

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
October 08, 2020, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, October 08, 2020 for a zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

William Barber – Assistant Director, UF Police Department
Donna Bloomfield – Grounds, Facility Services
Gregg Clarke – Director of Operations, Facility Services
Adam Dale – Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department
Linda Dixon – Director, Planning, Design & Construction
Gail Hansen De Chapman – Environmental Horticulture - Chair
Brian Keith – Associate Dean, Library Administration
Alpa Nawre – Assistant Professor, Landscape Architecture
Melanie Nelson – Associate Professor, Medicine
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facility Services
Matt Williams – Director, Sustainability

Members not attending:

Carlos Dougnac – Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction
Craig Hill – Assistant Vice President, Business Affairs
Brett Scheffers – Assistant Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
Kevin Trejos - Student

Visitors attending:

Melissa Thomas – Administrative, Planning, Design & Construction
Erik Lewis – Sr. Planner, Planning, Design & Construction
Tom Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Milo Zapata – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
David Conner – Conner Landscape Architects
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction
Sean Mountain – Project Manager, IFAS
Jessica Davidson – Civil Engineering, Energy Plant Project
Kasey Teimouri – Engineering Firm
Basil Lannone – Office of Sustainability
Fiona Hogan – Office of Sustainability
Chris Johns – Architect Firm, Reitz Union Lawn, Inner Road / Infrastructure Project
Gage Lapierre – Student – NATL Areas Teaching Laboratory
Dr. C. Craig Tisher – Director of Wilmot Gardens
Frank Bellomo – Unknown
Tuson McFadon – Program Manager, Central Energy Plant Project
Fraser Ringel - Unknown
Elizabeth Nolder – RMF Engineering, Reitz Union Lawn, Inner Road / Infrastructure Project
John Williamson – Inner Road Project

I. Adoption of Agenda and June 2020 Minutes

Motion: Brain Keith moved to adopt the agenda and approve the September minutes.

Second: Alpa Nawre seconded.

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

UF – 200 – Public Safety Building – UPD

Frank Javaheri

Frank introduced himself and stated he was presenting today on behalf of Robert Hatker, Project Manager, and that he had David Conner, Landscape Architect, and Kasey Teimouri, architect, from Scheckel Schultz. He showed the location and project boundary. Frank said the building would be three floors, with the first two floors and most the third floor will be used for emergency operations.

Frank went through approved LVL comments and had David Conner discuss the landscape changes. David showed a rendering of the site and focused on the community plaza which had been revised to accommodate security concerns. He said that there had been bollards that would surround the entry to provide security, but the new design used less bollards and instead was using a combination of tree placement and benches. He said that the bus stop was moved to the east away from the intersection. David said that the parking lot on the east was originally impacting some trees but had since been reconfigured to protect the trees. However, he explained that the new reconfiguration involved shifting some things to the west of the building, which would impact two trees. David discussed the new reconfiguration and showed the series of benches that are to be spaced throughout the plaza with walkways so pedestrians can move freely through the plaza or use the benches. He said there would be plantings between the benches and hardscape to allow for tree growth. He showed an aerial view to show the placement of the walkways and flag poles and a ground level view walking up toward the building so the committee could see how they provide more security. The committee asked about the benches extending out into the walkway and David said yes there are a few that will extend out to secure a vehicle could not access the front of the building. David showed the northeast corner of the project and stated there will be security fencing for the secured parking. He said that they will provide shrub massing along the perimeter and are proposing elm trees in the parking lot.

David went over the trees to be saved and removed based on the modified plan and said that total tree mitigation would cost \$27,000. However, he noted that the mitigation of tree costs was waived by the VP of Business Affairs for this project. David said that along Museum Road they were proposing proposed Bluff oaks and Magnolias in the plaza, with the others being oak trees in order to provide a canopy for shade. David went over the proposed planting plan. The committee discussed the plan and suggested he take into consideration there will be a camera surveillance system added to this building. Linda Dixon said that this plan needs to coordinate with the Honors College to create a consistent tree planting plan along Museum. Committee members suggested that there may need to be more seating near the bus stop for students. David stated some of the benches face the building and some face the road and that her will look at the benches near the bus stop to configure them so the students can see the buses coming. Committee members suggested he adjust the seating benches and configure them to be more social with perhaps a L shape and that he adjust the plan to add more screening by Centrex.

