

MINUTES
University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
February 01, 2024, at 9:00 AM
Facilities, Planning & Construction
ZOOM MEETING

The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, February 01, 2024, 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
Tim Martin – Associate Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conservation
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 Alferéz – Assistant Professor, Citrus Horticulture
Ryan Klein – Assistant Professor, Environmental Horticulture
Wesley Littleton – Student
Lucas Majure – Assistant Curator, FLMNH
Rachel Mallinger, Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department
Cydney McGlothlin – AVP, Planning, Design & Construction
Gerardo Nunez – Assistant Professor, Horticultural Sciences
Pawel Petelewicz – Assistant Professor, Agronomy Department

Visitors attending:

Rachel Mandell, Sr. Planner, Planning, Design & Construction
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction
Robert Hatker – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction
Ronnie Cooper – Project Manager, IFAS
Beverly Frank – BFrank Studio, LLC
Caeli Tolar – CHW
Laurie Hall – CHW
Jordan Benton – Facilities Services
Israel Sanchez – Wannemacher Jensen Architects, Inc.
Mathew Mullings – Student
Student Guest – Unknown

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Adam Dale made a motion to approve the January minutes.

Second: Nancy Chrystal-Green

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

None

III. MINOR PROJECTS

MP07528 – UF Wilmot Botanical Gardens – Outdoor Rehabilitative Gardens

Presenting: Robert Hatker

Robert introduced himself and explained that there is an ongoing project at Wilmot Gardens. He introduced Dr. Tisher, who would be presenting the project.

Dr. Tisher, the Director of UF Wilmot Gardens, announced that the project recently secured funding, prompting efforts to move forward in the design process. Dr. Tisher stated that the project team, including the Landscape Architecture Firm Marquis Latimer & Halback, has completed the 60% construction documents.

There are four trees situated on the project site. Dr. Tisher gave an overview of the site and the project's impact on the surrounding area. The surroundings include administrative buildings, a greenhouse, and the Chapman Healing Garden. The new garden will complement the Healing Garden and will be part of a patient gardening program called 'Therapeutic Horticulture,' providing an outdoor horticulture space spanning approximately 3,000 SF. Previously, most activities were confined to the greenhouse, but the new garden creates an opportunity for an outdoor component and the ability to serve more patients.

The organization serves individuals facing mental and physical challenges. This includes UF students who have experienced acute anxiety and depression, with this number growing since the COVID pandemic.

Dr. Tisher presented renderings of the garden, featuring a central teaching area and an adjacent storage space. The proposed rendering also showed the planned tree mitigation. Live oak or bluff oak will replace the sweetgum and water oak trees removed by the project. Dr. Tisher provided the measurements of the impacted trees and listed the trees that have been planted within the past 18 months, encouraging the committee to consider the process as part of the tree mitigation for the site. A total of 55 trees have been planted thus far.

The committee inquired about the tree mitigation. The project will be replanting three trees back on site as part of the project's landscaping. The committee asked what trees will be replanted. Dr. Tisher responded basket oak, live oak or bluff oak will be planted. The committee asked if the gray area in the rendering was gravel. Dr. Tisher replied it was not gravel, and also addressed mobility and accessibility. The committee asked about the timeline of the project. The project is waiting for additional pricing and is intended to start in late Spring.

Motion: Tim Martin made a motion to approve the project as presented using the trees that have already been planted on site as credit towards tree mitigation. This is not to set precedent.

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

IF24049 – WW Glenn Teaching Building
Presenting: Ronnie Cooper

Ronnie Cooper introduced himself and provided an overview of the project, highlighting that funding for the teaching building had been secured. Beverly Frank, from BFrank Studios, was on the call to present the project.

The project is located at the corner of Museum and Hull Road, where there are existing metal buildings and greenhouses. A new metal prefabricated building will be constructed, necessitating the demolition of one of the existing buildings and a pond. The tree line behind the building will not be impacted, and construction will avoid the drip lines of the existing trees. Conceptually, the building will feature air-conditioned space with large fans. The other side of the building will be designed as a teaching maker space for Bioengineering faculty and students. It will have a brick facade to blend with the surrounding buildings.

