

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
October 05, 2023, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, October 05, 2023 for a Zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

Gail Hansen De Chapman – Environmental Horticulture - Chair
Fernando Alferez – Assistant Professor, Citrus Horticulture
Nancy Chrystal-Green – Associate Vice President, Division of Student Life
Adam Dale – Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department
Linda Dixon – Director, Planning, Design & Construction
Ryan Klein – Assistant Professor, Environmental Horticulture
Brandi Renton – Associate Vice President, Business Affairs
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facilities Services
Matt Williams – Director, Office of Sustainability

Members not attending:

Gregg Clarke – Director of Operations, Facilities Services
David Conser – City of Gainesville – City Arborist
Carlos Dougnac – Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction
Basil Iannone – Assistant Professor, Forest Resources and Conservation
Brian Keith – Associate Dean, Library Administration
Bart Knowles – Major, UF Police Department
Lucas Majure – Assistant Curator, FLMNH
Tim Martin – Associate Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conservation
Gerardo Nunez – Assistant Professor, Horticultural Sciences

Visitors attending:

Melissa Thomas – Administrative, Planning, Design & Construction
Cydney McGlothlin – Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction
Fatima Ahmed – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Stephen Roberts – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Tom Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Jamie Lindsey – Architectural Designer, Planning Design & Construction
Savanah Partridge – Intern, Planning, Design & Construction
Kaylee August – Office of Sustainability
Caeli Tolar - CHW
Jordan Benton – Facilities Services
Michael Gilfilen – MJG Studios
William Belote – Property Manager for Sigma Alpha Epsilon
John Williamson – Contractor for UF-644, UF-644A and UF-644B
Frank Bellof - AGI
Rossignp - Unknown

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Ryan Klein made a motion to adopt the Agenda and approve the September Minutes.

Second: Fernando Alferez

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

UF – 644, 644A, 644B – Reitz Union Lawn/Inner Road Improvements – Design Development Tom Feather

Tom introduced himself and stated he was here today for the UF-644, UF-644A, and UF-644B projects. The project was approved in October 2020 by LVL for Design Development. The scope spans across the Reitz Union Lawn and out to Inner Road to the lawn west of Norman Hall.

This is an infrastructure and roadway improvement project. The infrastructure component includes steam, chilled water and electrical. The roadway improvements convert Inner Road from one-way travel to two-way travel, which will affect the 13th Street right-of-way. There will be a northbound left turn lane added as well as signalization changes.

The requirement for the major chilled water component of the project was urgent and an early release package was prepared. This work was executed and completed in November 2021 to meet the demand from other projects coming online. The remainder of the project was put on hold until this past April. The project is now impacting campus at the North Lawn near the Hub and Inner Road from Newell to 13th Street.

The project will impact the planters and palms at the north end of Reid Hall. John Williams, the leader of the design team, explained the challenges in the area and gave an overview of the upgrades to the steam, chilled water, and electrical.

Frank Bellomo of GAI Consultants was present to discuss the landscape and plantings. Frank went over the two planters' locations and the species within each planter. The piping will need to go under the sidewalk in this area. There was a meeting on site to discuss the utility and piping layout and its impact to the planters. Grounds agreed to relocate the two sabal palms and the fan palm somewhere else on campus and after construction, the project would restore the area and replant the palms.

The committee asked if Grounds could handle relocating the palms. Tom replied it would have to be sometime between November and January. The work would impact entry to Reid Hall, so most of the work will be next Summer. The committee asked about the Millie grass and suggested purple top grass. It is a new favorite and a grass for the future.

The committee stated that relocating the existing sabal palms is ok but not to bring more onto campus. The city is also not bringing them in or planting them. The design team was open for suggestions from the committee. The building is on the national register, so when thinking about a replacement species, it should be tall and narrow similar to the palms. The committee suggested tall columnar trees and agree that in this area the plants should be tall.