Motion: Alpa Nawre made the motion to approve the project plan and mitigation as presented with the condition that they follow the suggestion of trees and ground cover as discussed, relook at the design of the plaza in front of the building to not only create the barriers needed for security, but also to look at the organization of the seating to allow for more social spaces, rather than following the current linear formation.

Second: Brian Keith

Motion Carried Unanimously

UF – 623D – Central Energy Plant

Milo Zapata

UF – 623B – Thermal Utility Infrastructure

Tom Feather

UF – 623C – Electrical Utility Infrastructure

Tom Feather

Milo introduced himself and stated he was one of two Project Managers for UF-623 projects. He said that Tom Feather was the Project Manager for UF-623B and C, with Chuson McFadden representing Jacobs for UF-623 projects and Jessica Davidson for the Central Energy Plant.

Jessica went over the program overview of all three project layouts on an aerial view and noted that they had been approved previously but were coming back to show some changes. She started with the Central Energy Plant and noted that few heritage trees on the site may be saved, but that 29 DBH Live oak would still need to be removed. She said that on the south side there were a few trees that were to be removed but may be able to be saved with removal of some parking along the south side of the plant.

Jessica said that the UF-623B – Thermal Utility distribution project was in two packages with package 1 being the infrastructure along Museum Road and Newell Drive. She went over the trees they needed to remove and some they were protecting. She went over package 2 that will include an overhead steam line (8 ft) that will follow the existing walkway on the east side of the wastewater treatment plant through the conservation area. She said there was an electrical duct bank under the existing walkway, and that this was a critical pipe that could not be placed underground. She said there would be some tree impacts and they will try to save as many trees as possible. She said they were working on the design and would bring it back to the committee with the proposed tree removals.

Jessica moved on to UF- 623C – Electrical Utility distribution. She said that here were some palm trees that would need to be removed and they would work with Grounds to relocate if possible.

Jessica went over the underground gas line that will go under the Lake Alice Conservation Area wetlands on the north side of Mowry and connect to the Central Energy Plant. She explained that by using the directional drilling option, they would be able to avoid direct impact to the wetlands and trees. She said that underground drilling would not affect the trees, since it will be at a depth of approximately 50 feet. She said that they would come back to the committee for any tree removals if necessary, Jessica said that if there were problems with the lines in the future, Facilities would run a new line and not dig up the existing. She said that when they come back to the committee, they will bring a representative for the gas line and the wetland-drilling. Committee members expressed concern about the maintenance and leaks of the gas line. She said that they had consulted a faculty member about this gas line and they thought because of the depth of the drilling there would be little impact if any.

Motion: Adam Dale made a motion to approve the proposed plans for tree removal and saving and transplanting along the roadsides and parking lots. This project will come back to the committee with updated tree impacts and proposed mitigation.

Second: Alpha Nawre

Motion Carried Unanimously

UF – 640 – Blueberry Research Building

Sean Mountain

Sean introduced himself and said he would be presenting for IFAS and that David Wood was the Planning, Design & Construction Project Manager. He said that the project was in Design Development. This is a one-story building with approximately 9,803 GSF containing research labs, teaching labs, and classrooms. He said that there would be no tree impacts for this project. And that there will be additional plantings on the north side of the building. Sean went over the proposed floor plan, \ existing trees and the proposed planting of the new trees on the north side of the building. He said that the faculty in this area wanted a teaching landscape and that Gail Hansen de Chapmen was working with the faculty on the planting list and design.

Motion: Adam Dale made the motion to approve the project with the recommendation that they protect the existing trees during construction.

Second: Brian Keith

Motion Carried Unanimously

UF – 644, 644A, 644B – Reitz Union Lawn and Inner Road Improvements

Tom Feather

Tom introduced himself and said they were before the committee seeking approval for Design Development. He gave an overview of the project scope and said the projects would be going on at the same time. He said the projects encompass the Reitz Union lawn, Inner road, improvements to the 13th Street intersection, and will also extend through the pedestrian tunnel that leads to Norman Hall. He said the scope included chilled water, electrical, steam lines, and changing Inner road to create a two-lane road from its current one-way.

