

Nature Centers Commission

K. Grace Crummer, Chair

3414 NW 25th Place Gainesville, FL 32605

4/4/2019

Re: Support for preservation and renovation of the historic Hartman House

Dear City Commissioners, Mayor and Historic Preservation Board,

The Nature Centers Commission Advisory Board would like to express our support for the preservation, renovation, and re-use of the historic (circa 1889-1906) Hartman house, located in Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park. We are incredibly fortunate to have this opportunity to preserve the living history of the property and interpret Gainesville's cultural, natural, and agricultural roots. The structure urgently requires stabilization, so we appreciate your joint consideration of this issue in a timely manner.

The 2007 grant from the Florida Communities Trust that enabled acquisition of the property requires a nature and interpretive center and specifically cites re-purposing the building, if feasible. The 2010 and 2016 updated architectural evaluation reports deem this renovation and re-use project feasible. The project is also listed in the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Master Plan project list as a priority, and in the Wild Spaces Public Places 2017 prioritized project list. Appropriate schematics for the renovation are in hand. We are excited by the public's interest and enthusiasm for the park itself, and by the potential to further the usefulness of the park for community recreation and education through this restoration.

Though apparently renovation is more expensive than demolition and building a new center, it is difficult to replace the historic value inherent in the Hartman house. For context, the successful and impressive restoration of the 1940s era landmark Cotton Club and surrounding structures required \$1.2 million in investment as of November 2018. It is poised for a bright future as both a museum and a valuable community space.

Thank you for your continued advocacy to improve the quality of life for Gainesville's citizens!

Sincerely,


K. Grace Crummer
Chair, Nature Centers Commission