

# NATURE CENTERS COMMISSION

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

February 11, 2016  
Thursday – 6:30PM

## MINUTES

I. Call to Order and roll call.

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present
Andy Kratter (new member)	Krisjanna Olson	Linda Demetropoulos
Mary Held (new member)		
Amy Carpus		
Grace Crummer		
Kathy Ewel, Secretary		
Rupa Lloyd, Treasurer		
Charlie Pedersen, Chair		
Jon Reiskind, Vice-Chair		
Taylor Stein (POL)		
Leslie Straub (PR)		
Penny Weber (PR)		

Chair recognized two new members: Andy Kratter, who is the bird collection manager at the Florida Museum of Natural History, and Mary Held, who is the owner of Green Clean Homes and a former park ranger.

II. Agenda Approval

<u>Motion by:</u> Taylor Stein	<u>Seconded by:</u> Grace Crummer
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve agenda	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

III. Approval of Minutes of January 14, 2016)

<u>Motion by:</u> Amy Carpus	<u>Seconded by:</u> Jon Reiskind
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve minutes with corrected spelling of Charlie's name	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

IV. Chair Report

Charlie reminded the group that the annual work plan will be discussed in April, timed to synchronize with the city's budget process. The 0.5¢ sales tax to be on the March ballot will be discussed; additional ideas are to be submitted to him.

Charlie attended a Community Development Committee meeting focusing on the Tree Mitigation Fund on January 27th. Another meeting will be held on March 30. The ordinance states that these funds are for planting trees and acquiring conservation land. NCC advises on proposed purchases of conservation lands.

Charlie asked that NCC members attend the City Commission meeting on February 18 to support the Parks Master Plan.

### III. Treasurer's Report

Rupa Lloyd reported that NCC has \$5,573 to spend. She suggested that some of these funds could be spent on water quality in the parks, an area of concern to the community. Leslie suggested having staff come in to give an update on water quality issues. Charlie pointed out that last year we delayed this discussion, so perhaps we should take it up earlier this year. Rupa thought we could perhaps focus on one area.

Charlie suggested having Geoff Parks review efforts regarding Hogtown Creek water quality education from the past summer and how successful education efforts were. Is money needed? A particular focus? PR? An appropriate grant to pursue? This would be a good topic to take up at the retreat in April. Jon Reiskind pointed out that Palm Point is likely to be affected in the upcoming Newnan's Lake phosphorus study. Will funds be useful in some way there? Kathy Ewel and Taylor Stein agreed that it might be useful to have Matt Cohen give a short presentation on the phosphorus issue at Newnan's Lake. Mary Held suggested that a small amount of money spent on marketing may be useful to figure out how to get more funds for a project.

Penny Weber asked whether all parks have adequate boundary signage indicating presence of a nature preserve. Linda Demetropoulos said they should be. Penny would like to see rules and appropriate activities indicated on these signs.

Linda said that Geoff has a list of needs for Sweetwater Wetlands Park and that Sally in Environmental Education is putting a list together.

### IV. PRCA Staff Report

Linda distributed the staff report and asked that comments and questions be sent to her by email. Amy Carpus asked why the opening of the Cofrin Park has been put off. Linda said it has been delayed because of conflicting available dates of main participants. Grace Crummer noted a safety issue regarding a gap near the bridge.

Linda reported that the surplusing of the strip of land at Palm Point on Newnan's Lake is proceeding. The City of Gainesville's real estate people have contacted the relevant land owners and they stated willingness to acquire the adjacent land. This will come up before the City Commission in mid-March. The parcels appear to be zoned for recreation. The Gainesville Area Rowing Club is proposed to be granted a temporary easement so they can proceed with their real estate closing and development plans. Kathy Ewel asked why Palm Point is a city park, but nobody could answer that. Charlie said it had belonged to the Gainesville Women's Club originally. Leslie stated that Gum Root Park is also in the county but is operated jointly with the St. Johns Water Management District and Alachua County. Leslie said she recalled discussions about lack of management capacity for conservation lands in the county in earlier years.