Tom introduced Elizabeth Nolder from RMF Engineering, and she showed an aerial view of the route of utility work, new electric duct bank, chilled water, and steam-line replacement. She said that in addition to the utility work, there would be surface work done to Inner Road with sidewalk and landscaping improvements. She said they would need to remove two Sycamore trees, transplant 15 Cabbage palms, transplant a date palm, and remove a Chinese fan palm for the utility work. She said in the Reitz Lawn area they would need to remove two Loblolly trees in the McCarty area and that they would replant two trees for each loblolly tree. She said that there were two teaching planting areas that will be taken out and restored back to the original condition once construction is over and that the idea was to try to salvage the existing plants. Committee members expressed concern about the plants dying during the construction. She said that they would replace with the same plants if the plants died during construction. Committee members also were concerned about the palm transplanting and would ask the design team to be aware of the spacing and use structural elements. Tom Schlick asked the design team to get with Bart Schiffman, because these teaching beds were for his ID class.

Motion: Brian Keith made the motion to approve the design of Inner Road and that the project come back with a plan to the committee regarding the ornamental beds that considers what is there, what is proposed to be put back and to make sure that it was coordinated with the impacted faculty.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

Wilmot Gardens – Reflective Garden

Dr. C Craig Tisher

Dr. Tisher introduced himself and showed a design by David Conner for a proposed project in the southeast corner of the Wilmot Botanical Gardens. He said that the WBG steering committee would like to develop the area creating a pedestrian path and other walkways with seating that wind around the bowl area shown in the design. He said that they were looking at stone or brick for the pathways and that there were different levels for paths and gathering, adding that a wood deck with seating on both levels was proposed.

Dr. Tisher showed slides of the area as it looks now and the elevations in the area. He also showed a design of what was proposed. He said that there were 5 trees that need to be removed to complete this project and went over them one by one (Laurel oak with a 14 DBH, Magnolias with a 13 & 6 DBH, Sweet Gum with a 15 DBH and a 24" DBH Laurel Oak, which he felt was a safety hazard). He said that the 24 DBH Laurel was hollow with animals living in the bottom and that the top had been taken off for over 20 years. Committee members were concerned about alternative tree planting for mitigation. Dr. Tisher stated that WBG didn't have much funding for the mitigation but would be adding 5 Weeping Cypress trees and 10 Japanese maple trees, in addition to 20 more camellias, for mitigation.

Motion: Adam Dale made the motion to approve the proposed tree removals and garden design with mitigation in the form of the proposed Cypress, Maple, and Camellia plantings.

Second: Melanie Nelson

Motion Carried Unanimously

Tree Removal - NATL

Gage LaPierre

Gage introduced himself and said he was before the committee to seek approval to turn two Laurel oaks into snags to prevent them from dropping limbs on a storage shed, while providing habitat. He said that there were hickory's and other trees coming up in these areas and that the Laurel oaks were shading out the other tree's growth. He said that if they only trimmed dead branches it would be a continual maintenance concern. He said that the snag would take a long time to die and will be manageable once that happens. He proposed mitigation of 4 long leaf pines and a southern red oak.

Motion: Adam Dale made the motion to conditionally approve creating two snags (providing standard mitigation) with site visit concurrence by Adam Dale.

Second: Brian Keith

Motion Carried Unanimously

Grounds Report

Tom Schlick

Tom went over the tree removals for the month. He showed the trees with a description and location. He said there were a few large heritage trees that had to be removed this month and committee members asked whether Grounds does an automatic replacement. Committee members expressed concern that they were removed without coming to the committee first and that they had received complaints from other members of the campus community. There was discussion that the University needs to hire an arborist or to put one on retainer to help review the trees and justify the removals of heritage trees. Gail Hansen de Chapmen noted that she had given approval for one of the trees and should have noticed the committee. Tom also went over the invasive species work on campus they had done by the Reitz Union.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 12:18 PM.