

Re: Request for Gainesville City Commission Agenda Item

Subject: Proposed Plan (“Plan”) for Implementation of the self-designation of Gainesville, Florida, as the First Butterfly City.

From: Gabriel Hillel, for the Butterfly Education Project (“Project”).

Date: Submission of this Request on or before Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, for consideration of its merits at a regular Commission meeting on Feb. 19, or on Mar. 5, 2009.

Discussion: In the State of the City Address for 2009, Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan spoke about drive and passion for excellence which “permeates our community and is reflected in the civic engagement of Gainesville’s citizens.” The Mayor looked forward to “entering our 25th year as a Tree City, USA, our fifth year as a Bicycle Friendly Community, and our first year as a Butterfly City.”

The Project, a non-profit entity, and its coordinator Gabriel Hillel, have been credited in *The Gainesville Sun*, and in the meeting minutes of the City with playing a role in the self-designation by Gainesville on Dec. 4, 2008, as the First Butterfly City. On Oct. 16, 2008, Mayor Hanrahan asked for and later received a proposal for the parameters of the First Butterfly City from the Project. She cautioned about the need to limit costs. The Project submitted such a proposal, on Nov. 5, 2008. Now that the City has approved of the concept, the Project is seeking:

- 1) a City commitment to a public-private relationship with the Project for implementation of a three-year Plan.
- 2) City support from several of its agencies to work toward making the Plan a success;
- 3) seed funding for a photography/art competition to provide material for display through

Gainesville, FL, around the time of the first citywide Butterfly Fest, on Oct. 24-25, 2009; the funding would be matched by a comparable sum from the McGuire Center (“Center”) for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity, at the University of Florida Museum of Natural History.

Such competition would be expected to produce revenue for the City both directly in the form of entry fees, and revenue from host businesses and entities displaying one or more photo/art submissions. Gainesville also would get money from sale of: a) 2010 calendars containing prize-winning illustrations from the competition; b) a map of prominent locations in the Gainesville area of species specific butterfly and moth populations; and competition entries (revenues would be shared with the creators.)

Gainesville will be economically enriched by visitors who attend Butterfly Fest(s). The Center has attracted 5,000-6,000 visitors for Butterfly Fest events annually. Increase of those numbers is a boost on a non-football home game weekend.

The City previously relied on visual contributions from children downtown and scattered activities related to butterflies during the annual Butterfly Fests. Gainesville programs, especially the Cultural Affairs office also provided assistance to such actions. But the three year Plan proposed here is to first to try a coherent presentation to determine which activities make sense and which do not in the future.

A major emphasis is intended to be on photography, to encourage children to learn how to create pleasing visuals, even with relatively inexpensive disposable flash cameras. Kodak and the Kodak Foundation will be approached, to provide such equipment, to generate fresh interests in communities where the expense s related to digital photography may seem to be beyond reach. For more than 100 years, Kodak has produced inexpensive cameras, starting with box cameras,

with Brownies, and comparable products to make photography accessible to children as well as adults, the poor, as well as the middle class. Immigrants and others struggling to learn English could find a common denominator in photos for communications.

The Project already has been working with the Caring & Sharing charter public school for more than 100 children in grades K-5, to determine whether approaches through photos reach children, especially boys, who appear to be functionally illiterate. The Project has consulted with Tony Jones, retired police captain, to decide whether Reichert House for young males might become involved in visual learning.

From the outset, nature as well as art, gardening as well as photography, will be encouraged. Kathy Malone, chapter president for the North American Butterfly Association (“NABA”) has suggested that one or two nectar plants may be sufficient to start a “butterfly garden.” Also it may be possible to link butterfly gardening with vegetable gardens, community spaces where children, groups, neighborhoods, can work together, to grow produce for home use, perhaps for sale.

Also from inception, it is understood that Gainesville will be developing criteria to be a role model for other cities seeking to promote “butterfly activities,” in their communities. The model is the Tree City program. Since joining in 1984, the City has created an advisory board and hired an arborist to protect as far as possible the fantastic canopy throughout much of the community.

For butterfly activities, neighborhood and group participation will be encouraged. Businesses will be linked by the symbol to Gainesville. Probably through direct mail solicitation, each business will be asked to identify themselves, their type of enterprise, their

profession or trade, by a butterfly display or displays.

The Project has a three year plan—2009-20011 to market the Butterfly City brand, and use the identification to show how Gainesville, FL acts as a caring, creative, environmentally-conscious community, and why other cities should follow suit. The Plan will be enhanced by a website open for view before Feb. 19, 2009.

Among the human resources on which the Project has relied to date for various aspects of its Plan are: Peter Johnson, business entrepreneur, for marking concepts; his daughter Jessica Johnson, for Photoshop techniques; Gabriel Hillel, a former journalist, for writing; Susan Schillinger, Ph.D., an education administrator, for editing; Andrei Sourakov, Center collection coordinator, for photography; Nat DeVore, a graphic arts student at Santa Fe Community College, for the website format; Rick Ferdig, Ph.D., University of Florida faculty, for insight into education applications; Kathy Malone, NABA chapter president, for links to knowledgeable butterfly advocates in and outside of academia, locally and nationally; Simon and Verna Johnson, Curtis and Tova Peterson, and other faculty and staff members, at Caring & Sharing, about application of the Project ideas, to learning strategies in English, art, and science, at the elementary school level, and, most recently, Tony Jones. Mark Minno, butterfly book writer, and Bruce Morgan, the original Tropical Rainforest landscaper, have indicated their willingness to make the Project a success.

