

**Jacksonville Tree Commission**  
**Urban Forest Master Plan Committee Minutes**

**Thursday, April 20, 2023, 9:30 AM**

**For Approval May 17, 2023**

**Ed Ball Bldg., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Conference Room 5**

**Attendees:**

Susan Fraser, Tree Commissioner  
Justin Gearhart, City Arborist  
Nancy Powell, Scenic Jacksonville  
Kathleen McGovern, Parks Dept.  
Scott Sauder, JEA

Cindy Chism, Staff

- 1. Call to Order – Ms. Fraser**
- 2. Roll Call – Cindy Chism**
- 3. Review of Stakeholder Perspective Identified from March Meeting – Susan Fraser**
  - a. Notes from previous meeting (Attachment A).
- 4. Scope of Work Discussion (Attachment B) – Big Picture – Susan Fraser**
  - a. The goal of Committee is to write a scope for an Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) that is reflective of the unique nature of the City's geographic scale , diverse land use types and acknowledges the available data. That scope can then be used by staff to generate a general cost estimate for preparation of the UFMP that can be used to develop a budget amount.
  - b. It was agreed that the UFMP would cover aspects of the urban canopy that was outside the current funding source of tree mitigation revenue; the scope would not include just tree planting but also education, maintenance, protection etc.
  - c. Mr. Gearhart pointed out that the current revenue for tree planting is restricted to planting on public land ; without including trees on private land in the UFMP the impact of the UFMP on the tree canopy will be minimal, as most of the tree canopy and the urban forest is located on private property.
  - d. Ms. Fraser noted that the way to move the needle on support for the tree canopy located on private property is education. If we are going to change how the private property tree canopy is managed there must be public consensus about what that looks

like and that is achieved through outreach and education. We must have public support for any changes in the way we support the tree canopy.

#### **5. Typical Table of Contents of an Urban Forest Master Plan**

There was general discussion about the sections of a typical UFMP; a table comparing the Table of Contents of several adopted UFMPs was shared.

#### **6. Guidance for Staff for Draft Scope of Work**

There was general discussion of the information necessary to allow for an accurate cost estimate for the scope of work to be developed, including:

- a. Who will be the manager of this document, and this process? Is it the Tree Commission and its staff? Is there a separate board to do this? Ultimately the UFMP is a planning document through the Public Works Department who supervises the Tree Commission. Will the scope include iterative review by the Tree Commission at critical points in the process? How many reviews/ meetings?
- b. Will the Urban Forestry Manager be the Project Manager?
- c. Does the Staff work with the consultant and then bring a final document to the Tree Commission for approval or disapproval? Mr. Gearhart said generally it's not just 1 meeting to have an idea and then a consultant or staff put something together, that a successful plan will include a constant interaction between the various stakeholders. Mr. Gearhart described the process recommended at the UFMP Workshop he attended recently: 1) there is the public portion that includes a public committee made up of stakeholders in the public who are interested; this committee provides input toward the big picture goals; 2) using that big picture, a technical report is developed with the various technical stakeholders involved in the development of a draft report. The internal technical committee will generate a draft plan and present it to the public committee. Once there is an agreement between the public stakeholders and the internal technical committee, the UFMP can be finalized.
- d. Ms. Fraser asked that Mr. Gearhart develop a draft scope incorporating the consensus of the Committee on the Big Picture questions presented and generally follow the process described. It was agreed by those present that the first phase of any UFMP for the City should be a review of the data and the process and programs that have been implemented so that recommendations can be made as to the need for additional data (or not) and a comparison of the process and programs with those of other jurisdictions presented. This first phase would assess what we have and identify what is necessary to go forward with the development of an UFMP for the City.

## **7. Funding Options**

- a. Ms. Fraser acknowledged that the restrictions placed on expenditure of the tree mitigation funds is limiting the Tree Commission in fulfillment of its adopted duties. She suggested that exploring support for changes to the current restrictions should be a part of the funding discussion for the UFMP and for additional staffing to support the duties of the Tree Commission. Discussion with the settlement parties Ms. Grandin is the place to start; if consensus and support for legislation to amend the current restrictions can be generated, this might be a piece of the funding strategy.
- b. Mr. Gearhart suggested that a clear plan to address funding should be developed so as not to pursue multiple approaches and diluting or dividing support for multiple approaches.
- c. Ms. Powell suggested meeting with CM Salem and discussing the funding options with him for guidance.

## **8. Discussion Items for Subsequent Committee meetings**

- a. There was discussion and consensus that Mr. Gearhart draft a scope of work for the entire Urban Forestry Master Plan, following a typical table of contents with modification to reflect discussion under Items 4, 5 and 6 and providing as much detail as his time permitted, to allow this committee to provide comments on his initial draft. Ms. Fraser and Mr. Gearhart plan to meet to review the initial draft scope before the next Committee meeting.
  - b. The agenda for the next meeting will focus on building consensus for a scope of work for an UFMP for the City to be forwarded to the tree Commission at its June meeting for further review and discussion.
- 9. Adjourned.** The next meeting will held Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am and will be an in person meeting in Ed Ball Building, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Public Works Office, conference room 5.