Motion: Adam Dale made a motion to approve the project as presented which includes:

- 1. Grounds taking the two sabal palms and the fan palm to be planted on campus sometime this winter.**
- 2. Then completing the proposed infrastructure on the site.**
- 3. Consider alternatives to palms since they are susceptible to lethal bronzing**
- 4. Coming back to the committee with a final planting choice for that spot**

Second: Ryan Klein

Motion Carried Unanimously

III. MINOR PROJECTS

MP05635 – UF SMMRL Canopy Refurbishments – Schematic Design **Stephen Roberts**

Stephen introduced himself and explained that the project would be putting a Canopy between buildings 0226 and 0771. The scope of the project included working on drainage issues as well. The project will be impacting one water oak. There will be a new slab put over the existing to help with the drainage issues. Michael Gilfilen from MJG Studio was present to discuss the project.

Michael gave an overview of the project location and the proposed scope of work. The canopy is aged and gathers leaves and debris. Facility Services has deemed it unsafe to clean. The area is used by students and because of the damage, the students get rained on while using the area. There is also a shipping container that was turned into a chemical storage building which will be removed prior to putting down the new slab. The goal is to improve the drainage and give the students some shelter. The new slab will slope to the southeast. The request is to remove the 13” DBH water oak. The project is requesting to pay into the tree mitigation fund for the tree removal.

The committee stated it looked like the tree canopy was previously damaged. The committee asked if the tree was looked at by someone to state it was in poor condition and how that determination was made. The committee said the tree type was weedy, grows quickly, and is subject to decay. They have a short life which could be an issue over time to the building. The committee asked about the soil being tested and Stephen stated that the project had conducted the first round of soil testing and there will be an additional test during the project.

Motion: Nancy Chrystal-Green made a motion to approve the project as presented.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

MP07840 – Fraternity-Sigma Alpha Epsilon Retaining Wall – Design Development & Schematic Design
Fatima Ahmed

Fatima introduced herself and stated she was there for the SAE retaining wall. She showed the location of the project on Museum Road. There is 3800 SF that is currently being used as a basketball court. The user group would like to build a concrete retaining wall and a 4” french drain pipe to support the existing brick privacy wall.

The brick wall is impacted by the roots systems of the Sycamore trees that are located within 10-12 feet of the existing privacy wall. The contractor will use the existing concrete slab in the courtyard to build the new retaining wall. The brick wall was constructed as a privacy wall and is not designed or constructed to handle the load of the retaining wall. Over time the University built a parking lot adjacent to the project location and added fill material several feet above the existing elevation and against the user groups privacy wall. Over time, this caused the wall to need to be reinforced with cables to hold it in place.

The root systems are growing toward the privacy wall and impacting it. Both trees hover over the courtyard and drop limbs and leaves which are affecting the user group. An arborist report concluded that the trees needed to be removed to ensure no impacts to the new wall. The committee claimed if the new concrete wall is constructed as a retaining wall, there should not be any new impacts. The committee stated that trimming or

pruning the trees to raise the canopy would be a benefit but there is the cost issue associated. The user group usually doesn't have the funding to handle this work and Grounds usually handles the parking lot maintenance. The committee discussed the trees and the parking lot and they agreed that the new concrete wall should retain the root systems.

The Property Manager, William Belote, stated the trees were almost reaching the house and they grow about 2 feet a year. The tree root system does put pressure on the privacy wall and water is coming through the wall now during rains. They have now installed a 4" french drain and constructed the new concrete retaining wall to handle the pressure. They put drains on the east and west walls down to the sump pump and out of the courtyard. This project cost was \$110,000 dollars.

The limbs and leaves will be problematic because there will be rubberized court tiles on the courtyard and the other areas will be artificial turf. The leaves and limbs will obstruct the drainage of the courtyard. The property manager would like to make sure that they don't impact the tiles or turf from draining properly. The committee asked about the timeline for the court tiles and William responded they would be starting on them next week.

