

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
December 07, 2023, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, December 07, 2023 for a Zoom meeting online.

Members attending:

Gail Hansen De Chapman – Environmental Horticulture - Chair
Nancy Chrystal-Green – Associate Vice President, Division of Student Life
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
Bart Knowles – Major, UF Police Department
Rachel Mallinger, Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department
Tim Martin – Associate Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conservation
Gerardo Nunez – Assistant Professor, Horticultural Sciences
Pawel Petelewicz – Assistant Professor, Agronomy Department
Brandi Renton – Associate Vice President, Business Affairs
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facilities Services
Matt Williams – Director, Office of Sustainability

Members not attending:

Fernando Alferes – Assistant Professor, Citrus Horticulture
Ryan Klein – Assistant Professor, Environmental Horticulture
Wesley Littleton – Student
Lucas Majure – Assistant Curator, FLMNH

Visitors attending:

Rachel Mandell, Sr. Planner, Planning, Design & Construction
Melissa Thomas, Administrative Support Assistant, Planning, Design & Construction
Tamera Baughman – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Tom Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Caeli Tolar – CHW
Laurie Hall – CHW
Travis Hastay - CHW
Jordan Benton – Facilities Services
Ruth Perry – RMF Engineering – Design Team UF-644 Projects
Elizabeth Nolder- RMF Engineering – Design Team UF-644 Projects
DRC Student – Unknown
Joanne Tremblay – Unknown
Anthony Auletta – Director at NATL

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to adopt the Agenda, adding Anthony Auletta in the Other Business section, and to approve the November Minutes.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

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

Tom introduced himself and the UF-644, UF-644A, and UF-644B projects, which were designed and are being constructed as one project. It was originally approved by LVL in October 2021. The scope spans across the Reitz Union Lawn, out to Inner Road and into the lawn west of Norman Hall. The project is before the committee to request clarification of the Landscape Plan.

Elizabeth Nolder from RMF Engineering provided an overview of the project scope and explained that it was a roadway and infrastructure project. The infrastructure component includes steam, chilled water and electrical. The roadway improvements include converting Inner Road from one-way travel to two-way travel. Elizabeth introduced Ruth Perry from RMF Engineering to discuss the landscape plan.

Ruth showed the area where palms were proposed to be relocated and where new palms were to be planted that were previously approved by the committee. An alternative option was to remove the sabal palms and replace them with crape myrtles. Some sabal palms were to be replaced with Live Oaks, and others were to be relocated by UF Grounds.

Ruth explained where there will be a drop-off area for students. Tom mentioned that this was an alternate plan and that it may not be done as part of the project. The dumpster area will be shifted which shifts the exit to the east. The committee asked if there would be any parking impacts. but the area is striped for no parking.

The project team reminded the committee that the project was previously approved, they are just revisiting the landscape plan materials. At the last committee meeting, they discussed replacing the palms with Natchez White crape myrtles. It eliminates all new Sabal Palms and designates an area that can accept relocated Sabal Palms at the discretion of the committee. The project would provide 4 additional Live Oaks and 3 additional “Muskogee” crape myrtles as part of the alternate plan (parking lot of the Fine Arts building).

The committee asked about the size difference of plantings. Ruth explained that since this was a large area that was planted in a grove fashion, the project wanted to put back more canopy. The Live Oaks have a larger canopy and will fill the area with fewer trees. Ruth noted that the project team was open to the suggestions of the committee. The committee stated the standard bottle brush or vitex would be nice options, although they are not in the Landscape Master Plan. Additional suggestions were Chickasaw plum and White Fringe trees. The project team stated that they were trying to keep consistency along the corridor. The committee recommended to keep at least two of the proposed trees as Live Oaks and change two of the trees to either southern Magnolia or Swamp Chestnuts. The committee also suggested Winged Elm. The committee asked about how Holly trees do on campus. Tom stated the trees gather moss and it is difficult to remove. The committee also suggested White Oak and the Swamp Chestnut Oak, Bluff Oak, or Southern Red Oak.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to approve the Landscape plan with changes that include:

1. Replacing two of the Live Oaks in the grouping with two alternate large native trees, preferably a White Oak, Swamp Chestnut Oak, or a native Elm.
2. If the Alternate is produced, rather than Crape Myrtles to plant an alternative small flowering tree like the native White Fringe Tree, vitex, or the standard variety of Bottle Brush.

Second: Nancy Chrystal-Green

Motion Carried Unanimously

UF – 675 – Disability Resource Center – Advanced Schematic Design

Presenting: Tamer Baughman

Tamera introduced herself and Laurie Hall, who is on the Civil Management Team from CHW. Tamera reviewed the project site and scope. She explained the project would be located on the parking lot next to the Florida Gym and that there would be tree impacts. The project will be done in phases, with a second building being added to the site in a later phase.

Laurie showed the existing conditions. There are large heritage trees on the site, as well as three Live Oaks and a Pignut Hickory, some sabal palms, a pine species, and a grouping of trees at the east. There is a significant amount of grade change on the site which impacts the building located and configuration. Laurie showed a few renderings of the proposed building.

The project proposed the removal of 13 trees. There are a few trees that have significant rot and are in poor condition. The total mitigation is 26 trees. There is one heritage tree in poor condition and the project is requesting no mitigation. The project is pursuing LEED Gold.

The committee asked about the open lawn and if irrigation would be provided. Laurie responded that some of the lawn in the renderings will actually be parking, so the lawn space will be greatly reduced. The project will not be putting in trees in the lawn area due to it being a future building site for the later phase.

