

Jacksonville Tree Commission

Amended Minutes

Wednesday April 17, 2024 – 9:30 AM

Via Zoom Platform & In Person

[Recording of Meeting can be obtained by sending request to
Charles Hayes kennethh@coj.net]

For approval May 15, 2024

Commissioners:

Chris Miller, Council Liaison
Nina Sickler, Director of Public Works
Curtis L. Hart, Chair (Council Appointee; 2012-0033-A)
Susan Fraser (Council Appointee; 2022-0063-A)
John Moscarillo (Mayor Appointee; 2023-0696-A)
William Burke (Mayor Appointee; 2023-0695-A)
[vacant] (Council Appointee; 2021-0027-A)

Advisors:

Jonathan Colburn - Urban Forestry Manager
Justin Gearhart - City Arborist
Shannon MacGillis - Office of General Counsel
Jose Regueiro - Accounting

Staff: Charles Hayes

1. Call to Order

Conducted by Chair

2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum

Conducted by Chair

Commissioners present:

Curtis Hart, Chair
Susan Fraser
Chris Miller
Nina Sickler
John Moscarillo
William Burke

Quorum present (4, in person): yes

3. Call for Public Speakers (online & card): none

Action Items:

(Prior to Action Items)

Curtis Hart - Chair: Asked if Commission still a vacant seat (Environmental) and stated two names have been submitted but has not heard anything.

4. Prior Meeting Minutes.

Issue: The minutes for the meetings of January 17, February 21 and March 20 are pending approval.

Susan Fraser - Commission Member: stated February minutes were brief and did not state what the conditions for the motion to add Parks for the New Species list. The March 20, 2024 minutes did not have amounts of the motion and conditions for the RiversEdge project.

Hart: directed that the minutes be corrected for next meeting.

MacGillis: suggested the Commission to take a motion, second and vote on minutes for January 17, but the February 21 and March 20 minutes can be deferred.

Motion: Approve January 17, 2024 minutes.

Moved by: Susan Fraser

Second: Nina Sickler

Vote: Approved, unanimous.

Hart: postpone February 21 and March 20, minutes until next meeting.

5. (Agenda Item taken out of order): Financial Report for Ordinance Tree Fund, Charter Tree Fund, and BJP

Jose Regueiro - Accounting: Briefed March 20, 2024 Financial Highlights (Highlights can be found [Jacksonville.gov - Tree Commission](https://www.jacksonville.gov) April 17, 2024 Meeting, stated Commission has \$23.1M to appropriate to projects. Currently do not have a solution for the \$1.7M Better Jacksonville Plan which is part of the \$23.1M.

General discussion about the overall strategy of spending funds through the Tree Commission. Discussion of ebb and flow of funds coming in. Reiteration of the role of Tree Commission to strategically consider planting projects and expectations of projects proposed, in scope and in stage of project.

6. Proposed Level 2 Program Projects

A. Ribault Scenic Drive Park Project, Proposed

Issue: Tree Planting by St. John's Riverkeeper for right of way buffer, shade for parking lot, walkways, and scenic seating areas. Trees will be installed to coordinate with the existing irrigation system.

Jimmy Orth - St. Johns Riverkeeper: briefed proposal being a part of a program started a year ago Resilient Ribault partnering with LISC Jacksonville. Benefits include: Improving water quality, assist in flood prevention, enhance access to water ways and approve parks, and housing security.

Kathleen Parks - Development Coordinator: requested \$21,675 for funding.

B. EdgeWood Park Project, Proposed

Issue: Residents proposed tree plantings to complement existing features and provide right of way buffer. Walkways and benches will be shaded. Residents actively monitor the area and would do the same for the proposal.

McGovern: briefed plan and explained how involved the Residents are in the area and it would be under warranty for a year.

Fraser: added asked about the random cabbage palm in the plan and it was explained one Resident would like to have one.

C. Pine Trailhead Project, Proposed

Issue: Starting point for new trail system off the Gold Star Parkway in the Thomas Creek Preserve. Planting was coordinated with St. Johns River Management. Priority to keep the horse trailer and parking space open and accessible while providing shade.

McGovern: briefed plan and explained the details of the area. Large turn around area and wanted to provide shade as well as barrier so cars do not destroy area.

Fraser: asked if people park where they want and wants to ensure that people don't park on or around tree planted area, suggested raised area.

D. Sal Taylor Creek Preserve Project, Proposed

Issue: Coordinated with COJ Preserve to plant trees in grassy parking lot area to keep horse trailer and parking space open and accessible while providing shade. The recreational area will receive a few shade trees and Cedars will provide a buffer for the picnic tables and pavilion.

McGovern: briefed proposal and explained details of area. Busy area but very dry with little shade. Explained there is water to the site. **Fraser:** expressed same concern as with Pine Trailhead with barrier needed to protect trees.

E. Northwest Legends School Project, Proposed

Issue: Coordinated with DCPS Real Estate and Maintenance. Plant trees in grassy areas adjacent to the recreational fields and tracks. All planting and watering are coordinated with DCPC.

McGovern: briefed proposal and explained details of project, would be out of the maintenance area and activity area.

F. Winton Dr. Park Project, Proposed

Issue: Old landfill site proposed to become loop trail with parking once old debris and drainage improvements.

McGovern: briefed the proposal with details of the project, told it would be 6 months for the construction to be complete and would be tasked to parks.

