

Jacksonville Tree Commission

Amended Minutes

Wednesday May 15, 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 June 2024

**Commissioners:**

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] (pending 2024-0388, Council Appointee)

**Advisors:**

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

**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  
Nina Sickler  
John Moscarillo  
William Burke

**Quorum present** (4, in person): yes

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

**Nancy Powell** Executive Director for Scenicjax turned in request to speak card.

**Action Items:**

4. Curtis Hart introduced Alden Howell, the newly nominated Tree Commission Council appointee (subject of resolution 2024-0388, pending). Howell was advised by **Hart** and **Shannon MacGillis** that he could participate in the discussion but was not allowed to vote until the final approval vote from the City Council.

**5. Prior Meeting Minutes.**

**Issue:** The minutes for the meetings of February 21, March 20, and April 17, 2024 pending approval.

**Susan Fraser** - Commission Member: stated the February minutes on the issue of Trees to Add to Approved Species List, were not specific enough and needed to be amended to reflect the specific conditions that Parks would need to present a presentation before fruit trees are used to show they have a plan how to manage them in public places.

**Motion: to** amend minutes of February 21, on page 7, regarding the motion on Fruit Trees, to reflect the specific condition that Parks "make a presentation regarding fruit trees".

**Moved by:** Susan Fraser

**Second:** Nina Sickler

**Vote:** Approved, unanimous.

**Motion: to approve February 21 Minutes, as amended.**

**Moved by:** Susan Fraser

**Second:** William Burke

**Vote:** Approved, unanimous.

**Motion: to approve minutes for March 20, 2024, as presented.**

**Motion by:** Susan Fraser

**Second:** Nina Sickler

**Vote:** Approved, unanimous.

**Motion: to approve minutes for April 17, 2024, as presented.**

**Motion by:** Susan Fraser

**Second:** William Burke

**Vote:** Approved, unanimous.

**6. June Meeting Date**

**Issue:** The third Wednesday in June fall on a holiday

General discussion about moving meeting from June 15 which is a holiday. **Sickler** suggested that we circulate emails.

**MacGillis** stated that dates could be discussed by "one-way" emails but not emails to "all" or between multiple Commission members, to prevent Sunshine violations.

**Hart:** Staff assigned to get some dates to the members for scheduling.

**Hart** raised the point to **Howell**, and other members possibly, needing to attend the Ethics/Sunshine Course. **MacGillis** stated that she would check on the next offerings and for those seeking attendance to email her.

### **7. Design Standards Subcommittee Discussion**

**Issue:** Further discussion on Design Standards that was touched on in the last meeting that included tree planting, the medium, and what trees were planted in.

**Burke:** Stated that he had done designs for the city in the past and Public Works has some standards. He explained that this information could be used.

**Hart:** Explained that Context Sensitive Streets Special Committee (CSSSC) deals with everything above the ground but feels they do not take in consideration below the ground.

**Dave McDaniels:** stated the Subdivision Standards and Policy Advisory Committee (SSPAC) was working on the manual rewrite.

**Hart:** advised William Burke to attend the next SSPAC and report back to the Commission.

**Generally:** The Committee discussed the benefit to the Tree Commission of Tree Commission having a set standard so that applicants for use of Tree Commission funding could be implemented during the development phase of planning and going to other committees and getting more information from the Urban Forestry Manager will assist in the task.

**Hart: deferred the discussion to the next meeting.**

### **8. Level 2 Project Proposal Alden Road**

**Issue:** Tree Planting project proposed in the northern Right of Way of Alden Road between John Promenade Blvd and Alden Trace Blvd W. The project would consist of planting a variety of shade trees that would serve as an aesthetic improvement and heat reduction. The planting would also help filter and slow down stormwater runoff.

**Justin Gearhart - City Arborist:** Briefed project and exact location for the plantings. He explained the area has dry soil, so the species selected was based on this. Justin stated that it would be a combination of 12 Sycamores, 18 Pine, 7 Yaupon Holly, and 4 oaks. He also explained that it was clear of the water pipes and that it has been cleared by Traffic. The trees will have a two-year warranty. Requesting \$76,282.56.

**Fraser:** Stated Sycamores can be problematic with their leaves and would recommend live oaks.

**Gearhart:** Explained that the use of Sycamores add diversity due to the amount of oaks already in the area, and Sycamores do well in the soil, and grow fast for the canopy, and may help keep certain disease (rust and canker) down, and having Sycamore being a part of the planting project adds color and quick shade, therefore meet the needs of the consumers of the area being planted.

