie Pedersen, Chair
Nature Centers Commission