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Committee
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PROPOSAL
for designation of Gainesville, Florida,
as the first Butterfly City

Submitted for a Local Ad Hoc Committee
Participating in a Butterfly Learning Project

Purpose

This Ad Hoc Committee seeks to draw national attention to an outstanding, accessible Butterfly Rainforest at the Cultural Plaza in the City of Gainesville, Florida. The attraction in turn has the potential to position the City as a learning center for local residents and tourists.

The symbiotic relationship can serve to 1) promote civic pride; 2) foster community spirit; 3) encourage outdoor activity; 4) maximize awareness of our surroundings, 5) generate new links between public and private enterprise; 6) emphasize art-nature connections; 7) foster research into safer pesticides; and 8) create a new public revenue source.

The timing is especially appropriate in light of the current exploration about "Who's your city?" described by City Commissioner Jeanna Mastrocicasa, in the Gainesville Sun, on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008. Folks will be talking in the coming months about why we chose to live and work here in the 21st Century. Local governance is part of that formula. Designation of our community as Butterfly City, indeed the first Butterfly City, will speak well of an imaginative Gainesville government.

These suggestions are offered by the Committee after 1) extensive internet and print research, 2) discussions and e-mail exchanges between and among a butterfly collection curator, a global marketing consultant, a freelance writer, a leading area photographer, a graphic designer, a librarian, a foundation program officer, educators who have been affiliated with University of Florida School of Education, as well as school administrators and teachers at the charter K-5 Caring & Sharing Learning School and 3) a trial run at the School to foster visual thinking.

Comparison With Tree Cities

Gainesville's consciousness of its own surroundings is evident in its early enrollment in the Tree City movement. Gainesville applied for and was admitted to the Tree City list in 1982. By 1991, Gainesville already had earned an award for its continuous participation for 10 years. Today there are thousands of "Tree Cities" across the nation, 135 in Florida.

The path taken for a Tree City designation is useful to understand what is being proposed for the first Butterfly City here. Tree City USA began as a 1976 Bicentennial program through the National Arbor Day Foundation and was co-sponsored by the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. The National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors are now co-sponsors as well.

Tree Cities have gained specific benefits from the designation. The following are noted among those perks:

1. Encouragement of tree care and planting programs.
2. Citizen involvement in planting and care of trees.
3. Assurance of leadership in local tree maintenance.
4. Adequate funding for tree care programs.
5. Enhancement of livable communities.
6. Attraction for new businesses.
7. Opportunities for public education about tree care.
8. Introduction of trees and their importance, to children.
9. Scoring of points in grant application processes.
10. Direct involvement of local officials in tree conservation.

Gainesville and other Tree Cities have to meet certain standards in order to maintain the designation. The following steps must be taken:

1. A forester, city department, or tree board must be designated by ordinance to be responsible for community tree care.
2. A community must have a tree care ordinance in effect.
3. The community must have an active urban forestry program in place and supported by an annual budget.
4. The city must proclaim and observe Arbor Day.

Gainesville got to be a Tree City by taking the following steps:

1. Creation of an Ad Hoc Committee.
2. Development of a Tree Ordinance.
 - a. A tree board or department wrote and implemented an annual community forestry work plan.
 - b. Public policies were identified for planting, maintenance and removal.
 - c. News articles were written and talks were given to local clubs and organizations about benefits of, and issues raised, by the designation.

Gainesville renews its designation each year. Florida has a state forester responsible for vouching for the City's ongoing efforts.

Gainesville, as the Pioneering Butterfly City

The Ad Hoc Committee has been in place and growing since 2007. The original intent was to maximize use of the Butterfly Forest, for children who rarely got the opportunity to be aware of an attraction they could relate to their every day lives. The Caring and Sharing Learning School agreed to participate. Articles were written and presentations made to Leadership Gainesville and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. The response of the children and families to the Butterfly Forest was over the top when their art work was presented to the public in June.

The children themselves engendered respect at the outset from staff at the Butterfly Rainforest in the Florida Museum of Natural History's McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity. They arrived with a purpose, to take photos for the Butterfly Learning Project. They were taught how to transform the photos taken with single use cameras, into symmetrical designs.

Their creations suggested expansion of the project in other directions, e.g., into stimulation of adults as well as children to learn more about the immediate natural environment around them. Input already has resulted in a fresh approach to apply visual learning techniques to aid literacy. At an Ad Hoc Committee meeting last month, suggestion was made to promote awareness of safer pesticides for mosquito control.

Andrei Sourakov, collection coordinator for the McGuire Center, informed the Committee that pesticides generally used for mosquito control were killing off butterflies. In South Florida, especially in the Keys, several varieties of butterflies were threatened with extinction, before a massive public education campaign persuaded authorities there to mandate use of pesticides which are safer for butterflies. Use of safer pesticides likely could lead to a greater proliferation of butterfly gardens. This issue should be front and center for the First Butterfly City.

