

NATURE CENTERS COMMISSION

Thomas Center, Bldg A, Room 204
302 NE 6th Ave

August 13, 2015
Thursday – 6:30PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present
Amy Carpus	Jon Reiskind (PR)	Linda Demetropoulos
Grace Crummer	Taylor Stein (Policy)	
Kathy Ewel, Secretary		
Rupa Lloyd, Treasurer		
Charlie Pedersen, Chair		
Leslie Straub (PR)		
Penny Weber (PR)		

II. Agenda Approval

<u>Motion by:</u> Grace Crummer	<u>Seconded by:</u> Amy Carpus
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve agenda as submitted	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

III. Approval of Minutes of June 11, 2015

<u>Motion by:</u> Grace Crummer	<u>Seconded by:</u> Amy Carpus
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve minutes as submitted	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

There was no meeting in July because of lack of a quorum.

IV. Chair Report: Charlie Pedersen presented the Chair Report. He announced that David Miller has resigned from the commission for health reasons. Amy Carpus agreed to serve as Interim Vice-Chair for the remaining two months of the fiscal year and to chair the next meeting (Sept. 10) when Charlie will be away.

V. Treasurer's Report: Rupa Lloyd presented the Treasurer's Report. \$4,732 remains in the account: \$3,030 for Materials and Supplies, \$1,552 for Printing and Binding, and \$150 for advertising.

Linda Demetropolous reminded the group that \$3,275 had been put aside 2 years ago for taxidermy for Morningside Nature Center's Education Center. Once a deposit of \$1,687.50 had been paid, Tony's Artistic Taxidermy began filling the order and has already delivered a gray fox, raccoon, opossum, and an armadillo. The red fox and fawn should be ready in a week. A bat was never delivered to him. The balance is \$1,532.50 without the bat. The only concern about paying this was that money might have been encumbered for the storyboard, but no plan had been submitted, and Leslie had not yet arrived at the meeting.

<u>Motion by:</u> Amy Carpus	<u>Seconded by:</u> Penny Weber
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve paying the balance owed for the taxidermy by the end of FY2015	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

A balance of \$3,199.50 remains in the account after the taxidermy payment is made (without the bat). (editor's note: this is a corrected balance).

Leslie Straub arrived later in the meeting with a list of items to be purchased for the storyboard. After considerable discussion about the merits of several of the items, she agreed to submit a plan with prices and priorities for discussion at the next meeting so the purchases can be made before the end of the fiscal year.

VI. PRCA Staff Report: Linda Demetropoulos distributed copies of a powerpoint presentation just presented by Michelle Park at the RCAPW meeting. The Trust for Public Land conducted polls for both the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. In the City's poll, three of every five voters said they would support a property tax increase to benefit public parks, trails, etc. Once the County's poll results have been presented, there will likely be a discussion regarding a joint sales tax initiative. Michelle will work on the joint sales tax initiative with Helen Warren and Randy Wells from the City Commission, Mike Byerly and Ken Cornell from the County Commission, and Doug Jones, Mayor of City of Archer, representing the League of Cities.

Linda reported that the City Commission approved a FY 16 budget request for full-time operation of Sweetwater Wetlands Park that includes 2.5 permanent Park Rangers. Also approved was a full-time permanent volunteer coordinator and full-time permanent staff specialist servicing the Nature Operations, Cultural Affairs, and Parks Operations Divisions.

Linda reported that Dignity Village is being fenced, and the City has committed to take control of that area, making sure police are stationed there and rest room and trash facilities are adequate. There will be a minimum set of rules, and campgrounds will be in clusters with designated garbage and fire areas. A capacity will be set. It will be a safe place. There will be a staff person for the City of Gainesville with whom Morningside Nature Center can liaison.

