

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
June 10, 2021, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, June 10, 2021 for a Zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

Gregg Clarke – Director of Operations, Facilities 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
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
Melanie Nelson – Associate Professor, Medicine
William Barber – Assistant Director, UF Police Department
David Conser – City of Gainesville – City Arborist

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
Milo Zapata – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Doug Soltis – Professor, Florida Museum of Natural History and Department of Biology
Basil Iannone – Assistant Professor, Forest Resources and Conservation
Rachel Mandell – Senior Planner, Planning, Design & Construction
Tom Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Van Russian – Duke Energy
Tommy Harrison – Duke Energy
Matt Roach – Duke Energy

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: **Brian Keith made a motion to approve the Agenda with an added item and discussion item, and a motion to approve the April and May minutes.**

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS – no business

III. MINOR PROJECTS – no business

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

McCarty Woods Recovery

Doug Soltis

Doug Soltis stated that the purpose of his request was to establish monthly work parties to focus on the removal and control of invasive species in McCarty Woods. The volunteers will be largely students, faculty and staff of the University as well as local members of the Native Plant Society. Before any invasive plant species are removed, they will view a presentation on the plants to target and the proper means of removal. Also, the woods will be surveyed beforehand. The major target species for removal is Cat's Claw. The root tubers are not generally deep when the plant is young and can easily be pulled up. Removing some of the bigger vines will be a top priority. Doug asked if the use of herbicide would be permitted but explained that it wouldn't need to be considered immediately. The volunteers will also remove privet along the edge of the woods, mostly on the East side. Doug said that he has been in contact with Matt Williams to follow the standard protocol for the disposal of the trash bags. He then explained the uses of McCarty Woods, such as space for class, teaching, research and stress relief. He highlighted the proximity of McCarty Woods to classrooms and provided a list of courses that utilize the site. Doug provided examples of bird species, reptiles, amphibians, mammals plants and butterflies that live in the woods.

Committee member Adam Dale thanked Doug for the information on McCarty Woods. Doug stated that the enthusiasm is there to protect McCarty Woods. Committee Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman asked if additional natives would be planted to enhance the variety of plants. Doug replied that the work groups would first identify if there are any plants missing in the flora and would then move forward with those questions. Gail expressed that the involvement of students would be a good experience. Basil Iannone thanked Doug Soltis for the presentation and explained that planting new species could prevent future invasive species from coming in. He also recommended reaching out to Mark Hostetler for volunteers. Basil asked if there are plans for getting native plant material and Doug answered that they want to first make an updated checklist of the organic species currently in McCarty Woods before making decisions for the future.

Committee member Brian Keith said that he appreciated the project and the procedure followed by coming to the committee. He then asked who the point of contact was for the project and how sustained communication would work overtime. Linda explained that conservation areas on campus have Conservation Area Land Management plans and the processes of how those plans were created. Committee member Keith expressed concern with the long-term maintenance of the project. Doug said that he wanted to provide nature walks and questioned how they could be advertised. Matt Williams stated that the Office of Sustainability can maintain a website and could be a central point of contact. He also expressed the importance of making sure volunteers have an ecological background. Matt said that the University's Business Affairs Division is the logical lead for stewardship efforts since it has responsibility for the physical campus and has a communications person.

Motion: Brian Keith made a motion to approve the proposal for invasive exotic plant removal at McCarty Woods as presented and asked the appropriate party bring to the committee a stewardship program model that could be replicated for other Conservation areas.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

UF-623C Duke Sub Station Easement Discussion

Milo Zapata

Milo introduced himself and three representatives from Duke Energy: Van Russian, Tommy Harrison and Matt Roach. Duke is requiring an adjustment to the location of an easement for the substation. Milo stated that they are here to inform the committee that workers will be coming on site to start tree removal along the easement. He displayed a map showing the location of the substation site and the transmission lines and poles that will be constructed.

Van Russian provided an overview of the project and explained the initial design was done in an expedited fashion. Within the existing easement, there are very tall trees which could disrupt the lines and cause power problems on campus.

Tom Harrison showed a visual of the existing energy easement and the proposed easement. He also discussed the density of the trees in the area. Milo displayed a table listing the off-easement tree removals. Matt Roach stated that there is a total of 18 trees to be removed outside of the easement.

Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman explained that the proposed easement is shifting part of the existing easement out of a conservation area. Linda Dixon explained that the trees within the proposed easement would have to be removed but that Duke Energy would be giving up their rights to remove the trees within the area that is no longer needed in the easement.

Basil Iannone was concerned that the location of the proposed trees for removal was a water recharge area. Linda stated that she was not aware of that and believed the ditch drains to a small retention area. Van Russian stated that a hydraulic expert studied the area and said that there would not be an issue with removing the trees. Basil asked if there was a way to ensure stabilization once the trees were removed. Matt Roach said that the environmental specialist was not on the call but that BOPs will be required to help with the stability.

Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman explained that this project was not for an approval, but just a discussion item.

GRU Truck Parking

Frank Javaheri

Frank shared the location of a site on West University Avenue, across from 9th street, where GRU needs to put a medium sized truck for two to three hours. He wanted to bring it to everyone's attention in case they saw the truck on campus. He was concerned about the trees and said that he has already informed GRU that the truck should not park on top of a root system. Linda stated that three small trees on the site have already been approved by LVL for removal. Committee Member Adam Dale recommended that GRU cut down one of the smaller trees and park on top of it to avoid the larger Oak tree's root system. Frank said he would let them know.

Newell Project Update

Brian Keith

Committee Member Brian Keith asked for an update on the scope of the project for Newell Drive and if it will be completed by the time students return to campus. Frank Javaheri said that the project is scheduled to start on August 16th and to conclude in December of this year. He said that the bollards in the project may change, but besides that everything is the same. Committee Member Keith Brian said he saw the scooter parking being repainted and Frank explained that it will be removed as part of the project.

Grounds Report

Tom Schlick

Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman expressed that she was hoping for a Grounds Report at this meeting, specifically over algae concerns at Lake Alice. Matt Williams added that there are a couple of issues. He said that the lake is hot which caused the algae bloom and that there needs to be a comprehensive approach to

resolving the issue without the use of copper-based algacides because there is a good likelihood of a fish kill. Matt also stated that we do not have the data to see what types of nutrient loadings may be contributing to the algae.

Tom Schlick stated that he does not have a grounds report and that he will have some gardens work to discuss at the next meeting. Tom stated that he will do whatever he can to help with Lake Alice. He said he expected the bloom to go away with the rain and cooling of the water temperature. He said the rate of sedimentation is probably higher than it has ever been.

Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman thanked Tom for the information. Tom said there is not a formal plan with the department to do something about the algae bloom. He said that a Lake Alice plan needs to be defined for the next five years. Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman made a formal request that the committee discuss the creation of a management plan for Lake Alice at the next committee meeting.

Basil Iannone asked where the source of sedimentation was from. Tom Schlick explained that approximately 65% of the campus drains into Lake Alice. He said that the construction upstream is contributing to it. Basil stated that there needs to be proactive mitigation.

Brian Keith said that he agreed there needs to be a plan for Lake Alice and that there also needs to be a plan for long-term implementation. He said there needs to be a stewardship model and that there are several parallels to McCarty Woods. Chair Gail Hansen De Chapman asked Linda Dixon where the implementation of a conservation area plan would fall. Linda responded that it would fall to different groups, such as the Office of Sustainability and Facility Services. Chair Gail Hansen de Chapman asked if specific people would be named in the plan and Linda replied that it could do that. Matt Williams stated he has some funds that can likely be utilized for the conservation management plans.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:42 AM.