

# NATURE CENTERS COMMISSION

Thomas Center, Bldg A, Room 204  
302 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Ave

January 14, 2016  
Thursday – 6:30PM

## Minutes

I. Call to Order and roll call

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present
Amy Carpus	Grace Crummer	Linda Demetropoulos
Kathy Ewel, Secretary	Jon Reiskind (Vice-Chair) (PR)	Grace Howell
Rupa Lloyd, Treasurer	Penny Weber (PR)	Geoff Parks
Krisjanna Olson		Michelle Park
Charlie Pederson, Chair		Guests Present
Taylor Stein (POL)		Stefan Broadus (Public Works)
Leslie Straub (PR)		Alan Foley (Jones Edmunds)

II. Agenda Approval

<u>Motion by:</u> Amy Carpus	<u>Seconded by:</u> Taylor Stein
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve agenda with presentation by Stefan Broadus moved up to Chair Report and presentation by Michelle Park moved up also if she arrives soon enough.	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

III. Approval of Minutes of December 10, 2015

<u>Motion by:</u> Charlie Pederson	<u>Seconded by:</u> Rupa Lloyd
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve minutes of December 10, 2015	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

IV. Chair Report

Charlie Pederson attended the Fundraiser Gala for the GAP Foundation last Friday. The goal was \$10K.

Stefan Broadus described the work that will be done by Public Works to improve flow through Hogtown and Possum Creeks in the floodplain north and south of NW 8<sup>th</sup> Ave between 22<sup>nd</sup> St. and 34<sup>th</sup> St. The original concept in the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Roadway Project had been to replace two culverts connecting the two sides of the floodplain with a bridge. Jones Edmunds was contracted to conduct a more holistic analysis that included watershed as well as culverts. The resulting study was presented to and approved by the City Commission in August. The study favored a larger scale solution with longer term benefits; it proposes to minimize 1) capital and maintenance costs of intermittent repairs resulting from erosion and sedimentation, 2) flood risk to the roadway and to homes on the north side of the floodplain, primarily in Mason Manor, and 3) environmental impacts to the creeks and floodplain.

The culvert dug for Hogtown Creek in the 1960s has been blocked by sediments, doubling the flow through Possum Creek and causing scour and erosion, jeopardizing sidewalks and the road. In trying to restore some of the historic characteristics of floodplain, which had been severed in half by 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., Jones Edmunds made 3 recommendations: 1) Stabilize the Possum Creek spillway where the existing concrete structure is at risk of further failure of high rates of flow continue. The spillway will have three sides to prevent its being uplifted from the water. The concrete foundation will be thicker and will have fiber reinforcement with sheet pilings. 2) Install four cross culverts (equalizing culverts) mostly between Hogtown and Possum Creeks (but including one to the east of Hogtown Creek) so that runoff from during rain events would get to the south side of the road more quickly. These culverts will be the same size as before but with more slope. 3) Remove sediment downstream from and within the Hogtown Creek culverts so that Elizabeth Creek would get more flow. Rocks will be placed at the outflow to prevent scouring. At the headwall of Possum Creek, the three sides of the spillway will be made of steel or sheet piling in a concrete foundation with fiber reinforcement that will lock the spillway into place and prevent uplifting from the water. The culvert size will remain the same: a triple box 10' x 7'. Work will begin in mid- to late February and will be completed by mid-July.

Sediments would have continued to accumulate even with a bridge, and the bridge itself would have been much more costly. Sediments should be caught much earlier than 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., so the ultimate solution will be in the watershed. This will be a separate project.

Leslie Straub asked if there had been any consideration to the fact that construction will be going on during the breeding season of many animals. Geoff, Alan, and Stefan all said that the work had to be done during a time when Possum Creek can be shut off completely, and there would be capacity in Hogtown Creek. There will be no naturalist to monitor breeding activity, and they felt that no particular species was at risk during that time.

Charlie Pederson asked about sediment accumulation. Stefan said there would be enough slope for the pipe to self-clean, but it may need to be jetted out like every other stormwater pipe in the city. The cross culverts connect at grade and at 24" should be used for passage by wildlife when there is no water flow (i.e., most of the time).

Linda will find out what will happen to the sediment that is removed.

Charlie asked Michelle Park to provide an update on the Master Plan as part of the PRCA staff report. The list of projects, with 6 categories of priority, is now being finalized and will be presented to the City Commission for approval on February 18. The county will receive a copy of the list when the campaign gets underway, and it will eventually be attached to the ordinance to be taken to the voters on the Nov. 8 ballot. Alachua Conservation Trust will lead the campaign, using feedback from the Trust for Public Land poll. A recreation-citizen-advocate and a cultural advocate are being sought to co-chair the effort with Tom Kay, a nature- and land-based advocate.

The duration of the proposed 5¢ sales tax will be for 8 years, with a target range of \$46 million toward the total of \$80 million needed to purchase all the properties listed in the 20-year Master Plan. The list she handed out included projects added since the 2012 original plan (with an asterisk and highlighted in yellow) by directives from the City Commission and the Recreation, Cultural Affairs, and Public Works Committee. Most of the Nature Park projects are still at the top of the list and should be funded by the new tax.

Adjustments will be made so that the total spent on projects through priority 7 will be approximately \$47 million. A proposed new multipurpose recreation center in NW Gainesville was discouraged by staff members in Recreation, who felt that maintenance needed on existing centers should be given higher priority, so the new center would have to be put aside until additional funding beyond the \$46 million is obtained.

