

Jacksonville Tree Commission
SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes

Monday April 28, 2025, - 8:00 AM

Via Zoom Platform & In Person

*Recording of Meeting can be obtained by sending requests to
Joe Rainey [jrainey@coj.net]

For approval May 21, 2025

Commissioners:

Curtis L. Hart, Chair (Council Appointee; 2021-0033-A)
Susan Fraser (Council Appointee; 2022-0063-A)
Vacant (Mayor Appointee; 2023-0696-A)
William Burke (Mayor Appointee; 2023-0695-A)
Alden Howell (Council Appointee; 2024-0388-A)
Chris Miller, Council Liaison
Nina Sickler, Director of Public Works

Advisors:

Justin Gearhart - City Arborist
Laura Hartung - Office of General Counsel
Jose Regueiro - Accounting

Staff: Joe Rainey

1. Call to Order

Conducted by Chair

2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum

Conducted by Chair, Commissioners present:

Curtis Hart, Chair
Susan Fraser
William Burke
Alden Howell
Chris Miller
Nina Sickler

Quorum present (4, in person): yes

3. Call for Public Speakers (online & card):

- a) **John Nooney - (Public Speaker)** Expressed his concerns regarding his trespass citation on Jacksonville University property (seeking pardon), and river access. Continues to lobby for the purchase of his property by Pottsborg Creek.
- b) **Will Tuten - (Public Speaker)** UNF Student, expresses appreciation for upcoming tree plans on campus and the trees around the city. Is requesting the inclusion of

Southern Hackberry (SugarBerry) providing shade, edible fruit and habitat for wildlife.

Request for action/follow-up- Hart to Gearhart: To put the consideration of including the species on the approved species list onto an upcoming Tree Commission agenda.

Action Items:

1. Prior Meeting Minutes.

Issue: The minutes from March 19, 2025, deferred to next regular meeting.

2. Level 3 Project Proposal

A. UNF- John November, Sarah Dark: UNF project presentation (please see presentation documents)

Designed by UNF staff in coordination with City, with the philosophy of "right tree, right place." All planting is on UNF property. Plans consider street sight lines, heat zones (need for shade), fruit species are away from sidewalks (fruits would fall upon grass). Maintenance is UNF/State, because the property is not City, with little exception. Updated plant schedule and tree sizes provided. Project is noted for diversity in tree selection, placement, and planning related to maintenance.

Fraser: Point of Inquiry - requested explanation / plan for maintenance of fruit trees.

Presenter: The fruit trees are near dorms and near student activity related to gardening.

Fraser: Point of Inquiry - requested a breakdown of estimate.

Presenter: explained that the "not to exceed" cost estimates are the equivalent of what is listed in other Level 3 Projects as "contingency" [**Gearhart** agreed that usually Level 3 Projects include 10% for "what ifs".]

Fraser: Point of Inquiry - if the costs of plant material exceed project funding the group will come back to Tree Commission?

Gearhart: the project cannot be altered to make up for costs (can't remove trees from the plan).

Tracy Arpen: Point of Information - non-profits take a risk on cost of work and planning (hourly compensation for staff time).

Hart: Point of Information - Raised the issue of if costs exceed approved amount and Tree Commission increases the amount, that may affect the City Council approval process as an Exceptional Planting Project.

David Hoyt: UNF Student expressed appreciation of the shade provided by trees around the parking lot and the addition of new trees moving forward.

Katherine Harlamor: UNF Student commented on future plantings at university entrance, housing areas, not sure about fruit trees, and appreciates program to bring more shade trees.

Total requested amount: \$367,000

Staff note: Sec. 94.107, Ordinance Code, applies.

Motion: Approve, as presented.

Moved by: Susan Fraser

Second: William Burke

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous

Kelcourse: Spoke regarding the LDPM, asking for inclusion as vender for soil needs. Referred to Task force.

Financial Report: Jose Regueiro [taken out of order]:
See section 3,a, below.

3. Level 2 Project Proposal(s):

A. Beaver Dam Rd Pond- Justin Gearhart

Total requested amount: \$90,938.70

Motion: Approve, as presented.

Moved by: William Burke

Second: Susan Fraser

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous

B. Glorianne Drive- Justin Gearhart

Total requested amount: \$11,036.25

Motion: Approve, as presented.

Moved by: Susan Fraser

Second: William Burke

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous

3. Financial Report: Jose Regueiro [taken out of order]:

Noted: Item 3, a discussed prior to Level 3 Project proposal.

- a. Combined revenues:** Combined Revenues for Fiscal YTD are \$3.78M compared to \$2.88M Mar-24. An increase of \$906.SK year-on-year. Combined Expenses for Fiscal YTD are \$1 .92M compared to \$3. 17M on Mar-24. A decrease of \$1.25M year-on-year. Combined Revenues for Mar-25 were \$1 M compared to \$598.6K for Mar-24, an increase of \$404.SK. Meanwhile, expenses were \$229.7K and \$407.SK on Mar-25 and Mar-24, respectively. Total unallocated funds were \$24.1 for Mar-25.

(See Details on PGs 59-72 of April Agenda)

- b. Fund Status: Justin Gearhart:** Total funds not appropriated at \$32.67M. Remaining in the three pools in public works \$1.14M. For 630-City \$2.11M. For level 2 \$3.14M and Level 3 \$2.36M.

Total obligated funds \$3.67M as of April, 2025

(See Details on PGs 73-83 of April Agenda)

4. Status of Level 2: Justin Gerhart, Kathleen McGovern:

- No Changes for April

No Motion/ No Vote.

5. Parks Department Project Update:

- Greenland Park is Complete
- Genovar Park is Complete
- Palmetto Leaves Park is Complete
- Walter Anderson Park is Complete
- Julington Durban Park in progress

Requested follow-up from previous meeting: Riverview Park details for pruning and maintenance of pear trees.

Fraser: Request estimated costs to maintain be provided. Questions, if planting/ maintaining fruit trees in public parks can be replicated?

No Motion/ No Vote.

(See Details on PGs 84-93 of April Agenda)

6. UFMP Update: Valerie Feinberg / Anne Coglianese:

(UFMP presentation available in supporting documents)
Presentation overview detailing what the UFMP and their consultants will be doing and their value to Tree Commission.

A. Announcement of May 16th UFMP Workshop with Tree Commission

7. Old Business

A. Taskforce Update- Fraser: Susan Fraser and Jon Colburn had a call with James Urban to discuss details and updates to planting methods. Fraser announced that she expects a big update and there will be a conclusion. Details and results from the Taskforce are being organized for presentation.

8. New Business

A. Money For Appropriations: Gearhart: Overview of past projects and allocations regarding appropriations. Gearhart presented financial details of the past two years and breakdown to support previous funding request for single year funding.

Discussion: of current funds and how they are being utilized. The remaining funds will last about 1 month. Details of how funds are being distributed between charter and ordinance funds were discussed.

Gearhart explains the complexity of planting trees due to limitations in use of funds due to utilities, site complications, and tree compliance. Commented that he has increased the use of Charter Funds for Remove and Replace. He systematically line-items Ordinance Fund spending versus Charter Fund spending, as required. He noted that "remove" comes from Ordinance Fund, but the replace aspect may come from either fund depending on the species of tree.

Fraser: requests Parks department work to spend these funds.

Total requested amount: \$2,100,000 from Ordinance Fund to Remove and Replace as a 1-year amount.

Motion: Approve, as presented.

Moved by: William Burke

Second: Nina Sickler

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous

END OF MEETING 09:50 AM

ATTACHMENT 1