The committee inquired about the fencing around the area and whether it would be affected. Ronnie Cooper clarified that the fencing would not be impacted by the project. The committee also asked about the impact on student parking in the area since the Fifield parking lot would be used for this building. Regarding the building's façade, the committee questioned if it would be a blank wall. The brick façade would adorn the front of the building, and the design intended to reduce heat gain along the west side of the building. The design team explained that the design was still under development, and more renderings would be available once more information was gathered.

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

Second: Adam Dale

Motion Carried Unanimously

IF24011 – Microbiology Cell Science – Teaching Lab Addition
Presenting: Ronnie Cooper

Ronnie Cooper introduced himself and stated that the team received enough funding for the addition of a teaching lab at the Microbiology building. He showed the location of the project and indicated that a 5,000 SF addition is planned, which would impact trees on the site. The project will absorb the entry point of the building, but the existing utilities will not be impacted.

While a few palms may be affected, the large oak tree should not be impacted. At the current proposed design phase, a maximum of 9 cabbage palms will be affected. If the teaching lab addition expands further, it may impact the small Ligustrum tree as well.

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

Second: Tim Martin

Motion Carried Unanimously

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Landscaping and Natural Resource Projects **Presenting: Jordan Benton**

Jordan stated that there were a few projects to go through.

Ficke Meadow fencing has been installed along both sides of the road. Bridge construction is underway and has been modified to enhance its aesthetic appeal.

The masonry walls at Tigert Circle are nearing completion, and irrigation has been installed. Tigert Circle will be graded properly, and then planting will begin. The landscaping from Tigert Circle to Tigert Hall is scheduled to be redone, followed by additional planting on the north side.

New outdoor furniture deployment is underway to comply with the Landscape Master Plan. Placement is being prioritized in the historic district as well as areas where existing furniture is in poor condition. Some underutilized furniture has since been removed with no intention for replacement.

The current bridge at Shepard's Park in the Reitz Ravine, which is approximately 30 years old, was damaged by a fallen tree, resulting in structural concerns. It is recommended that an overlook replace the current bridge structure for public use and safety or be removed all together.

Small hollow trees on both sides of Museum Road near the Bat Houses will be removed due to safety concerns. Following the dangerous collapse of a limb, inspections revealed damage and rot in the center of some Museum Road trees. The committee wanted to know more about the trees prior to their removal. However, the trees were small and posed urgent safety concerns, so they did not have to be reviewed by the committee.

The committee requested that emails be sent to the Chair when safety-related tree removals occurred. This line of communication would better support committee members receiving calls regarding tree removals on campus. Members stated that the role of the committee is to provide oversight, so communication regarding tree removals must be improved. Jordan suggested a quarterly email be sent to the committee chair to inform members about ongoing tree removals and upcoming projects to better address concerns from callers and students. The committee asked if explanatory signs could be posted at tree removal sites. Tom Schlick stated that photos of the area will be emailed to Gail Chapman.

Concerns were presented about trees that were removed by a faculty member for research plots without committee approval. Several pine trees and oak trees in poor condition were removed.

Jordan briefly updated the committee on the Stormwater Master Plan and states that the plan intends to prioritize the protection of Lake Alice.

There are also plans to attend a consulting session with Claire Lewis from Florida Friendly Landscaping to create a landscape plan for Malachowsky Hall. The area to the north is a future building site, so no trees will be planted.

Chair Report

Gail Hansen de Chapman

Gail Chapman stated that there were no updates on the Urban Forester position that had been requested back in June of 2023. The committee asked that consideration for this position not be eliminated because VP Reynolds was leaving. Associate VP Benton stated that she would be able to bring concerns to Sr. VP Kratzer.

A student inquired about trash removal at the Reitz Union Pond and stated that an otter was seen swimming through the trash. Jordan and Tom stated they would make a note and have someone clean up the area.

The committee asked if an onboarding session could be arranged to inform new members about committee responsibilities, authority, and how they could make recommendations.

Rachel Mandell is currently responsible for new member orientation and could include the orientation on a future agenda. The committee confirmed that it would be beneficial for members and suggested scheduling it before the next committee meeting. They also inquired if the session could be recorded. Gail agreed to send an email to Rachel to arrange the session.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:19 AM.