

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
February 10, 2022, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, February 10, 2022 for a Zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

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
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
Andrew Smiarowski - Student
Matt Williams – Director, Sustainability
Jacob Pruitt – University Police Department

Members not attending:

Donna Bloomfield – Grounds, Facilities Services
Carlos Dougnac – Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction

Visitors attending:

Rachel Mandell – Sr. Planner, Planning, Design & Construction
Melissa Thomas – Administrative, Planning, Design & Construction
Sam Schatz – City of Gainesville – Urban Forestry, City of Gainesville
Tom Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Melanie Heflin – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Keith Humphreys – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Milo Zapata – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction
Cydney McGlothlin – University Architect, Planning, Design & Construction
Dustin Stephany – Sustainability Coordinator, Planning, Design & Construction
Chuck Kammin – Utilities Department, Facility Services
Elisabeth Manley – Owner & Principal, Manley Design
Laurie Hall – Landscape Architect, CHW
Caeli Tolar – Landscape Design, CHW
Brandi Renton – Associate Vice President, Business Affairs
Jody Green – Admin Assistant to the Director of the Harn Museum & Special Projects Manager

Deah Lieurance – Extension Scientist, Agronomy Department
Olesya Malakhova – Research Technician, UF Residential Landscape Ecology Lab
Jennifer Lyons – Project Manager, Charles Perry Partners, Inc.
Kaylee August – Program Coordinator, Office of Sustainability

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Adam Dale made a motion to approve the Agenda with an added information item and approve the January Minutes.

Second: Tim Martin

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

UF – 656 Newell & Northeast Gateway – Construction

Melanie Heflin

Melanie introduced herself and stated she was in front of the committee to present the Newell & Northeast Gateway projects which are priority projects from the Landscape Master Plan. GAI Consultants and Elisabeth Manley with Manley Design were also in attendance to present the project updates.

Elisabeth noted that a letter was previously provided explaining the additional tree removals. The reason the project had to come back to the committee is because, as part of phase II of the Northeast project, the parking lots between Little Hall and Criser Hall have been added back to the project scope and is causing additional tree impacts due to the added infrastructure and utility work.

There is a 29” heritage Shumard Oak tree in an existing end island that has been protected so far in the project. With phase II and the required new stormwater piping, the location of an existing manhole provides no alternatives to reroute the infrastructure and will require the tree to be removed. A 29” Drake Elm tree in a planter towards the southwest corner of Tigert Hall will also be impacted.

Three Bald Cypress trees were in a parking lot island near Criser Hall and due to the location of a large fire main, they will need to be removed and are unable to be relocated. A pine with existing storm damage on the northern edge of the project boundary, which originally was going to be saved, was removed prior to coming to the committee for approval because of the utilities and infrastructure work. At the corner of Union and 13th street, the new footing for the gateway wall will require the removal of a Sabal Palm and two Loblolly Pines. Lastly, a Magnolia tree has already been removed due to utility impacts.

The committee asked about the process of what happens when a project bypasses the committee and removes a tree prior to receiving approval. Melanie explained that the project tried to preserve the trees until a decision had to be made to keep construction on schedule. Melanie asked if there could be an emergency request procedure and Linda replied that these things usually come to the Chair of the committee. Gail stated the topic will be discussed later during the meeting during the tree mitigation agenda item.

The committee discussed the Shumard Oak and how excavation on the western side would compromise the tree’s root system which is why the tree is requested for removal. The Drake Elm is unavoidable and will need to be removed.

The committee noted that projects are frequently having to come back to the committee to ask for approval of additional tree impacts. Cydney explained how projects come to the committee at different stages. Projects first come to the committee at the Programming phase where surveys have not been drawn yet and there is no design team. The footprints provided are a projection and try to show where a new building would result in the least amount of tree impacts. Once a project has a design team, the project comes back before the committee at the Advanced Schematic Design phase when surveys have been completed which may determine additional tree

impacts. At the Design Development phase, a project should know the exact impacts and have a landscaping plan. Basil stated it would be better in the beginning to have the worst-case scenarios to understand the impacts and then move forward with best-case scenarios. The committee said it would be helpful to provide an overview of previous approvals when returning to the committee with new impacts so that the members understand the changes.

In summary, the project requested approvals for eight tree removals that haven't occurred yet and two trees that have already been removed, for a total of ten trees.

Motion: Brian Keith stated given the facts presented and the circumstances of an underway project and the realities of that, the committee accepts the removal of the additional trees as presented. The two trees removed without coming to the committee prior to the removal should be mitigated at a penalized rate.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried 3 to 2 (Tim Martin and Basil Iannone voted no) vote.

UF – 671 Harn Museum Art Wing – Advanced Schematic Design

Keith Humphreys

Cydney explained that this is the first project that will contribute to enhancing the Cultural Plaza into more of a plaza rather than a parking lot. Keith provided an overview of the project. It is an addition to the American Art Wing that will expand into the parking lot at the corner of Hull Road and Bledsoe Drive. The addition will be one story and about 20,000 gross square feet. It will contain two art galleries, a study center, a conservation lab and storage. There will be a dedicated drop-off area and added green space to comply with the Campus Master Plan.

