

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
May 13, 2021, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday May 13, 2021 for a Zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

William Barber – Assistant Director, UF Police Department
Gregg Clarke – Director of Operations, Facilities Services
David Conser – City of Gainesville – City Arborist
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
Melanie Nelson – Associate Professor, Medicine
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facilities Services
Matt Williams – Director, Sustainability

Members not attending:

Donna Bloomfield – Grounds, Facilities Services
Carlos Dougnac – Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction
Craig Hill – Assistant Vice President, Business Affairs
Alpa Nawre – Assistant Professor, Landscape Architecture
Brett Scheffers – Assistant Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
Kevin Trejos – Student

Visitors attending:

Melissa Thomas – Administrative, Planning, Design & Construction
Jim Vignola – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction
Fiona Hogan – Office of Sustainability
Laurie Hall – CHW
Caeli Tolar – CHW
George Murphy – Unknown
Mac McKinney – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Guest - Unknown

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Adam Dale made a motion to approve the Agenda with adding a Signage Concerns section to the Other Business area. The Committee will approve April Minutes to the next meeting.

Second: Brain Keith

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

UF – 632 – ASA 06 – Museum & Sweetwater Signal & Bike Path Improvements for DSIT Jim Vignola

Jim introduced himself and stated he was here today to discuss the Museum & Sweetwater Signal & Bike Path Improvements for the DSIT project. These are funded separately so it is considered a sub-project that will be completed at the same time as the DSIT project. He introduced Laurie Hall and Caeli Tolar from CHW to present the proposal. Laurie showed the existing area and conditions. Currently, Sweetwater Drive and Reitz Union Drive are not aligned. This project will align the two roadways and add a new traffic signal with a scramble pedestrian crossing design. This project is coordinated with the Utility Project at Museum road for construction scheduling and completion. A left-hand turning lane and median improvements will also be included. The intersection will connect to the north/south bike trail toward Black Hall. There was concern of pedestrian crossing mid-block along Museum Road and so pedestrian barriers will be placed for that area in the median. There was prior discussion about the bike racks and so they were moved to more appropriate areas as shown in the presentation. The project was approved by the Transportation & Parking Committee on May 11th, and they were happy with this proposal.

The project is proposing a 4' greenscreen across the median with planted Carolina Jessamine and Confederate Jasmine. The proposed planting will have Live Oaks and Perennial Peanut which align with the Landscape Master Plan. Laurie showed the intersection layout and how pedestrians would cross in all directions. The crosswalk will be painted, not raised. The committee asked about the root growth in the medians and expressed concern of the road lifting after a period of time. The committee suggested using a smaller tree that would be more appropriate for the median, such as Bluff Oak, Magnolia, or Black Gum. The committee suggested to also lower the greenscreen to 3'.

On Sweetwater Drive, the north/south bike path and service drive have proposed planted palms and swamp chestnut trees. The reason there are palms being planted is because of the utilities in this area. It will be large enough for the bike path and the service drive without any problems. The committee asked about the width of the bike path, which is 15 feet. The committee asked if the path should be wider but Laurie Hall stated that widening the path would cause additional impacts on the existing trees and the utilities in the area. The path going west toward Gale Lemerand Drive was narrower and the committee recommends it be wider with less landscape. There will be drip irrigation for the plantings in the project.

Laurie showed the Magnolia on the north side of Museum Road that needs to be removed because of the signal going in. The committee discussed the plantings and trees going on the site and made alternate suggestions. The user group is looking for trees in the median with a presence. The maintenance is also a question for the median, but the Bluff Oak or Southern Magnolia will work better as a median tree. Laurie stated they would discuss with Grounds about the species and maintenance.

Motion: Adam Dale made the motion to approve the project as presented with allowing confederate jasmine to be planted and considering alternatives for live oak in the median with a preference to Bluff Oak.

Second: Brian Keith

Motion Carried Unanimously

III. MINOR PROJECTS

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Linda stated she was here today to talk about an amendment to the Campus Master Plan which was approved in December 2020. The 2020-2030 Campus Master Plan changed the Future Land Use designation of McCarty Woods to academic and was taken out of conservation. The location was listed for a future building on that corner. She showed the Future Land Use map that was approved in December 2020 and then displayed the amended map illustrating the site returning to a conservation designation. She then discussed the documents outlining the 1.8 acres coming out of the academic FLU and going back into conservation, as well as the corresponding map. She showed the Capital Improvements map which had shown the site for future buildings beyond the 10-year plan horizon and also the amended Conservation Boundary map. These revisions keep all of McCarty Woods in conservation and will be going to the Board of Trustees in June. The committee had an open discussion about the future buildings shown on the map and others being demolished.

Motion: Brain Keith made a motion to approve the plan amendment as presented.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

Questions about Signs

Matt Williams

Matt expressed a need for more explicit signage at Lake Alice. It may be beneficial for the signs to be in other languages and to be more graphic. It is important that everyone understands the dangers of alligators and wildlife on Campus. The signs need to be positive, colorful and have more graphics and should be located throughout campus where there may be potential environmental conflicts. For example, “Don’t walk this path after dark” may be better received if it stated, “Path open from dawn to dusk”. The committee asked that Matt reach out to others to spearhead this approach for signage. It will be beneficial to help educate the people on campus. He asked to set up this topic for a future agenda item and making sure we do not rush to add signs. There is a need and a risk but there needs to be positive education.

Tree Report

Tom Schlick/Donna Bloomfield

No tree report for this month. There will be a presentation in June for some removals of exotic invasive plants.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:24 AM.