All the Right Components

As home to the McGuire Center and the Butterfly Rainforest, Gainesville is an ideal community to raise consciousness about such issues. There are thousands of Tree Cities. No Butterfly City yet exists. The butterfly is an ideal symbol to heighten awareness of our fragile environment. Consequently, Gainesville is asked to approve an Ordinance designating this community as the first Butterfly City. Criteria should be developed to justify the designation, and set standards for other cities.

Again, following the Tree City format, the Butterfly Ordinance should identify a committee of volunteers who will meet with specified frequency to develop an annual work plan. Components of the work plan would be subject to approval by the City Commissioners and the Mayor.

Once Gainesville is established as the First Butterfly City, others likely would want to follow suit. Already in Florida, Coconut Creek, in South Florida, has publicized itself as a "butterfly capital." Selma, AL, was identified as a "butterfly capital" in that state.

Several states including Florida have selected specific butterflies as symbols. A half-dozen chose the Monarch. In 1996, the Florida State Senate voted 39-0 to have the Zebra Longwing as Florida's state insect. On April 26, 1996, then Gov. Lawton Chiles, signed that Bill into law.

In 1990, the Monarch Butterfly was proposed as a national symbol, in a bill introduced in the U.S. Congress. The unsuccessful attempt produced a lively exchange in the New York Times.

On June 11, 1990, University of Florida Zoology Professor Lincoln Brower eloquently countered a New York Times editorial page view that the Monarch butterfly was a frivolous creature. He described an insect able to cover thousands of miles with the "most fantastic navigation system and migration behavior of any animal on earth." Dr. Brower concluded that the Monarch butterfly should give us an appreciation of biological values. As local symbols of a fresh look at our surroundings, the Monarch and other butterflies can have a far reaching effect, if an effort is made to raise consciousness, in ways being proposed here.

A Kinder and Gentler Nation

But who will perform the monitoring function of the sponsors of Tree Cities? There are several possibilities. The most likely is the North American Butterfly Association ("NABA"). NABA, a not-for-profit corporation, was formed in 1992.

NABA describes its purposes as the fostering of public enjoyment and conservation of butterflies. NABA focuses on the joys of non-consumptive, recreational butterflying including listing, gardening, observation, photography, rearing and conservation. The organization is headquartered in New Jersey. NABA has held national events periodically, most recently, a biennial event in June.

NABA has chapters in several states in the United States, including Florida. In this State, chapters appear to have been organized on a regional or county basis. The local NABA chapter hosted the organization's first statewide meeting in Gainesville last year. Several prominent NABA members including Alana Edwards from South Florida, were featured presenters at the third annual Butterfly Fest last month in the Cultural Plaza last month.

Should NABA decline the monitoring role, other possibilities could be considered to serve as a monitoring organization, including the McGuire Center itself and the Smithsonian Horticulture Services Division. States including Florida where Butterfly City designations are sought could take on that role.

The Florida Federation of Garden Clubs already certifies Butterfly Sanctuaries. The organization has proposed a Butterfly Day. As the first Butterfly City, Gainesville could proclaim Butterfly Days for the October Butterfly Fest weekend sponsored by the Florida Museum of Natural History. The annual Butterfly Fest is already scheduled for next year.

Consider the Possibilities

As a Butterfly City, Gainesville could reach out to Sister Cities with common interests, including Morelos in Mexico. That university city is a gateway to mountains where millions of Monarchs spend winter seasons.

Mary Risner, outreach coordinator for the University of Florida Center of Latin American Studies, has already been making resources available to the Caring and Sharing Learning School. Children at that school and elsewhere could share bilingual "pen pal" news about butterflies with pupils near butterfly farms throughout Latin America.

Children in the Alachua County School system could share news about the butterfly gardens being grown at their schools in newsletters. Information could also be exchanged about connections between the arts, and the teaching of core subjects. Awareness of such links could avoid the dramatic cutback in public school arts and music programs this year.

Caring and Sharing Learning School children were shown such links through the Butterfly Learning Project. They each were assisted to use a single film negative to grasp concepts of spatial relations, to understand perspective, depth, two and three dimensions. Shown how to think visually, they learned how to make "order" out of chaos.

The experience at that School has already revealed a way to make parents proud of children who are able to create original designs with little apparent difficulty. About 50 of designs were mounted for a display at the Tutoring Zone. The enthusiasm of the child creators infected the gathering, including the parents of many who were in attendance. The designs this summer were on display as the last exhibit in the Discovery Room at the UF Museum of Natural History.

Fostering Community and Neighborhood Spirit

Under former Mayor Glenda Hood, the City of Orlando, Florida, emphasized designation of specific neighborhoods by billboards at their borders. As incentives for the areas to create projects and make use of them, Orlando annually provided small grants of less than \$5,000 to a few select neighborhoods each year.