William said several trees had been removed around the area and there was no explanation of why they were removed. The committee asked if mitigation was going to be paid into the tree mitigation fund and maybe something could be planted back for the shade of the parking lot. The committee also asked about the heat on the artificial turf.

The committee questioned that the removal seemed to be more about leaves than the retaining wall. The committee discussed the drainage of the proposed materials and putting domed grates over the tile to not block the drains. The committee understood the why the project wanted the trees to come down because of the use of the space, and there should be a plan to replant something back in collaboration with Grounds. The committee stated putting something back would help with the shade in the parking lot. The Property Manager asked about other trees being removed from behind other houses and why they can't remove the two behind this house. The committee said the average life span is about 20 to 25 years. We are now reaching the benefit of the trees and to replant we would be waiting again to have a benefit. The committee also said they didn't have information about the other trees being cut down to understand the question.

The committee asked about the drains and the issue of the leaves getting into the tiles and on the turf. The drains run along the full length of all the walls. The committee discussed the project drain and if the water would make it to the drains. The committee stated that when the University saw this project, it years ago, and we are late in the game to change the assumptions. William stated that with the study from the Arborist, he thought the trees would be removed because of those assessments. The committee discussed the project and if there is new information, the Chair could put it back on the Agenda in order to change the motion.

Motion: Adam Dale made a motion to not approve the removal of the two Sycamore trees.

Second: Fernando Alferez

Motion Carried 3 yes and 1 nay

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Landscaping and Natural Resource Projects

Tom Schlick

Tom stated he was presenting today because Jordan was not able to attend. Tom said they are working on the project list that was discussed in prior meetings. They will be installing landscaping bollards at the Plaza of Americas. They've been working on holly tree removals on the west side of Buckman drive for the Campus Beautification Project. The planters are going to remain in place for a short time. They are waiting to find out more of the traffic patterns before continuing with the hardscape demo. They have pulled off the Tigert Circle to work on DSIT.

The committee asked about the timeline of removal and replanting Buckman on both sides of the road. Tom explained it is slower than what was previously thought because of the traffic pattern plans. Linda explained that Planning is doing a study to mirror what the city did on each street for Fletcher and Buckman to make them one-way pairs. The curb line will not be impacted.

The tree removals will continue on Buckman, but the Shumard trees will be a later timeline. Trees that big will be done during a weekend or a break.

Conservation Area Land Management (CALM) Plan – Invasive Species Pilot **Kaylee August**

Kaylee explained she wanted to provide an update on the Invasive Species Pilot. She also noted that CALM week was next week and encouraged participation.

One of the common themes of the CALM plan is Invasive Species Management and a pilot invasive species management project is being organized for Fall 2023-Spring 2024. They are compiling data and will be identifying gaps to apply for the FWC Grant in spring. They are looking at pre- and post- treatment removals and percentage reduction of invasives for both mechanical and chemical removal efforts. They are thinking of a 25 x 25 plot to study. Phase 2 will be identify recurring funding and looking at a site-specific plan, focusing on 1 or 2 invasive species. Phase 3 would be a long-term management plan to secure funding, hire a land manager position and establish native plantings.

Kaylee said they are targeting Harmonic Woods and Jennings Creek in Fall of 2023. The research question is what is the efficacy of mechanical and chemical removals? There was a discussion around the site lines and the conservation areas. Kaylee explained that they have community outreach plans Green & Clean events. There are a number of areas on the list that will be addressed, and this is just what is happening this Fall.

Chair Report

Gail Hansen de Chapman

Gail stated there were a few things in the Chat. Gail and Adam said it could be handled on the next months agenda under 'other business.' The committee asked if the tree mitigation fund handled by Grounds could be incorporated into the monthly grounds report.

There will be a large temporary building for Steinbrenner Hall. It will be on turf and the landscape will be restored when the building is removed.

Gail stated she is working with Business Affairs about the roster and changes. There are members coming on and going off the committee.

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