

City of Gainesville

City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601



Meeting Agenda

December 17, 2020

5:30 PM

Workshop

Virtual

Utility Advisory Board

Wendell Porter (Member)
Wes Wheeler (Member)
Barry Jacobson (Member)
Carla Miles (Member)
Theresa Spurling-Wood (Non-Voting Member)
Tim Rockwell (Member)
Don Davis (Non-Voting Member)
Fletcher Crowe (Member)
Jason Fults (Member)

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CALL TO ORDER**ROLL CALL****STATE OF THE UTILITY**[200619.](#)**GRU Operational Update for the Month of November 2020 (B)**

Explanation: Staff has prepared a report of statistical and informational data related to GRU's operations in the month of November 2020.

Fiscal Note: None.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report.

[200619 GRU Ops Update Nov 2020 All Depts. 20201217](#)

DISCUSSION ITEMS[200620.](#)**Groundwater Recharge Wetland Property Purchase (B)**

Explanation: As was described in the May 20, 2020 memo from Tony Cunningham to City Commission, GRU is planning to create a groundwater recharge wetland. The project is being constructed with cost share funding from the Suwannee River Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The project will receive reclaimed water from the Kanapaha Water Reclamation Facility and will provide an environmental benefit by supporting flows at the Santa Fe River and area springs by recharging the Floridan aquifer with high-quality, low-nutrient water. The project is part of the North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan and is integral to our water resource management plan. In addition to the environmental benefits, the project will provide cost-effective, long-term beneficial reuse of reclaimed water to meet our future needs as our community grows.

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to:

- 1. Request City Commission approval for completion of purchase of the property; and*
- 2. Seek City Commission direction on potential funding and operations for public access to the wetland.*

Property Purchase

Selection criteria for the groundwater recharge wetland site include: 1) sufficient developable acreage to meet operational needs now and in the future, 2) site geology consisting of sandy soils that allow recharge into

the Florida aquifer, and 3) proximity to existing reclaimed water piping. Several potential locations were evaluated by staff before selecting the proposed site. The proposed site meets all of the key criteria identified by staff and is located in the unincorporated area of Alachua County off Parker Road, immediately North of Diamond Sports Park.

In February 2020, Purchase and Sale Agreements were negotiated by staff and the property owner for the purchase of two independent parcels totaling 75 acres. These agreements are contingent upon City Commission approval, satisfactory property investigations, and the issuance of zoning approval from Alachua County for the project. Zoning approval will consist of a special exception approved by the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners.

In addition to the customary property investigations associated with property purchase, GRU conducted extensive geotechnical investigations in order to ensure that the site geology is suitable for the project. The geotechnical evaluation was completed in November 2020 and the results confirm that the site has the geology to support a recharge wetland. The request for a special exception was heard by the Alachua County Planning Commission on November 18, 2020 and received unanimous recommendation for approval. The special exception request was heard by the Board of County Commissioners on December 8, 2020 and received unanimous approval.

On August 30, 2020, appraisals for both properties were prepared by a State Certified Appraiser with an MAI (Member of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers) designation. The appraisals indicate the market value of both properties is higher than the negotiated purchase prices.

Community and Stakeholder Outreach

GRU has been engaging with local stakeholders and community members to share information about the project. In accordance with Alachua County's zoning approval process, we hosted a neighborhood workshop on July 7, 2020. This public meeting was advertised in the local newspaper and invitations were sent to property owners and homeowner associations in close proximity to the proposed site. The Gainesville Sun had a front page article about the wetland the following Sunday, July 12, 2020. Additionally, the property owners received direct mail notifications of the Alachua County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners hearings.

Funding for Enhanced Public Access

GRU operations is not equipped to manage the public access component of the project. GRU has initiated conversations with Alachua County, Audubon and other local stakeholders in order to develop a plan for the public access elements of the project. The project provides the opportunity for a public park with hiking, wildlife viewing, and other passive uses. Bringing this to fruition will require other entities that can manage and secure funding for enhanced public access facilities. Staff requests

guidance from City Commission on this issue. Potential funding and operational alternatives include but are not limited to:

*Alachua County Parks Department
City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs
Partnership between multiple entities.*

Schedule

GRU plans to close on the property in early calendar year 2021 upon City Commission approval. The State has committed to cost share funding for the design and permitting of the project. If State funding is allocated for the construction phase of the project, GRU will solicit a design-build team in 2021. The design, permitting, construction and start-up of the project is expected to be complete by calendar year 2024 contingent upon both State and local funding. Future phases will be constructed as reclaimed water becomes available to hydrate additional wetland area.

Fiscal Note: GRU has entered into contracts to purchase the properties at a combined price of \$1.59 million, plus closing costs. The funds for property acquisition are included in the GRU Water/Wastewater 2021 capital budget. In addition, under the cost share agreement we have with FDEP, FDEP has committed funds to pay for 50 percent of the cost of purchasing the property up to a maximum contribution of \$1 million.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Commission:

1) approve both Purchase and Sale Agreements for the purchase of two properties located in the 3400 block of SW 122nd Street) from Mitchem-Rivers, LLC in a combined amount not to exceed \$1,590,000.00 plus closing costs, as negotiated by staff;

2) Authorize the General Manager, or his designee to execute all documents necessary to complete the acquisition of the real property in accordance with the Purchase and Sale Agreements, subject to approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality; and

3) Provide guidance on potential funding and operations of public access.

[200620 CComm GRU Groundwater Recharge Wetland 20201217](#)
[200620 2020 Appraisal North Acreage Parcel \(12 acres\) 20201217](#)
[200620 2020 Appraisal South Acreage Parcel \(63 acres\) 20201217](#)
[200620 PRES GRU NHWS Final 20201217](#)
[200620 PRES GRU Wetland ACPC Final 20201217](#)
[200620 Purchase and Sale Agreement \(12 Acres\) 20201217](#)
[200620 Purchase and Sale Agreement \(63 acres\) 20201217](#)
[200620 Groundwater Wetland Fact Sheet 20201217](#)
[200620 GRU Groundwater Recharge BoCC 20201217](#)

200621.**UAB Annual Report 2019-2020 (B)**

Explanation: The City Commission has requested that each City advisory board and/or committee draft an annual report on the board's activities for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

Fiscal Note: None.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the criteria for the report and agree on a method for drafting it.

[200621 Advisory Boards and Committees Annual Report 2019-2020 20201](#)

MEMBER COMMENT**NEXT MEETING DATE**

January 14, 2020

ADJOURNMENT