

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
January 13, 2022, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, January 13, 2022 for a Zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

Donna Bloomfield – Grounds, Facilities Services
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
Basil Iannone – Assistant Professor, Forest Resources and Conservation
Brian Keith – Associate Dean, Library Administration
Tim Martin – Associate Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conservation
Melanie Nelson – Associate Professor, Medicine
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facilities Services
Matt Williams – Director, Sustainability

Members not attending:

William Barber – Assistant Director, UF Police Department
David Conser – City of Gainesville – City Arborist
Carlos Dougnac – Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction
Andrew Smiarowski - Student

Visitors attending:

Rachel Mandell – Sr. Planner, Planning, Design & Construction
Melissa Thomas – Administrative, Planning, Design & Construction
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction
Stuart Cullen – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Jim Vignola – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Tom Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Milo Zapata – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Rick Taylor – University of Florida Police Department
Darren Baxley – University of Florida Police Department
Tom Wichman – Statewide Coordinator/Extension Project Manager, IFAS
Scarlet Seymour – Project Manager, Utilities and Energy Service, Facility Services
Laurie Hall – CHW, Landscape Architect
Caeli Tolar – CHW, Engineer
Chad Doering – Director for Facilities Management, Housing Department
Jennifer Meisenhelder – Project Manager, Utilities and Energy Services, Facility Services
Jeremy Marquis – Architect, Marquis, Latimer + Halback, Inc.

Jason Hall – Engineer, England-Thims & Miller, Inc. (ETM)
John Michael Simpson – Unknown
Kaylee August – Office of Sustainability
Andrew Castanheira - Unknown

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Basil Iannone made a motion to adopt the agenda with adding the McCarty Woods discussion in the Other Business section as well as a motion to approve the December minutes.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS –

UF-654 – (NUR) New Undergraduate Residential Complex – Programming **Stuart Cullen**

Stuart introduced himself and stated he will be the new Project Manager for this project. This project has been before the committee prior, and the expected completion of the project will be July of 2023. There was prior approval received by the committee for tree removals, but as the project has been going through the design development phase, it was discovered there needed to be a few corrections to the mitigation. Laurie Hall from CHW was present to give the updates for the design development of the project.

Laurie stated the last time they were before the committee, there was a discussion of handling the mitigation on site. She showed the project site location and went over the tree removals that were previously approved. The number of trees that will be planted back is 137 trees. Prior removal approval was for 66 trees and palms and a 26” magnolia tree. The goal was to mitigate everything on site.

Laurie showed the landscape plan and explained the layout of the different species. They are trying to introduce different species where they can increase the diversity of planting and all species are compliant with the Landscape Master Plan. Facilities Services - Grounds will also review the planting plan.

The committee discussed a few of the species and asked about the Sycamore trees. The committee suggested because this is a flexible open space area that Sycamores may not be a good choice. Chad Doering stated they would like to see something that doesn’t drop limbs or require much maintenance. Laurie said that a winged elm tree may be a good alternative. The committee asked that the substitute trees be of similar mature size. The committee asked about the bald cypress trees and wanted to know if they were in a wet area. Laurie stated it was flagged for those criteria of being a wet area. There are also utilities in that area and there is a concern for limited root zones for trees in that location. The committee went over the shrubs list and stated that they would need to allow the dwarf hollies to grow naturally and not prune them into shapes.

Linda Dixon discussed the UF Framework Plan and the pedestrian pathways across campus. The sidewalk that goes east/west from Cypress Hall to the Reitz Union is the pedestrian promenade through the Broward Hall service drive. She requested that the planting plan reinforce the pedestrian connection with consistent trees along the sidewalk edge. She also requested to keep open the middle of the Great Lawn near the dining facility by not planting along that east-west sidewalk. In the future there may be some modifications for outside seating, so Linda encouraged not to plant trees in the north end area of the lawn.

The committee asked about the construction activity along Museum Road. Laurie stated that live oaks would be planted on the streetscape for this project. The committee asked if someone could investigate the different projects going on along Museum Road and if the plantings could be made consistent because this is a major gateway for the University. Linda stated she would talk with the project managers and make sure the streetscapes have consistent landscapes.

Motion: Basil Iannone made a motion to approve the draft mitigation and landscaping plan with some key considerations:

1. If the Sycamores are replaced, (maintenance concern) they are replaced with something that will give the same size and shade functionality.
2. Open the lawn to the north and align the edges with more consistency on the east/west pedestrian pathway.
3. The landscaping south of building 3 will be tied into the overarching feel of the entryways of UF campus and in compliance with the Landscape Master Plan.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

III. MINOR PROJECTS

UT00469 – McCarty Chilled Water Extension (Phase 1) **Scarlet Seymour**

UT00470 – Gator Residential Chilled Water Infrastructure (Phase 2) **Scarlet Seymour**

Scarlet provided an overview of how these two projects come together to have a more complete chilled water loop to create more resiliency in the north district of campus. She showed the outline of the projects and noted the increased trench width. There were trees that the project was trying to save as requested by the committee but because of the increase in trench width, these trees would need to be removed. There was a request to have an arborist look at the trees but because they were not able to be saved, the project is asking for removal without an arborist's insight. The project will pay into the tree mitigation fund for the loss of these trees.

Scarlet summarized the proposed tree removal totals. UT00469 will have 13 trees removed and will pay 6500.00 dollars for mitigation. UT00470 will have 7 trees removed and will pay 3500.00 dollars for mitigation. The project would like to start in March and be completed in May of 2022.