Generally: The Commission discussed whether Sycamores or Oaks should be used. This also included the spacing of trees, distance from the sidewalk, and distance from water lines.

**Motion: to approve Alden Road, as presented.**

**Motion by:** Nina Sickler

**Second:** John Moscarillo

**Vote:** approved, unanimous.

**9. Financial Report:** Jose Regueiro not present.

**Chair Hart: deferred to next meeting.**

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

**Justin Gearhart -** Briefed as of May 1, 2024, remove & replace was \$429,985 but will come down to about \$200,000 due to various projects, 630-CITY \$2,371,402, Level 2 down \$1M and is now \$3,491,079, Level 3 \$1,549,250 but Level 3 projects have not been paid (RiversEdge and Mayport). Total funds not obligated \$2.7M.

**Fraser:** asked for BJP funds update.

**MacGillis:** Draft will be filed May 22 - \$1M Charter to Remove and Replace, \$1.7M BJP to Remove and Replace, \$1.5 Charter to Level 2, \$2M Ordinance to Level 3. Through the bill, all the BJP funds will have been moved. Introduction to Council May 28, Committee week June 17, and final Council action June 25.

### **11. Level 2 Updates**

**Gearhart:** Briefed Baker Front, Gold Star Phase 1, Kernan Blvd, and Ft. Caroline have reached the end of warranty period.

**Hart:** asked to have completed list in the meeting.

### **12. 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.

### **13. Parks Department Project Update**

**Kathleen McGovern:** Riverwalk Phase 2 is in progress, S-line is 30% complete and Lift Every Voice and Sing parks is in progress. Community centers are getting started.

### **14. Public Comment - out of order**

**Nancy Powell - Scenicjax** Stated River Front plaza was started the tree plan didn't come through the Commission and number of trees were taken down. Stated she and others had asked to design around the large, older trees. Other parks are coming and will ask for money need to take this into consideration.

**Sickler:** stated that she will ensure this happens, but it will only come in front of the Tree Commission if they request funding.

Generally: Committee discussed the scope of the Tree Commission. Does the project have to come through the Commission if they are not asking for money as part of the tree preservation and what authority the Commission has. The Tree Commission, by ordinance, has the scope of monitoring all planting projects and the Commission needs to get guidance from administration as to the full role intended for the Commission.

**Hart:** Stated that it is up to the administration to set the role beyond overseeing the money; and agreed that the authority to review non-Tree Fund requests is within the ordinance scope of duties of the Commission.

**Sickler:** Stated that she can have the Project Managers build it into their schedules to present their project before the Tree Commission for information and input and it would add value.

**Hart:** Stated if this happened then this could be the public forum for the CIP projects.

**Sickler:** suggested that City could present a CIP funded project to the Commission and the Commission could make additional planting suggestions or modifications to the plan with the additions being funded by Tree Fund.

**Hart:** agreed that City could present a CIP funded project to the Commission and the Commission could make additional planting suggestions or modifications to the plan with the additions being funded by Tree Fund. Hart suggested that an ordinance could read of a 10% threshold of tree removal must come to Tree Commission.

**MacGillis:** pointed out that the current ordinance articulates that the Commission has the authority to review historical trees and exceptional specimen trees.

**Hart:** stated he could set up Subcommittee, including himself and Fraser and anyone else, to create criteria regarding tree size requiring pre-application that mandates the project come through Tree Commission to come up with criteria for whether trees come down or not and get an ordinance created for the Council to approve.

**MacGillis:** asked if this was intended as a running Subcommittee or a Task Force; **Hart:** his intention is to set up a Task Force to consider processes to cause any project with historic or exceptional specimen trees come to Commission, pre-permit.

## **16. New Business**

### **Jacksonville City Council 2024 leadership Installation**

Chair explained event to occur on June 20 at 5pm.

**Fraser:** asked if the group "Late Bloomers" could present at a future Commission meeting. (**Hart** stated to put it on an agenda)

## **17. Old Business**

### **Tree Removal Reporting**

**Issue:** Committee requested report on tree removal.

**Gearhart:** Showed report that Plans created.

**Fraser:** asked if could get number of trees and site.

**Planning** - stated not all based on categorized by inches.

**Generally:** Talked about the report and what exact information needed to help or would like to see. If you can see the pattern of development and trends could assist with projects to plant.

**Tree Commission functions presentation to Council members.**

**Sickler:** inquired on which future Committees to present on Tree Commission. **Hart** to **MacGillis** agreed to look into scheduling.

END OF MEETING 11:00AM

APPROVED