*Editor's notes: The only two Nature Parks outside of Gainesville City limits are Wacahoota and Palm Point. Gum Root Nature Park is operated solely by PRCA. There are adjacent Water Management District Lands but they are managed separately.*

*Gum Root Park was originally purchased as part of the Gum Root Conservation Area project, in cooperation with the St. Johns River Water Management District. The City purchased a total of approximately 369 acres—349 acres purchased on May 13, 1993 and at a later date, a 20-acre pasture that was originally an out-parcel—for \$435,800. Funds for the City's acquisition were provided by the City of Gainesville, the Federal Aviation Authority, and Florida Department of Transportation. At the same time, the SJRWMD purchased approximately 372 acres south of SR 26, designated as the Gum Root Swamp Conservation Area, using Preservation 2000 funds. The SJRWMD purchase was subsequently incorporated into the Newnan's Lake Conservation Area (SJRWMD 2006).*

V. Committee Reports

- a. Policy: This committee will meet next month to review policies and include a definition of multi-staging in the part regarding geocaching and letterboxing.
- b. PR & Awards: An intern is working on the event and the theme will be Starry Night by Van Gogh. Recipients have been notified, and guest lists are being assembled. Charlie and Linda need to send a letter to and award certificate EnviroTech thanking them for the good job they did.

Jon Reiskind and Leslie Straub thought it would be appropriate to honor David Miller, a former member of NCC who was chair for many years and very active in that role. They will work on something appropriate for the next meeting, but on a personal rather than official basis.

VI. Liaison Reports (5 min.)

- a. Bicycle & Pedestrian Board: Charlie reported that 16-passenger pedicabs offering drinks are being considered. (The person who steers the vehicle will not be allowed to drink.)
- b. Recreation & Open Space Advisory Board: no report
- c. Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Public Works Committee: no report

VII. Friends of Nature Parks Report

Penny Weber announced that new officers will be elected at the annual meeting on February 20 at Morningside Nature Center from 5-8, after the park is closed and the full moon has risen. Food will be available in the Heirloom Garden, the Morningside Parketeers will play, and there will be a campfire. They ask that participants RSVP.

VIII. Old Business

- a. Star Award progress: see above

IX. New Business

a. PRCA policy review: see above. Send comments to Linda Demetropoulos

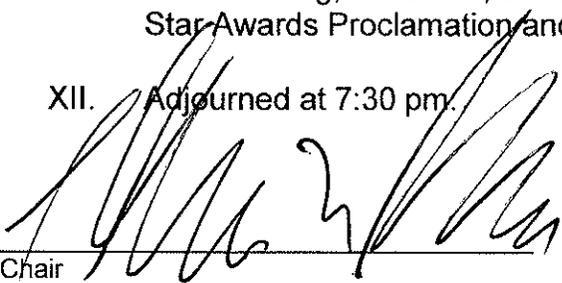
X. Board comments

Taylor Stein noted that the Gainesville Downtown Connector is not lit in the Depot Park section. He was told that policy prevents lighting and that ~~Will~~ <sup>Wes</sup> the Losen, who owns a neighboring business, was going to put lights up. Linda wondered whether the Downtown Connector is technically a park, and whether it is closed after dark. Rupa said that if it is, it needs an exception because of safety threats to bicyclists and pedestrians. Nothing appears closed about it. Leslie said the matter could be brought up to Bike/Ped board (Dekova Batey is the city staff liaison); Linda will check on this. Charlie noted that other parts of the trail have lights; he will mention it to Steve Phillips in the Chairs committee meeting. Taylor will send an email to Shannon Kelleher, who is the staff liaison with the Public Recreation and Parks Board.

XI. Next Meeting, March 10, 2016

Star Awards Proclamation and Awards Recognition Event March 3, 2016

XII. Adjourned at 7:30 pm.

  
Chair

3-10-2016  
Date