The committee was concerned about how the tree mitigation funding was going to be used and Scarlet provided a suggestion from Grounds on how they could plant a few trees on the site. The committee was concerned about vehicle traffic on Newell Drive and what the plan was for that area during construction. There is a bus pullout area that is currently inactive, and the plan is to keep one lane open and maybe use the bus lane as a second lane during construction. The project manager will coordinate with Frank Javaheri on maintenance of traffic.

The committee asked about the tree mitigation fund and how the funds are used and the timeline for replanting. It was requested that at the next meeting the committee have a discussion with Facilities Services of how the tree mitigation funds are being used. The committee members agreed there needs to be a discussion at the next meeting for clarity of how the mitigation is being used. Linda reminded members that they still have an outstanding action item to review the tree mitigation policy. She asked that the committee members send their recommendations to Gail to be compiled and discussed at a future meeting.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to approve both projects as presented.

Second: Brian Keith

Motion Carried Unanimously

Motion: Brian Keith made a motion that at the February committee meeting, the committee revisit the plant list and tree mitigation policies and practices in the way in which they intersect with this committee's work with the goal that by the conclusion of the spring semester we have brought to a head what changes the committee would like to recommend or enact.

Second: Tim Martin

Motion Carried Unanimously

MP06934 – Landscape Master Plan Shared Use Path at Physics

Jim Vignola

Jim introduced himself and introduced Jeremy Marquis and his team to present the updates of the project. Jim showed the location of the project and gave a brief overview of the scope. It is providing the east/west connector starting the cross-campus pedestrian pathway. This is an important project from the Landscape Master Plan. The current path is inadequate and has significant grade changes. The project will provide safety, lighting, and a more defined path to make a new gateway through campus. The project is seeking advanced schematic design approval from the committee.

Jeremy introduced the design team members of the project. He showed the proposed shared use path from the Landscape Master Plan. He then discussed the existing conditions of the current path. The area will be reconfigured to create an ADA accessible 15' minimum shared use path, which provides enough area for pedestrians and bikes. The path then opens to a 20' section where two existing paths meet. The project would enhance the green space in the area as well as improve functionality.

The project will relocate the existing crosswalk from the parking garage coming across Gale Lemerand Drive. The reconfiguration of the space will require the removal of palm trees (hopefully transplanting them) and a few small magnolia and elm trees. There is a cypress and oak tree that will be saved.

Trucks will enter and exit inside the wastewater treatment plant instead of crossing the pathway in the service drive behind the Physics building. There will be a south turn around for the large semi-trucks coming in this area. This project will retain the current service drive for Physics and will not be removing the retaining wall in the service drive. The existing retaining wall along the Observatory will be replaced, and mounted lighting will be installed on the wall. There is a proposed outdoor seating or classroom space in the green space, which Jim clarified is not part of the program but would be implemented if the budget permitted. There will be screening on the pathway along the wastewater treatment facility. Bollards will be added on the edge of the path to restrict vehicle access.

The committee asked about the project team working with the stakeholders in the astronomy building to make sure the lighting proposed wouldn't interfere with the Observatory. The project has met with Observatory faculty and designed lighting that reduces impacts, but they will get back with the stakeholders to review the final design. The committee was concerned the proposed outdoor classroom would be too hot but there are a few trees in this area providing some shade. Jim clarified that since it's not programmed, any approval or comments should not be contingent on the outdoor classroom. The project will be removing 11 trees and will be putting back 25 trees on site. There are no heritage trees being impacted. The committee discussed the Moon Tree seedlings and they will not be counted toward the tree replacements.

Motion: Basil Iannone made a motion to approve as presented with the understanding it will come back to the committee for final approval.

Second: Tim Martin

Motion Carried Unanimously

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

McCarty Woods Discussion

Basil Iannone

Basil stated there have been several discussions around the McCarty Woods trimming. Doug Soltis and the volunteer group working at McCarty woods was disheartened and discouraged by all the trimming that happened by Facility Services. Linda stated there was miscommunication of where the boundaries of the conservation area are located and misunderstanding between Grounds and Dr. Soltis with regard to the work that was planned. The clearing that happened on the north side near the parking lot is not in the conservation area. However, the east side area that was cleared is in the conservation area. Some of that damage was due to felling a dead tree so that it would fall into the woods and not into areas where it would be safety issue.

Linda stated that the conservation area land management plan needs to be updated to provide clear communication about boundaries and management strategies. She explained that they will be updated over the next year and that the last update was in 2005.

There is a request to plant back some flowering trees or beauty berry at McCarty Woods. Linda will work with the stakeholders to confirm approval of the replanting project. The committee would like to see the landscaping, edging and trimming of a conservation area be done delicately and with better instruction and knowledge of the rules of conservation areas and wetlands. The conservation areas also need to have a buffer. The Campus Master Plan policies are to plant only natives on the edges of conservation areas.

Motion: Brain Keith stated in light of the recent McCarty Woods event that was in the Gainesville Sun, the committee reiterates that human intervention impacting conservation areas regardless of whether it was a project or not should come before the LVL committee in advance per the UF Campus Master Plan.

Second: Basil Iannone

Motion Carried Unanimously

Matt Williams stated that Duke will be continuing the work within the easements. This is a project that has come before the committee previously and has approval but wanted to make everyone was aware that the work is continuing. The tree removals are considered hazardous trees and would not need mitigation.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:12 AM.