There is a heritage tree on the corner of Fletcher Drive and Stadium Road which impacts the proposed entrance to the building. There may be a need for this tree to be removed. There will need to be a drop-off area for the students, and the main entrance should be visible, level, and clear of leaves and sticks. Rachel asked if Laurie could clarify the distance of the building to the tree, since the renderings were not to scale. Laurie responded that the proposed building is within the dripline of the tree. This is a disability resource center, and the students will need an accessible entrance. The committee asked if the building could move to the north. A tree cluster and utilities restrict the building from moving north. The user group felt the main entrance is not well identified. The tree blocks the view of the main entrance and blocks the view across Stadium Road. There have been reduction cuts done to the tree in the past and maybe there can be some pruning done to the tree. It is not currently proposed for removal, but the user group felt that its impact on the building design warranted a discussion. Tamera showed a rendering of what it would look like with and without the tree. There will need to be some adjustments to the overhang to keep it out of the dripline of the heritage tree. The project will be coming back at the Design Development phase with the proposed Landscape Plan.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to approve the tree removals as presented.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

Motion Clarification on the Heritage Live Oak on the Corner of Fletcher and Stadium Road of the Project site.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to favor the retention of the Live Oak on the Corner of the project.

Second: Adam Dale

4 Members approved 1 member opposed – Motion Carried

UF – Health Ortho or Building Addition – Design Development
Presenting: Tamera Baughman

Tamera showed the project site and explained that it was the second addition for the building. The project is proposing a 27K square foot addition to the west and no change to the east side of the building. There will be a new drop-off zone configured in the existing parking lot. Additional parking will be added in the lot to the north of the addition. Tamera introduced Caeli Tolar from CHW to present the project scope and landscape plan.

Caeli showed the existing conditions and the proposed tree removals. There are a few trees that were planted as part of the tree mitigation for the last project on the site that are proposed for removal. There is one heritage tree in the area. Caeli pointed out a large Laurel Oak in poor condition that will need to be removed that the project would like to not pay mitigation for.

The project will be removing trees to the north of the parking lot to add additional parking. Caeli showed the tree impact summary. The project will be removing 17 existing trees that were planted as mitigation as part of a previous phase on site. These will be mitigated with a 1:1 replacement requirement. 182 trees will be removed that are subject to the standard 2:1 replacement regulation. One heritage laurel oak is proposed for removal, making the total mitigation required 384 trees. The project is replanting 65 trees on site, meaning that there will be 319 trees to be mitigated. The tree mitigation fee for the project totals \$79,750.

The stormwater management facility will have to be reconfigured. The conveyance system, including inlets, will need to be relocated to accommodate the building expansion. Due to the additional impervious area associated with the development, the existing stormwater management facility to the north will need to be expanded to account for the added runoff.

The proposed plant palette includes Bald Cypress, Red Maple, Winged Elm, and Basket Oak as the main canopy trees. All plant materials are consistent with the existing plant cover and are compliant with the Landscape Master Plan.

The committee asked about the parking. The project will be replacing the spaces they are taking with the addition as well as adding 16 patient and staff spaces. The committee stated that some of the parking is not being used and questioned if the additional parking was needed. The user group expected it would be needed during shift change or if there was an influx of patients. The number is based on the existing demand, the new OR and treating more patients. The committee asked for more information justifying the additional parking.

The committee asked if the additional parking could be located to the east of the building. The property to the east is owned by the UF Foundation. The committee said it would be helpful to understand the shared parking lots on site and have a better understanding of the restrictions. Tamera responded that they could get more information and come back to the committee.

The committee asked if the project could move forward with phasing the parking until later. The committee stated that keeping the small forest would be beneficial. The committee also felt that the previously mitigated trees should not be mitigated at 1:1. Caeli responded that the trees did not have a 5” dbh and were not subject to mitigation for this project. Caeli also said there was damage to the trees. The committee stated it looked like deer rubbing. Grounds recommended putting rubber tubing around the trunk to try and prevent the deer from damaging the tree.

The committee asked to table the project until additional information could be provided about the parking demand and existing lot availability. The committee also asked for clarification about potentially expanding to the east.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to table the project until they could come back with more information on the parking lot and the restrictions and have investigations regarding the area to the east to have a cooperative arrangement that could be made about the parking.

Second: Pawel Patelewicz

Motion Carried Unanimously

III. MINOR PROJECTS

None

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Yearly Report of the NATL

Anthony Auletta

NATL has its own management team. Currently, Anthony is the Chair of NATL and came to the committee to provide an annual report. Working with NATL are two dedicated graduate assistants that are paid to help with the work. Also, NATL has between 2 and 4 interns that will help with maintenance. Antony noted a few projects that are related to restoring other areas.

Anthony explained that NATL is maintained with prescribed burns. They can do it in house because one of the students became a 'Burn Boss'. The upland pine community was able to be burned during 2023. They were able to help with the invasive species. Anthony showed what they are proposing to do in the future.

Another project is converting the upland field to a wildflower meadow. This involved massive planting and a lot of volunteer hours. Anthony said that the area looks great, and the invasive species were staying under control. There are projects ongoing to update the invasive species distribution maps. The two areas for volunteer work have been in McCarty and Harmonic Woods.

Landscaping and Natural Resource Projects

Jordan Benton

Tom stated they didn't anything new to report. They are working on the ongoing reported projects from the last meeting. The committee asked about the fence going up. Jordan noted that there was one project for the gas line adjacent to Harmonic Woods. Gregg stated there will be tree removals of smaller saplings to clean up that area and they would be back next month to provide more information about what will need to be removed for safety and students walking along the sidewalk.

Chair Report

Gail Hansen de Chapman

Gail stated Rachel will email out the orientation materials to the new members.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:58 AM.