

Jacksonville Tree Commission

Minutes

Wednesday May 21, 2025, 9:30 AM-11:27 AM

Via Zoom Platform & In Person

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

For approval June 18, 2025

Commissioners:

Curtis L. Hart, Chair (Council Appointee; 2021-0033-A)
William Burke Vice Chair (Mayor Appointee; 2023-0695-A)
Susan Fraser (Council Appointee; 2022-0063-A)
Vacant (Mayor Appointee; 2023-0696-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 Vice Chair, Commissioners present:

William Burke
Susan Fraser
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 Potsburg Creek.

Action Items:

1. [Addressed out of order:] Riverfront Park presentation (Level 2)

- a) **Pat Andrews- (San Marco Preservation Society)** Details the popularity of the park and need for its upgrade. Seeks to encourage the approval of the plan as presented.
- b) **John Johnson- (Parks landscape architect)** Details issues related to the park location and how the plan best works for the park. **Fraser:** Asked questions regarding drainage and type of "shade" trees selected. **Powell [audience member]:** Would like to see options in trees other than palms to be planted, expressed concerns related to townhome views related to the selection of trees to be planted.

The presenter explained aspects of the planting project in relation to the bulk head tie backs and how this infrastructure affected the choice of tree species in the design. Also, the presenter explained that community involvement was part of the planning process.

Motion: Approve, as presented for \$58,437.50.

Moved by: Nina Sickler

Second: Alden Howell

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous for \$58,437.50

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

Noted: Financial Reports will occur earlier in agendas in the future.

- a. **Combined revenues:** Combined Revenues for Fiscal YTD are \$4.91M compared to \$3.43M Apr-24. An increase of \$1.48M year-on-year. Combined Expenses for Fiscal YTD are \$2.35M compared to \$3.58M on Apr -24. A decrease of \$1.23M year-on-year. Combined Revenues for Apr -25 were \$1.13M compared to \$551.9K for Apr -24, an increase of \$576.8K. Meanwhile, expenses were \$425.2K and \$404.6K on Apr -25 and Apr -24, respectively. Total unallocated funds were \$25.21M for Apr -25.

(See Details on PGs 63-70 of April Agenda)

3. Prior Meeting Minutes.

Issue: Minutes from March 19, 2025 and April 28, 2025 Meetings

Motion: Approve, as presented.

Moved by: Nina Sickler

Second: Susan Fraser

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous

4. Level 2 Project Proposal

i. Beachwood Blvd. - Justin Gearhart

Motion: Approve, as presented for \$60,566.94.

Moved by: Nina Sickler

Second: Susan Fraser

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous for \$60,566.94

ii. Warrington Park - Kathleen McGovern

Discussion: Fraser: [point of inquiry] asked what was the reasoning behind choosing Pine trees vs. Live oaks in the planting plan. **McGovern:** Pines were selected due to sandy soils in location. **Gearhart:** Pine establishes better in this type of location.

Powell [audience member]: Voiced her concerns over watering in warranty period not being fulfilled.

Motion: Approve, as presented for \$90,300.00.

Moved by: Nina Sickler

Second: Susan Fraser

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous for \$90,300.00

iii. ASPC Dog Park - John Johnson

Point of inquiry: Are the tree selections taking into account the line of sight of security cameras? **Presenter:** the plantings are east of cameras. **Point of inquiry:** is the planting area open to the public or only for staff? **Presenter:** The planting area is open to the public.

Motion: Approve, as presented for \$34,140.

Moved by: Alden Howell

Second: Chris Miller

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous for \$34,140.

iv. Riverfront Park - Kathleen McGovern (reviewed out of order please see page 2 of minutes) **\$58,437.50**

5. Guest speaker, Council Member Joe Carlucci: Council Member Carlucci expressed accolades to the Commission for their work and announced that there will be some new projects upcoming to include a centennial tree to be planted in Alexandria Park.

6. Additions to Approved Species List - Justin Gearhart, Jon Colburn

i. Celtis Laevigata Sugar Hackberry

ii. Chickasaw Plum

iii. American Elm

iv. Bluejack Oak

v. Chapman Oak

vi. Sandpost Oak

vii. Turkey Oak

Motion: Approve all 7 species proposed, as presented.