William Burke - Commission Member: raised question of soil remediation, if they were removing and replacing soil.

Hart: Suggested to table proposal; regarding remediation and potential additional costs.

Motion: As to the proposed Level 2 projects proposed -
Approve, Ribault - \$21,675 as presented
Approve, Edgewood Park #1 - \$14,500 as presented
Approve with conditions, Pine Trailhead - \$28,325 with conditions to have raised barrier or structure for parking to prevent planted trees from being runover or parked against.
Approve with conditions, Sal Taylor Creek Preserve - \$44,200 with conditions to have raised barrier or structure for parking to prevent planted trees from being runover or parked against.
Approve, Northwest Legends School - 28,100 as presented
Table for additional information, Winton Drive Park. -

Moved by: Susan Fraser

Second: William Burke

Discussion: none. Commission would like a post-planting report.

Vote: Motion as stated approved, unanimous.

7. Status of legislation to move funds to Remove/Replace

MacGillis: stated the appropriation bill is in draft, that included some pre-draft from Susan Grandin. Informed Commission that she will still need additional meeting with Public Works to go over numbers. The due date will be 2:30, May 8, to go regular cycle, with backup of May 28, as 1-cycle to stay on course for June 11.

Chris Miller - Council Liaison: Reconfirmed that the numbers are justified based on intent of the Committee and previous and future funding.

Fraser: raised the issue to reopen discussion on Level 3 funding needed to be adjusted from the original 6 million request.

Sickler: Requested that Public Works and Parks get an opportunity before the legislation goes in to put together a potential Level 3's to put that into the justification.

Justin Gearhart - City Arborist - pointed out the difference between Level 2 (City Project) and Level 3 (Developer, non-profit, and there is currently \$4.2M in Level 2 not committed.

John November - Public Trust: regarding purpose of pervious lawsuit; expressed approval of the Level 1, 2, & 3 programs. Stated that there will be more Level 3 coming and recommended not cut back the 6-million request for Level 3.

Fraser: questioned if having the funds appropriated may add pressure on Commission.

MacGillis: suggested that appropriations should be based on the strategic view of the Commission; a reasonable basis for belief of smart allocation of funding for potential future projects.

Hart: stated he thinks that \$6M Level 3 is too much and should be \$500,000 and if projects come up can go back to the Council.

Sickler: suggested cut the \$6m by half to \$3million.

Miller: suggested that fund with a buffer above what you anticipate.

Justin Gearhart - City Arborist - cautioned that Level 3 had to be shut down to rework the process, so there is not a pure spending history. Asserted Level 3 justification for 1.5million, or more, appropriation to Level 3.

Motion: amend \$6M fund move to Level 3 to \$2M, \$1.5M with 33% for buffer.

Moved by: Nina Sickler

Second by: William Burke

Discussion: **Hart:** asserted the number should be based on certain projects; **Sickler:** the 1.5 million is based on history with 33% buffer; **Fraser:** inquired about fiscal year limitations and

suggested to keep the amount small then go back and request in October when we have the projects; **Burke:** asked about roll-over; Commission advised that the funds do roll over); **Miller:** stated that keep in mind when Council members learn about what the Tree Commission can do, there will be more requests. Also, suggested projects be presented at the earliest stages to have Tree Commission be part of the process of the project, not after the fact (late in a project). **Hart:** pointed out that a recent project proposal was not pressure on the Commission, but more disappointment in the timing the developer presented the project. Asserted that the \$21 million is not for planting trees anywhere, there is the process. Agreed to the \$2million as stated in the motion. **Jonathan Colburn** - Urban Forestry Manager - raised the fact of Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Vote: Approved, unanimous.

8. Tree Commission Presentation

Issue: Need to get dates to go in front of the Council. Currently only have been in front of Neighborhoods.

Hart: Need to shorten and format the presentation.

MacGillis: stated she would get with chair with a possible schedule.

There were no questions; no motion.

9. Minimum Design for Planting Trees

Jonathan Coburn - Urban Forestry Manager: briefed come up with strategy for planting, minimum planting wells ordinances were minimal. Asserted that having Tree Commission be part of early stages of planning projects as the process recommended in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. **Hart:** asserted that any project funded by Tree Commission must plant in the manner proscribed by the Commission. Requested the Coburn produce planting standards for consideration and potential task force/subcommittee.

10. Fund Status of 630-City, Remove & Replace, and Level 2 Programs

There were no questions; no motion

11. Status of Level 2

Gearhart: briefed not a lot of changes from month prior, currently in the last month of Gold Star. Several projects will be out of warranty.

12. Parks Department Project Update

McGovern: Northbank Riverwalk, S-line & Lift Every Voice and Sing parks update.

13. Tree Dashboard

Sickler: briefed Mayor's office working with Mowing and Landscaping for dashboard for PlanIt GEO showing every tree project status.

Gearhart: PlanIt GEO shows planned and completed.

NEW Business/announcement: **Sickler:** hearing room is complete and available for use. **Fraser:** hearing room is very formal.

Gearhart: training on the use of the hearing room is coming up.

14. Upcoming Events, Webpage Addition

Charles Hayes - Staff: briefed that agencies could post on upcoming events on the .gov Tree Commission website. They could fill out a request and get it approved by Public Affairs.

15. **Call for public comment:** none.

16. **DCSB Planting updates:** Gearhart.

END OF MEETING