

Minutes
Tree Advisory Board
Thomas Center
May 9, 2016

The meeting was convened at 4:06 PM. Board members present were Chair Ivor Kincaide, E.J. Bolduc, Erick Smith and Russell Adams. Also attending were Mark Siburt (City Arborist), Linda Demetropoulos (Nature Operations Manager), Joe Wolf (Gainesville Regional Utilities Forester), and Meg Niederhofer. Others present included Sarit Sela, Suzanne Wynn and Nathalie McCrate (Gainesville CRA), Tony Monk (David Connor & Associates) and Tony Flegert (CHW, Inc.)

The agenda and minutes of April 11, 2016 were approved (Motion: Erick Smith; second, Russell Adams; unanimous). The NW 1st Ave CRA project was moved to first in the agenda for the guests and presenters convenience.

Old Business:

Tree Ordinance Review

Mark discussed how the ordinance review meetings will continue to happen, but not in the same format. A copy of the presentation and efforts to date was presented.

Tree Removal Permits—Single Family (RSF) vs. Planned Developments (PD)

Mark further discussed this topic with Sean McDermott (City Attorney's office) and Ralph Hilliard (Planning Manager) to understand the process and ramification of a proposed change. Staff recommends basing permits on "use" vs. "zoning". This will make interpretation more consistent. Mile Run was used as an example of a PD that in physical appearance, looks like a SFR and would have many regulated trees to interpret the process as it stands currently.

Tree Mitigation Fund Balance Update

Mark explained the fund reconciliation process involves multiple other Departments and his view is only a piece of the whole. He will work with the other Departments, standardize a fund reporting process and will work towards providing this fund balance showing inputs and outputs every meeting.

Ecological Assessment Update

The City has a signed contract with UF and field assessments should start shortly. The total cost is \$50,000 (\$20K funded by a grant, \$15K from FY16 budget, \$15K from FY17 budget). At the current time, this study is not able to be funded by the tree mitigation fund.

New Business:

Tree Mitigation Fund Project Proposal – NW 1st Ave CRA

The CRA presented an overview of the streetscape project on 1600-1900 block of NW 1st Avenue. This project began in the 1990's when UF needed an upgrade for their water service to serve new construction. The goal of the project is to maximize on street parking, increase pedestrian access, improve business access and make the site have an identity. They feel trees are important to this thematic identity and were requesting potential funding support as well as expertise in tree establishment.

Board questioned the choice of elms, CRA provided reasoning for upright form and less invasive root systems. Board questioned if root systems are truly less invasive and if these were the right tree for this project, suggesting crape myrtles. T. Monk said that was the original tree of choice, but for dramatic effect and theme to tie the area together the elm was chosen, along with its durability, fast growth and form. Ivor started discussion regarding diversification of tree species and the CRA/T. Monk felt a uniform species was important to establishing an identity at this site.

Underground utility conflicts were then discussed. The proposed chemically treated Biobarrier is a new product. One study was found regarding the effectiveness of the chemical, which was superior to other root control methods. Utility comments indicated that keeping spatial separation from trees and underground utilities is the best solution to ensure long term protection of utility infrastructure and provide reliable service to the commercial customer base in this area. If future conflicts arise, it was agreed that utilities can remove trees for access or maintenance, embracing the concept of a streetscape with replenishment perspective. Board was in agreement that the typical lifespan of an urban tree in this setting would be 15-20 years.

The proposed Silva Cell would ensure tree health, reduce soil compaction and provide the trees the best chance to establish. This would be the first use of Silva Cell in Gainesville. Board agreed that Silva Cell, proposed design, Biobarrier system and tree species were a well thought out choice for this project. R. Adams approved the motion as presented, E. Smith second, unanimous (EJ abstained from vote).

Tree Mitigation Fund Policy Update

Mark and Linda discussed the need to evaluate projects coming into the TAB for review on a consistent basis. An allocation of funding overview showing the percentage breakdown to different categories (staffing, projects, land purchase, etc.) was discussed. Discussion ensued regarding the recent inputs to the fund. Is this typical? Is the input going to be consistent?

Discussion then centered on how to use the fund wisely, yet keep a long term vision; making sure funds were available for unanticipated high quality projects in the future. Ivor stated when considering use, consider the funds origin. Linda brought up the point of calculating lost ecosystem services by keeping track of tree species from the fund.

Staff Report:

The Horticulturist position has been advertised and closed. As of this time, there were 17 applications. Staff will start the process of screening and interviews.

The Tree Appeal meeting has been put on hold until September (when the owners return from out of town).

The Manager's report was provided in written format for Board inspection.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Wolf, GRU Forester