In response to questions about specific items, Michelle said that historic windows in Boulware Springs Building (priority 7) must be replaced, perhaps facilitating more frequent use of the building. Taylor Stein remarked that many items such as improvements and maintenance are low on the priority list. Michelle said that it is usually easier to get funding for new projects rather than maintenance of existing facilities and programs.

For the campaign, Michelle will group projects within the priorities into 6 categories, including Nature Parks and Bikeways and Trails.

Amy Carpus pointed out that the Veterans Administration could help with Americans with Disabilities concerns.

Krissy Olson asked when Depot Park is likely to be completed. Michelle said this will depend on funding beyond the \$46 million. Completion of the southern end will be mostly for conservation. Phase 1, which should be completed this summer, must operate for a while before plans can be made for subsequent work. A third "Wild Spaces Public Places" effort may be started as early as year 6 so that as long a gap such as we are experiencing now may be avoided. New funding may also help leverage funding from other sources. Krissy also asked who works on LEED buildings, i.e., the New/NW Community Center. Michelle said city policy specifies that all new buildings must be LEED, and all contracts would be put out for bid.

Charlie Pederson asked how and when the Nature Centers Commission can help. Michelle said the official launch will be in April. The campaign will continue through the summer with particular effort in October. Help will be needed with identifying people willing to place yard signs, finding speakers for different groups, writing letters to the editor of newspapers, and standing on corner with a sign on Nov. 8. She will distribute forms and a questionnaire at the next meeting to gather this information. Charlie suggested that NCC could hold a public meeting in a park, perhaps in September or October; this could be a topic at the retreat, when we make our annual work plan.

- V. Treasurer's Report  
Linda said the \$1,000 discrepancy has been resolved and that NCC has \$5,573 to spend.

VI. PRCA Staff Report

Linda Demetropoulos discussed the status of the Green Space Acquisition Fund. The City Commission voted at the December 17th City Commission meeting to rename the "Greenspace Acquisition Fund" to "Greenspace and Community Improvement Fund" and expand its use to allow other expenditures related to community improvements. The City Attorney will draft a resolution that will go to City Commission at a future date for approval. This will afford another opportunity for NCC and public comment. Linda reminded NCC of the Hogtown Greenway vision from the Comprehensive Plan of 2001 and displayed the 1993 visual aid showing the original intention and greenway plan.

Linda reported on the Hogtown Creek Headwaters Phase II development progress. In 2008 when the Hogtown Creek Headwaters grant application was written for acquisition of the property, the City promised to construct at least two user-oriented recreational facilities on the property; a picnic pavilion and tennis court. In preparation for this phase of construction, a public meeting was held on December 16, 2015. The attendees of the meeting said that they did not want a tennis court constructed. A public survey was posted on the PRCA web site to query park neighbors and the general public to find out what amenity they would like in place of the tennis court. The survey will be open on the PRCA web site through the weekend and close on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup>.

The Great Invader Raider Rally is scheduled for Jan 30.

Jan. 21 is Arbor Day, with a ceremony at 11:45 at the Matheson Museum.

- VII. Committee reports: Awards Committee business is covered under Old Business. There are no other reports.
- VIII. Liaison reports: none
- IX. Friends of Nature Parks report: none
- X. Old Business  
Linda said that letters to Star Award recipients will go out on Monday. One of the new interns will do the event planning.

XI. New Business

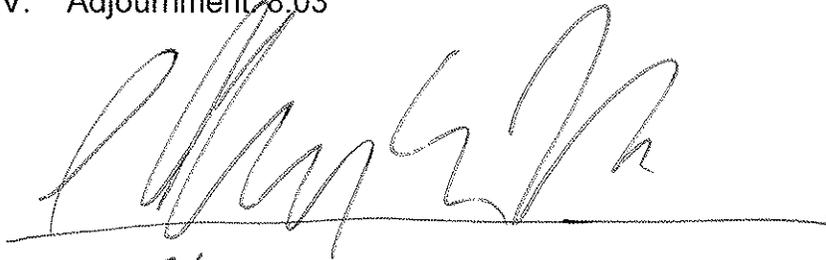
Linda described the current status of Palm Point Park: originally 16 acres on Newnan's Lake with 153 upland acres added 2 years ago, including a strip of land that runs northward up the shoreline. This strip is less than 1 acre, very steep, and cut off from the southern part by a road. Neighboring land owners have cleared trees and shrubs from the strip (park property) to enhance their view of the lake. The adjacent fish camp at the northern end offered a parcel of land for sale that would make the strip accessible and could be used for launching canoes and kayaks. However, the Gainesville Area Rowing Club has a contract to acquire the fish camp property and would like to get an access easement over the Palm Point Nature Park strip for access to Newnan's Lake. Linda suggested a joint use agreement, but the club feels vandalism would be likely if the public had access. The Palm Point expansion was purchased with funds from Wild Spaces Public Places, and the funds would have to be returned to that source if the strip of land is surplus. Linda Demetropoulos asked for NCC input and approval because the Gainesville Area Rowing Club is ready to close on their property acquisition.

<u>Motion by:</u> Kathy Ewel	<u>Seconded by:</u> Rupa Lloyd
<u>Moved to:</u> Declare surplus an inaccessible sliver of Palm Point Park land bordered by Lakeshore Drive, provided it is neither zoned for conservation nor too costly for the city or department to split out.	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

XII. Board or citizen comments: None

XIII. Next Meeting, February 11, 2016

XIV. Adjournment: 8:03

  
Chair

2-11-16  
Date

