

City of Gainesville

City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601



Minutes - Final

October 13, 2021

4:00 PM

Thomas Center Room 105

Tree Advisory Board

Erick Smith (Chair)
Marc Frank (Member)
C. Elisabeth Manley (Member)
Russell Adams (Member)
Ryan Klein (Member)
Elisabeth Staten (Student Seat)

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CALL TO ORDER - 4:09 PM**ROLL CALL**

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

Absent 1 - Adams

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

Absent 1 - Adams

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

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

A motion was made by Member Frank, seconded by Member Manley, that this Matter be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Staten

Absent: 1 - Adams

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

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Staten

Absent: 1 - Adams

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Member Manley, seconded by Member Frank to approve the minutes of September 11th, 2021. :

Aye: 4 Member Frank, Member Klein, Member Manley, Chair Smith

A motion was made by Member Manley, seconded by Member Frank, that this Matter be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Staten

Absent: 1 - Adams

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

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Staten

Absent: 1 - Adams

210528. Approval of Minutes from the Tree Advisory Board Meeting of September 8, 2021 (B)

GRU UPDATE

Forester Wolf briefed the board on two issues regarding City Commission votes, the COVID vaccine mandate and request for resignation of GRU General Manager Ed Belarski. He detailed the negative impacts the mandate has caused. 15 experienced Electric T&D lineworkers left or retired (28% of the workforce) due to the mandate. Employee surveys showed 30% of GRU's workforce may leave due to the mandate. He then discussed the negative impacts to contractors being required to have the vaccine (no FEMA assistance, no tree trimming, underground electric, janitor force and more contractors all unable to perform work or interact with city employees due to the mandate - unintended consequences).

He then brought up the fines levied by the State of Florida Health Department. Employees were required to fill out an affidavit marking "YES" or "NO" as to their status on receiving the vaccine. The State said this is a violation of privacy. They leveled a fine of \$5,000/employee. The city has roughly 2,000 employees, putting the total fine at \$10,000,000. This fine is being discussed. He discussed the Commission meeting where they had a motion for GM Ed Belarski to resign. The outpouring of positive support from employees and public took over 3 hours of public comment, ending at 1:30AM. This level of support caused the Commission to withdraw their motion calling for resignation.

PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE

Arborist Conser discussed the movement, directed by the commission to trim streetlights for illumination. The annual work plan is being finalized, Purchase Orders prepared and vendor qualifications reviewed. Jeff Weisburg (Associated with the River Phoenix association) contacted him about partnering on tree give-a-ways to engage disenfranchised youth groups. The Tree Give Away held on 9/24 was a success, targeting East Gainesville. The message was "Saving Gainesville one tree at a time".

He wants to do a complete tree inventory in 2022 including all trees on city land (and spaces for trees) in the right of ways using the TMF for funding. The inventory will allow him to know what they have which is necessary to plan future management and objectives. The last tree inventory was done in 1994. Chair Smith participated in the 1994 study.

PLANNING UPDATE

There was no Planning Update

DISCUSSION

210517.

Matching Grant Funding Through Tree Mitigation Fund (B)

Coordinator Schatz introduced the grant and completed application. The grant matches funds 50/50. Multiple Matching Grants are available and staff is intent on applying for them. Before doing so, they wanted to inform and educate the Board, making sure Board approved. Arborist Conser advised staff has spoken to Budget & Finance for buy-in and received approval.

This specific Grant presented applied to making Evergreen Cemetery an arboretum. With the Grant and working together staff will be able to plan, cultivate and manage this greenspace for the future.

Member Manley's Design Firm met with the Evergreen Cemetery Association a few years ago and held a public input workshop. The Association's vision of using the site as a open park space (keeping respect to the graves) dovetailed with the proposed activities through the Grant. There is another private cemetery located adjacent to Evergreen. Staff will reach out and see if they would like to be a part of the process. There is another parcel adjacent to Evergreen managed through the Sweetwater Park, as well as the Hawthorne Trail that travels through the cemetery. Incorporating Evergreen would enhance the public greenspace downtown.