Siena, Italy, is far more experienced at engendering both civic pride and neighborhood spirit. More than 500 years ago, the City established distinct neighborhood groups to aid mercenaries in Siena's struggle for independence from Florida and other nearby city states. What remains centuries later are 17 neighborhoods or "contradas" which readily identify themselves through colorful flags and animal symbols. For centuries, other than the years during World War II, the neighborhoods have competed against one another in two annual Il Palio races. On those occasions, tourists can observe the fierce loyalty of Siena citizens to their particular neighborhoods. Family rituals are tied to those contradas.

Victory Gardens Then, Butterfly Gardens Now

In Gainesville, neighborhood associations and garden clubs already proliferate. Butterfly gardens have sprung up sporadically, primarily by individual home owners. But groups could do so as well. Gainesville could reward such efforts with butterfly seals of approval. Cooperation rather than competition is the goal. Such precedent of public spirited gardens existed during the World Wars. Wikipedia describes them:

"Victory gardens, also called war gardens or food gardens for defense, were vegetable, fruit and herb gardens planted at private residences in the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom during World War I and World War II to reduce the pressure on the public food supply brought on by the war effort. In addition to indirectly aiding the war effort these gardens were also considered a civil "morale booster" — in that gardeners could feel empowered by their contribution of labor and rewarded by the produce grown."

“Victory gardens became a part of daily life in the middle of the earth, the home front. Amid regular rationing of canned food in Britain, a poster campaign (“Plant more in ‘44!”) encouraged the planting of Victory Gardens by nearly 20 million Americans. These gardens produced up to 40 percent of all the vegetable produce being consumed nationally.”

“Victory gardens were planted in backyards and on apartment-building rooftops, with the occasional vacant lot ‘commandeered for the war effort!’ and put to use as a cornfield or a squash patch....In 1946, with the war over, many residents did not plant Victory Gardens in expectation of greater produce availability...(A few communities did continue them without interruption until the present.)

“Since the turn of the century there has existed a growing interest in Victory Gardens. A grassroots campaign promoting such gardens has recently sprung up in the form of new Victory Gardens in public spaces, Victory Garden websites and blogs, as well as petitions to both renew a national campaign for the Victory Garden and to encourage (their) re-establishment on the White House lawn.”

Creating Revenue Sources

The first Butterfly City could sell or offer for sale Gainesville Original (“GO”) post cards, to publicize the City, commemorate events, and generate interest in the designation itself. (See samples.) These GO cards could be sold, at nominal prices.

The City by trademark and/or copyright could control the production of these 4x6 postcards and, perhaps their distribution as well. Initially, GO Cards would be available only in or from Gainesville. Alternatively, the City could limit its participation to its logo on GO Cards, in return for a share of the revenue. This GO card concept was developed during the processing and display of photographs at the Butterfly Forest taken by third, fourth, and fifth graders of Caring and Sharing Learning School.

Such landscape negatives can be transformed into eight (8) distinct horizontal and vertical variations. Placed on a CDs for editing, those images allow for an assembly line of original prints, each distinct from any other. As postcards, each would carry the distinctive Gainesville, Florida logo on the address side. The City obviously would have control of the circumstances warranting the use of its logo for distribution of what has been referred to as Kaleidophotos. The United States Post Office can be petitioned to create a butterfly stamp for postcard use. Indeed, a butterfly, the Common Buckeye, was featured on the 24 cent post card stamp—until the rates went up, to 26 and then 27 cents.

Although too late for distribution at the 2008 Fall Art Festival, GO cards could be circulated thereafter at such local art and other fairs, A City-sponsored table would contain materials about butterfly awareness and protection. A significant theme could be promotion of use of pesticides for mosquito control to avoid harming of butterflies.

Gainesville could control and charge **nominal fees** for butterfly seals of approval granted to participating businesses, garden clubs, schools, apartment complexes, neighborhoods, or groups or individuals, for activities promoting butterfly awareness and/or conservation. Such endorsements might go to creators of butterfly gardens who consider environmentally friendly measures for mosquito control (including the promotion of dragonflies for this purpose.)

Gainesville could issue **licenses** to businesses, clubs, hotels, etc., and individuals, to permit sale of merchandise, or use of art work, or creation of butterfly gardens under approved circumstances. Real estate brokers, developers, builders, and contractors could add the Gainesville “seal of approval” to their local promotion by purchase of butterfly adorned licenses. This effort of course would be voluntary, not coerced. Approved **butterfly** decals could be displayed. They could be butterfly specific—a Zebra Longwing for one activity, a Monarch Butterfly for another. Once a Butterfly City has been designated, a citizens’ advisory committee might be created to flesh out the details. However, at this stage, emphasis is placed on designation of Gainesville, FL as the first Butterfly City.