The tree impacts include a Magnolia in the back and two Laurel Oaks. There are also 8 palm trees which will either be relocated and saved or removed. There are 3 Shumard Oaks which were previously approved when the project was brought to the committee during the Programming phase. The previous plan was to keep the parking lot near Bledsoe drive, but because of the intention to make the area greener and the need for a drop-off area, the Laurel Oaks and Magnolia will need to be removed.

The committee asked about the parking lot to the north and explained that some parking would be removed. There may be opportunities to add trees toward the east end of the site. The committee stated the trees looked like live oaks and not laurel oaks, which were probably misread from the old landscape plan.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to approve removal of the proposed additional trees with onsite mitigation.

Second: Melanie Nelson

Motion Carried Unanimously

III. MINOR PROJECTS – No Business

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Update on Duke Easement Project

Chuck Kammin

Chuck explained that Duke Energy has two different groups that need to come onto campus for vegetation management. One is the substation crew and the other is their distribution transmission crew. They need to perform vegetative maintenance under their 69KB transmission line easement. They tried to do this work earlier in 2021 but received pushback due to the clearing. They would like to come onto campus between March 5 and 13 to conduct the maintenance.

There are a few trees that will need to be removed by the “Jimmy Johns” substation. The committee asked if this area was in their easement and Chuck stated it is within the 50’ easement. There will be plantings of natives back in the area once completed in coordination with the Office of Sustainability.

Duke has a 6-year maintenance schedule within their easements. The committee was concerned about the PR associated with the proposed clearing. The maintenance along Mowry Road is in a conservation wetland area. Matt shared the map where Duke’s drop points are. They have asked to take out anything that is a tall growing tree species.

The committee asked if there was a way to notify UF faculty and students of the maintenance to prevent push back. Matt is working with Duke and faculty to create a replanting plan. This is a way of showing that there is a plan to make the area better and is also an educational opportunity.

Duke is trying to perform the work when there is reduced vehicular and pedestrian traffic on campus and is scheduled to start during Spring Break. The committee asked if there could be an announcement so that UF faculty and staff would be notified of the vegetative maintenance. Greg Clark stated they would get with Business Affairs so they could get the message out sooner than later. The committee asked if Duke is on board with the replanting of natives in the easement. Chuck has talked with Duke and they are in full cooperation with the replanting plan.

Tree Report

Tom Schlick

Tom stated this month was a bad month for palm trees. He showed one in front of the stadium, another at the parking garage at the O’Connell center and another at the Bat Houses. The committee suggested testing the green palms for bronzing to see if they need be removed. Tom responded there is not enough in the budget for that kind of testing.

The committee discussed the different areas infected by the bronzing. The committee asked about when there is a design from a prior project and a palm has died, if it is replaced to match the existing design. Tom stated that the palms are not doing well and if it should be considered to put back something different. The committee suggested there should be a plan, especially in the historic areas, to maintain the designs. Linda stated the historic areas are where the palms make a statement. The committee suggested having a succession plan. Tom agreed there does need to be a plan. The committee stated that not all palms are susceptible to lethal bronzing. The committee suggested using the tree mitigation fund to strategically do testing and replant trees.

Conservation Area Land Management Plans

Linda Dixon

Linda said that the Conservation Area Land Management Plans were going to be updated. She explained the plan update has been on the back burner for a while, but that funding has been received from the VPs office. A steering committee of faculty, staff and students will be formed for the project. Site visits will be conducted from March to May and the committee will be kept informed of the progress. The project should last around one year.

Linda also addressed the McCarty Woods concerns and the volunteer work led by Dr. Soltis. The VP Response letter did not support the funding of the intern and work at McCarty Woods. VP Reynolds requested more information about the funding oversight and reoccurring expenses.

Linda asked that suggestions for the CALM plan update steering committee be e-mailed to her. The committee discussed the programmatic responsibility and ownership of the conservation areas on campus. These will be addressed during the CALM plan update process.

Tree Mitigation Policy Discussion

Gail Hansen de Chapman

Gail stated she has met with a few of the Architects PDC works work, including Laurie Hall from CHW. She has also been reviewing mitigation policies from other cities. She will send her findings to the Committee members for further discussion. The committee said that the policy should better describe the intent and goals as it relates to conservation. Paying into the tree mitigation fund should be the last resort. The committee would like to collaborate with Dave Conser from the city of Gainesville.

LMP Plant List

Gail Hansen de Chapman

Gail stated she has compiled 4 different lists and also received a tree list from Elizabeth Manley and Laurie Hall. She has sent the spreadsheet to Tom to look over and provide comments. There was also a list of plants that need to be removed from the list in the Landscape Master Plan. Dr. Deah Lieurance from the Agronomy Department gave an assessment of the plants and whether they are at high risk for becoming invasive, in which case they shouldn't be used.

Chair Report

Gail Hansen de Chapman

Gail stated that there will be a vote by the Senate Steering Committee (SSC) for a total of 10 members on the committee which was approved by VP Reynolds. The request went to the Committee on Committees and they approved it. After that, it went to the University Constitution and Regulations Committee and also went to the Subcommittee on Constitutional Revision. This last week it was presented at the Senate Steering Committee requesting a change in the bylaws to allow ten rather than six committee members.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:17 AM.