For the City, Bob Woods, the communications and market manager, already has proven to be invaluable to the Project. He has suggested various City and other public agencies whose support will be necessary to make the Plan a success. Included are the Parks and Recreation Department; the Nature and Cultural Affairs Office; the Community Redevelopment Agency;

and RTS bus advertising component.

Cooperation with the Alachua County Visitors and Convention Bureau is essential. So are connections to local business venues, through the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce. Each step of the planning process is intended to supplement, rather than supplant, Center activities, especially those for the Fest. To that end, the Project has relied on Andrei Sourakov, and Mary Risner, outreach coordinator for the University of Florida Center for Latin America Studies.

Andrei, an internationally known photographer of butterflies, proposed the art competition. He has indicated that the Center is prepared to match within reason any financial contribution by the City or private resource to make that event a success.

Mary Risner got access for the children at Caring & Sharing to the Butterfly Rainforest last year. Mary Risner's role is expected to be much broader, especially as the need arises to communicate about butterfly activities in Spanish-speaking communities. The Project could be an important mechanism to further well-established ties between Florida and Latin America.

Both Costa Rica and Mexico especially present opportunities to link Gainesville internationally through the butterfly/mariposa-city/ciudad concepts. For example, Center director Tom Emmel for several years has led tours from this City to the wintering grounds of millions of Monarch butterflies in a comparatively small area near the City of Morelos. They return to North America in the spring.

That migration recently was featured in Gainesville on an hour-long documentary in the *Nova* series. The Project already has initiated contact with the local WUFT-TV producers to persuade the station that the Center and the City butterfly activities might warrant a local

program. The Project also will approach WUFT-TV to see whether the station's periodic fund raising activities could be enhanced by cooperation between the Station and project players.

What is needed is coordination by the Project of the various components which will be required to make the Plan work. Gabriel Hillel has filled that role to date.

At least some clarification will be necessary about the extent of City involvement. Hopefully that will be achieved by a meeting among representatives of the participants who already have contributed both to a White Paper and the Project Proposal during the last quarter.

Ultimately, some funding will be needed to get the Project off the ground. The photo competition seems to be the likely starting point. Supplies, and postage also will be needed for direct mailing not only to promote the overall venture, by making businesses here and cities elsewhere, aware of the campaign to foster creation of Butterfly Cities, including Gainesville. Kaleidophotos will be featured, primarily to attract children to participate in their creation as an in-school or after school activity. Such activities will be carried out as funds become available.

The Project has gotten small grants to date, e.g., from Leadership Gainesville Alumni and the Jaycees. Gabriel Hillel has had success in the past in obtaining grants from the Carnegie Foundation and the Southern Poverty Law Center, as well as the Legal Services Corporation. He also prepared annual budgets as director of the Greater Orlando Area Legal Services programs. Those budgets depended in part on fund raising activities. He and others associated with the Project will submit grant and loan applications, once the extent of the City involvement is known.

For this venture to work however, Gainesville must make the commitment promised by its self-designation as a Butterfly City. Certainly it is hoped that the specific public Departments

identified here will cooperate with the Project.

Until the Butterfly Fest, the Project will concentrate on the photography/art competition, and the promotion of butterfly gardens, no matter how small, through various agencies. Also, input will be sought to make the venture a success from NABA, through Kathy Malone directly, and otherwise indirectly. Others who have been promoting joy through butterflies also will be included. In light of the Super Bowl commercials, Coca Cola of Atlanta, GA may be contacted.

Starting in the 2009-10 fiscal year, the Project will assess where it appear financing would be most useful in the future, especially in promotion of visual learning as an alternative to standard reading methods, if that proves to be possible.

Grant applications then would be formally made to the City, for example, perhaps for Community Development Bloc Grant funds, or for activities supported by the Cultural Affairs Office. Evaluations will be made of the various techniques—the web site, direct mailing, public service advertising—and the extent to which the public has responded to them. Sample questionnaires likely will be distributed and evaluated during and immediately after the Butterfly Fest.

Modifications will be made in the Plan depending on what is known by the start of the 2010-2011 fiscal. By then, Gabriel Hillel, Peter Johnson, Nat DeVore, and Rick Ferdig contemplate creation of an informative video game about the round-trip migration of the Monarch Butterflies, and the obstacles they face, in the form of pesticides destroying their food supplies, loggers cutting down protected forests in Mexico where they thrive, animal and bird predators. After the third year, that is by the election of 2012, it should be clear whether the

Project has been made to be economically viable, and whether the City continues to be serious about its role as a Butterfly City. (If Gainesville then remains the First--and only--Butterfly City, the venture could not be regarded as a success.)

But what is important now is the extent to which Gainesville will provide a commitment, human resources (available time by staff) and a modicum of financial support as a matching grant to sustain the visual arts competition and display.

Please schedule discussions by appropriate staff and the City Commission itself to determine what level of commitment and endorsement will be given to this unique public-private venture.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriel Hillel

P.S. This is intended for Bob Woods Wednesday and/or submission to the City Commission on Thursday, after review and comments by Peter (and family), Andrei and Susan Schillinger, in my household. Time is of the essence.