Other Venues

The Alachua County School System, and individual schools, could connect to identification with first Butterfly City. But a Butterfly City is not just for children. GO cards and related merchandise could be made available to the public, at many public and/or private venues throughout the area, including the Visitor and Convention Bureau near City Hall.

The Chamber of Commerce and businesses associated with the organization could benefit from this fresh symbol, even if the concept were not adopted elsewhere. Medical facilities could be encouraged to find space for butterfly gardens. The City's Parks & Recreation Department might have each park site contain a butterfly garden. Housing complexes and condominium associations likewise might find butterfly gardens to enhance properties.

The Gainesville Airport Authority could make those passing through the renovated facility aware of all aspects of the Butterfly City. Art work and other displays would connect the world of flight shared by butterflies and airplanes. Articles would be written about aspects of the Butterfly City for airline magazines, especially carriers to this market.

Wal-Mart, Lowe's Home Improvement Store, Home Depot, and other businesses might market butterfly garden supplies, and tie themselves in to specific ventures. Each would earn a Butterfly City seal of approval.

The ultimate tie for the Butterfly City would be to the University of Florida ("UF"). In 2005, the University was soul-searching for an identity. The UF Board of Trustees heard presentations from highly regarded marketing consultants. Among the components those innovators suggested was research personified by McGuire Center scientists. The attractive endangered Miami Blue butterfly was proposed as one of the symbols for University research projects.

UF ultimately decided to go in a different direction. The University now has regional if not national recognition as the Gator Nation.

Imagine the Gator Nation being linked to our Butterfly City. How refreshing it would be to see the image of an alligator softened by a butterfly, a romance of a love-struck gator to a flitting butterfly. The symbiotic relationship between UF and Gainesville, between gown and town could be strengthened greatly by that incongruous pair.

Fund Raising

The Butterfly City undoubtedly will have its own web site, with links to numerous others. That would be independent of the City's own web site. Advertising revenue would be conceivable from approved links. GO Cards and other merchandise could be sold through such links.

New foundation sources or other donors might be available to the first Butterfly City. Kodak or Fuji could be interested in making grants available, to encourage use of the point and shoot cameras. They have been employed exclusively for the creation of GO Cards.

The one-time only cameras are fast disappearing altogether from the market. Children from low-income families likely would miss out on the possibilities for them of photography if they were to fade entirely or remain available at prohibitive costs. Widespread use of such one-time only flash cameras could "equalize" the playing field for students. The least expensive digital cameras appear to be beyond the price range of families with children eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

Immigrant families throughout the first half of the 20th Century swore by the simple inexpensive Kodak Brownies to record their experiences in the new world. Many of their children and grandchildren became the mainstays for the purchase of film cameras and accessories, and into this Century for the digital and software explosion.

Butterfly-safe mosquito control could be another goal of interest to foundations. Safer pesticides are invaluable, especially where butterflies can be found. A community of butterfly gardens might be ideal for providing research "subjects" for cheaper, safer mosquito control.

Public-Private Partnership

Starting in 1984-85, Orlando, Florida, decided to create a public corporation, primarily to obtain federal grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") which were unavailable to the City directly. The funding was to be used for development and rehabilitation of housing primarily in low-income minority areas.

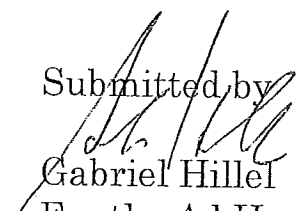
The Orlando Neighborhood Improvement Corporation ("ONIC") was created. Two city employees initially were paid by Orlando to operate the corporation part-time while they continued with their usual tasks. ONIC declared its "independence" in 1991. The corporation actual was able to sustain itself starting in 1999. The same twosome has remained at the top. Despite creation of a board of directors, ONIC's original twosome have run the corporation to renovate affordable housing.

Until this point, this proposal envisions Gainesville, Florida, carrying out most of the described tasks in-house. The Orlando alternative route is another possibility. However, several members of our Ad Hoc Committee to have Gainesville, Florida, designated as the first Butterfly City, have talked about establishing a small business, primarily to sell the GO Cards and related merchandise.

We would be willing to talk about a contractual relationship, to carry out as far as possible the mandates of the first Butterfly City. However, the primary goal of this proposal remains the creation of the first Butterfly City in the nation.

This proposal has been drafted in response to the suggestion(s) of Gainesville Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan, and City Manager Russ Blackburn during Citizen Comments on Thursday, October 16 2008. Thank you for the attention we hope this will be given.

Submitted by


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Submitted with Go Card samples to
the Gainesville City Commission
during Citizen Comments at 6 p.m.,
Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008. or as soon
thereafter as possible.