Member Klein asked about pruning and tree maintenance with the existing mature trees. He also wanted to know if there were any concerns with inviting citizens to walk among graves of the dead.

Member Staten asked for clarification of an arboretum. Staff provided summary that an arboretum is a collection of specimen trees, labeled and intended for educational and recreational purposes.

Board members Klein and Manley brought up large tree removals on UF property near McCarty Hall. Arborist Conser said he reached out to the Lakes Vegetation and Landscape Committee to be involved in plan reviews with tree removals. Member Klein wanted to see the Gainesville Tree List used at UF.

Arborist Conser said his focus is on applying for as many grants that are applicable. His experiences showed most grants come up on an annual basis. With Coordinator Schatz on board, his assistance will be instrumental in researching and applying for them. Board agreed with the use of grants and encouraged Staff to take advantage of as many as possible to match with the TMF.

Member Manley wanted to make sure any TMF use would be only for tree planting and establishment. Member Klein cautioned TMF expenditures if a lot of grants were approved and recommended specifying a dollar amount as cap. Board agreed and suggested \$120,000. All Board members agreed to this cap.

Two motions were made: a specific motion for the Evergreen Grant and a more general motion for their philosophical approval of any future grants that comply with approved Tree Mitigation Fund Policy. Board agreed that cost sharing with grants is an excellent way to fund and manage projects. The two motions are below:

- (1) The Tree Advisory Board approves the use of Tree Mitigation Funds to match grant funding for the purchase, planting and establishment of trees for the arboretum

project at Evergreen cemetery. Motion was made by Member Frank, seconded by Member Klein. Aye (4) - Member Frank, Member Klein, Member Manley, Chair Smith.

(2) The Tree Advisory Board approves the use the Tree Mitigation funds to match grant funding up to \$120,000 annually for approved uses within the Tree Mitigation Fund's policy provided Staff keeps the Tree Advisory Board informed of potential grants and uses. Motion was made by Member Manley, seconded by Member Frank. Aye (4) - Member Frank, Member Klein, Member Manley, Chair Smith.

RECOMMENDATION

The Tree Advisory Board discuss this item, and motion to approve as recommended.

A motion was made by Member Frank, seconded by Klein, that this Matter be Adopted (Resolution) as modified. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Staten

Absent: 1 - Adams

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

Abstain: 1 - Student Seat Staten

Absent: 1 - Adams

201067.

Discuss Updated Approved Tree List for the Tree Ordinance (B)

Coordinator Schatz introduced the updated list. Member Frank started comments on a broad scale. He noted in the column titled "Florida Native", 43 of the species were missed being categorized as Native. He asked for consistency in using the botanical author's names or not. He was hesitant to list cultivars as cultivars change over time. His suggestion was to list the species only, giving long term viability. Board agreed with his recommendations.

More species were added as High Quality (both canopy and understory), on the recommendation of Arborist Conser. Member Manley brought up the code implications, more options are better but there will be implications in more trees being rated as High Quality, and potentially more expensive valuation for Tree Appraised Values when properties are inventoried for development. Board discussed and noted most of the understory species added as High Quality were smaller trees that typically don't mature to heritage size or would take a long time to grow to 20" DBH. None of the Board remembered seeing a 20" DBH understory tree (of those that were added to the High Quality rating) in their experience in the area. Member Manley brought up Retention Basins, emphasizing two points. The basins are dry a lot of the time and trees are also planted on the slopes and berms as well as the bottoms increasing the species selection palette and making them diverse.

Member Klein asked for clarification of High Quality vs Canopy Trees and their code implications. Member Manley said that canopy trees are required on streets, code has a percent shading requirement to prevent heat reflection from paved

surfaces.

As in prior meetings, Chair Smith asked to go through the species one by one, making sure all board members input is included. Board went through the species until time expired. They will pick up where they left off next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

The Tree Advisory Board 1) review tree documentation; and 2) arrive at a consensus for a suggested revision to the Code.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MEMBER COMMENT

There was no member comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURNMENT - 5:58 PM