

City of Gainesville

*City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601*



Minutes - Final

July 8, 2020

4:00 PM

Virtual Teleconference Meeting

Tree Advisory Board

*Erick Smith (Chair)
Jason Smith (Member)
Marc Frank (Member)
C. Elisabeth Manley (Member)
Ryan Klein (Student Seat)*

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1 Call to Order - 4:00 PM**2 Roll Call**

Present 5 - Member Smith, Member Frank, Chair Smith, Student Seat Klein, and Member Manley

[200086.](#) Approve Agenda

A motion was made by Member Manley, seconded by Member Frank, that the agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Member Smith, Member Frank, Chair Smith, and Member Manley

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Klein

[200087.](#) Approve Minutes of March 11, 2020 Meeting

Attachments: [3-11-20 TAB Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Member Smith, seconded by Member Frank, that the minutes of the March meeting be approved as shown. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Member Smith, Member Frank, Chair Smith, and Member Manley

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Klein

New Business

3 [200085.](#) Request for Tree Mitigation Funds to Acquire Conservation Land Adjacent to Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park

Attachments: [Jurecko Evaluation](#)
[Jurecko location map](#)
[Jurecko property evaluation](#)

Nature Operations Manager Linda Demetropoulos presented the supporting materials to the Board and described, in detail, the property's location, condition, history and value to the urban forest and surrounding area. Ms. Demetropoulos also spoke briefly regarding the city's land acquisition policies. Member Manley asked whether there were any high quality, large significant trees on the property; Ms. Demetropoulos said she was certain that there are. Member Smith asked if there was a list of properties that were prioritized for purchase with mitigation funds; Ms. Demetropoulos stated there is a list which is currently being updated, and she will send to the Board once it is complete. The Board discussed other funding sources and their interaction with conservation land acquisition goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Member Frank inquired about the historical uses of the fund, prompting a brief discussion on previous uses of the tree mitigation fund for land

acquisition. Member Manley spoke to the benefit of using criteria such as canopy cover, heritage size, and high quality species composition in valuing prospective conservation lands from an urban forestry perspective, particularly because much of those funds are obtained as a result of fees associated with the removal of high quality, heritage trees. Ms. Demetropoulos spoke to the matter; Utility Forester Joe Wolf also vouched for the property both in terms of its aesthetics and its diverse species composition. Member Smith vouched for the use of the funds to preserve even single significant trees, for example with the establishment of “pocket parks.” There was a brief discussion regarding the difficulty of acquiring lands at fair market value and the complications this causes for acquiring conservation lands, despite Board interest in doing so. Ms. Demetropoulos spoke to the importance of managerial prioritization of acquiring conservation lands in moving such acquisitions forward. City Arborist Dave Conser suggested that as land values increase, it will make it more important to acquire lands sooner rather than later. Chair Smith recommended that additional discussions of conservation land acquisition can be best initiated by examining the list of properties the city is considering for purchase and assessing their value in the urban forest in later meetings. Member Klein inquired as to whether it would be possible, if the Board feels a property is an excellent acquisition for the urban forest and is vulnerable to future development, to purchase a property at above the appraised value if the landowner will not sell at appraised value; Ms. Demetropoulos advised that the city will only pay up to ten percent above appraised value, although typically appraisals do not take trees into consideration. Mr. Conser suggested that the Board might be able to express their support for this concept with the City Commission. Board members expressed interest in speaking with the land rights coordinator and legal staff regarding the matter. Member Smith encouraged Mr. Conser to communicate the need for conservation lands and their community benefits publicly. Member Manley also stated she would like to see signage at the property indicating the use of tree mitigation funds for its acquisition. Member Klein added that the signage could also describe the environmental benefits that the trees on that particular property provide the community.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the use of Tree Mitigation Funds for the project.

A motion was made by Member Manley, seconded by Member Frank, that we as the Tree Advisory Board support the use of tree mitigation funds for the purchase of the Jurecko property at the appraised value. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Member Smith, Member Frank, Chair Smith, and Member Manley

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Klein

4 Public Works Update

City Arborist Dave Conser stated he is enthusiastic about being on board. He introduced a good planting opportunity on SW 40th BLVD. He updated the board on the hiring process regarding the horticulturist position. He also stated he would like to increase the city's annual tree planting goals from 400 to 600 trees. He would also like to discuss revising the tree ordinance with the Tree Advisory Board, including expanding what the tree mitigation funds can be used for. He would also like to resume tree permitting as usual.

A motion was made by Member Manley, seconded by Member Frank, that we as the Tree Advisory Board support resuming the tree removal permit process as soon as possible. The motion carried unanimously.

5 GRU Update

Utility Forester Joe Wolf updated the Board on GRU's operations which are still normal, although employees must adhere to social distancing guidelines and wear proper PPE while in the field. Employees' temperatures are being checked and there is a reporting system in place for COVID-19 exposure and testing. GRU has not been doing cut-offs and has removed late payment fees for both residential and business owners, although these provisions may end soon. He has also continued work on the Urban Forest Management Plan. He is also going to follow up on the tree matrix that was presented to the board last year which still needs board input and final revisions; he would like it to replace the various tree lists so that it becomes one consistent list that includes GRU separation requirements and other considerations.

Chair Smith asked if Urban Forestry Inspector Chelsea Proia would like to give regular updates from the Department of Sustainable Development to the board during meetings; this will be added to future agendas.

6 Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.