Moved by: Nina Sickler

Second: Chris Miller

Vote: approved as presented, unanimous

Discussion: Fraser: made the suggestion that the format for presenting proposed new tree species follow the format as used by Gearhart, as the format is much more accessible for important information about the species. **No vote: Consensus** to use the format for proposed tree species as used by Gearhart in this presentation.

Reports:

7. Fund Status: Justin Gearhart: Total funds not appropriated at \$33.78M. Remaining in the three pools in public works \$1.06M. For 630-City \$2.11M. For level 2 \$3.03M and Level 3 \$2.36M.

Total obligated funds \$3.56M as of April, 2025

(See Details on PGs 71-81 of April Agenda)

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

- Palmetto Leaves Park is Complete
- Greenland Park is Complete
- Collins Rd is off warranty
- College St is off warranty

9. Requested follow-up from previous meeting: Taken out of order
Follow up on Remove and Replace funds request legislation (bill number 2025.324) moved as emergency and was passed unanimously.

Question from audience member, Nancy Powell, regarding why use of the emergency passage process for the bill was applied. MacGillis explained that a "1-cycle" emergency process was used, which is a three week process to include a full Committee week (Finance and TEU) of review versus the full six week cycle. MacGillis explained that a 1-cycle emergency passage was requested in order to get the funds to the account as soon as possible, but with Council standing committees' review. **Powell** expressed displeasure that the fund was not replenished earlier (so as to not need an emergency). The fact of the cancellation of the April meeting was acknowledged.

No Motion/ No Vote.

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

- No Changes for April

No Motion/ No Vote.

10. Parks Department Project Update:

- i. Palmetto Leaves Regional Park is complete
- ii. Julington Durbin is in progress
- iii. Walter Anderson is complete

11. UFMP Update: Valerie Feinberg:

(UFMP presentation available in supporting documents)
Presentation overview detailing what the UFMP and their three workshops with different groups to be presented at Tree Commission May 16th UFMP Workshop presentation.

Fraser: When is the next deliverable? **Feinberg:** That date will be determined in a meeting this afternoon. **Powell:** Is there going to be a defined Urban Forest Management Plan? **Feinberg:** This is being developed.

12. Old Business

A. Taskforce Update- Fraser: request for extension of taskforce. **MacGillis** stated that she will present the request to the Chair for his approval of extension to taskforce. **MacGillis** stated to expect an Amended Charge Memo on the topic soon, and that it will be distributed and posted to the website.

13. New Business:

i. 2025-0102-E, an ordinance by Council Member J. Carlucci, signed into law on April 18, 2025. Sickler: Staff addition authorization included in legislation, more measures are part of the process before these new positions can be posted for availability. **McDaniel:** These positions will need to be created then brought to the tree commission for approval to fund. **MacGillis:** Getting new positions to Tree Commission to make a recommendation is a multi-step process requiring the positions to exist first (the creation of the positions are part of the budget ask from Public Works, then the positions can be brought to Tree Commission, then the recommendation for the positions to be funded by Tree mitigation funds is presented in the form of legislation to City Council). **Sickler:** next meeting would be the time to bring a package with specific details on positions and dollar amounts for requests.

ii. Mowing in City Parks: Fraser: Expressed concerns regarding trees being damaged by mowing subcontractors multiple times after contractors have been warned. Suggested trees have mulch tree rings or protective guards included in install. **McDaniel:** Asked if there be a separate tree string trimming option? Currently contractors have had maximum contract repercussions, but this has not remedied the issue. Additional factors include the turnover of subcontractors and lack of regular quality

workers due to the nature of the work. **Fraser:** Suggested use of neighborhood groups to help with maintaining tree bases.

McDaniel: Expressed that any help offered by these groups is welcome and appreciated. Tree rings and guards are suggested to resolve the issue.

Amendment: Parks Department has agreed to include protective tree rings being added to solicitations moving forward.

No Motion/ No Vote.

END OF MEETING 11:26 AM

ATTACHMENT 1