Linda reported that Nature Operations has recently received three grants including a State Division Historic Preservation grant that was applied for more than one year ago. NCC had committed to a \$1,000 grant match. This grant will enable a firm to be hired to do site condition assessments of two parks, Split Rock and Broken Arrow Bluff. The firm will also help plan for protection and interpretation. It is possible that the matching funds could be taken out of FY2015 funds if paperwork can be processed in time, leaving \$2,199.50 in the account. (editor's note: this is a corrected amount).

<u>Motion by:</u> Amy Carpus	<u>Seconded by:</u> Penny Weber
<u>Moved to:</u> Matching funds should come from FY2015 funds if possible.	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

Linda reported that Nature Operations was awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant of more than \$60,000 through the Wells Fargo Foundation to help fund the Gainesville Greenway Challenge and the Great Invader Raider Rally.

Funds will support a project coordinator for 2 years to assist with these programs.

Linda reported that Urban Forestry received \$20,000 from the state through the Florida Forest Service to develop an urban forest master plan. This will fund a contractor to facilitate the master plan; the project must be completed in January, 2017.

There have been concerns related to the recently amended tree ordinance which contains more stringent requirements, including mitigation fees to be paid for impacts to heritage trees as a deterrent to removing the trees. Concerns have come from the Blue Ribbon Council on Economic Development, and citizen comments at City Commission. Linda and the City Arborist will go to the Community Development Committee (CDC) to explain the ordinance. No date is set for the CDC meeting. Penny asked if any of the Tree Mitigation Fund can be used for education and awareness on this. Linda stated that they had included education and awareness in a proposed tree mitigation fund policy, but the city attorney did not approve in accordance with the ordinance. Penny requested that the City Arborist explain what was in the 2013 ordinance. Linda will see if the Arborist can attend the next meeting. (editor's note: City Arborist can attend in October).

VII. Committee Reports

a. Policy: meet later this fall

b. PR & Awards – Storyboard Update

Leslie has contacted a faculty member at Santa Fe College who is interested in having her class work with us. This would use no more than \$200. A teacher at Lofton High School may be interested also. An internship for Santa Fe starts in January. Leslie named several items as well as radio spots that can be purchased in case there is money available at the end of FY2015; she will put together an expenditure package with priorities. The committee will meet next month at 6:00.

c. Nominations: Amy, Grace, and Kathy will meet next month at 6:00 p.m.

I. Liaison Reports:

a. Bicycle & Pedestrian Board: no report

b. Recreation & Open Space Advisory Board: no report

c. Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Public Works Committee: Linda reported that some of the discussion at today's RCAPW meeting was related to the polling results (discussed above). There was also discussion of reinstating the parks trespass policy. Amy Carpus agreed to be the liaison for this Board, given David Miller's resignation.

II. Friends of Nature Parks Report: no report

III. New Business:

a. Star Awards: 2015 star award form was reviewed. Star Awards should be advertised starting in August. Penny suggested that the calendar year be designated conspicuously on the form. Leslie suggested that the nomination information could be put under the title also. Other minor changes were suggested.

b.

<u>Motion by:</u> Penny Weber	<u>Seconded by:</u> Leslie Straub
<u>Moved to:</u> Approve form with changes	<u>Upon vote:</u> Passed unanimously

Linda will request the marketing team to post the form on the website. Linda will forward the form to NCC members. Linda asked for photos of 5-petal flowers for the award.

- c. Nomination committee formed as shown above
- d. In response to a concern of Penny's, Linda reported that a nature assistant is working on marking new boundaries and will make sure Morningside's boundaries are well marked.

IV. Old Business:

- a. Creeks/water quality: Linda reported that staff has been working hard to inform the public about water quality in Loblolly Woods Nature Park, and publicity seems to have helped. A sign on the kiosk says "This creek is impaired for fecal coliform bacteria." A media blitz helped a lot, and Alachua County Environmental Protection Dept. and City of Gainesville water quality personnel were contacted to help spread the word. City staff go out into the park to speak with potential swimmers. Next year, summer camps will be contacted. Amy recommended that science teachers (or the county's lead curriculum resource teacher) be contacted because they may do study days in the creek.

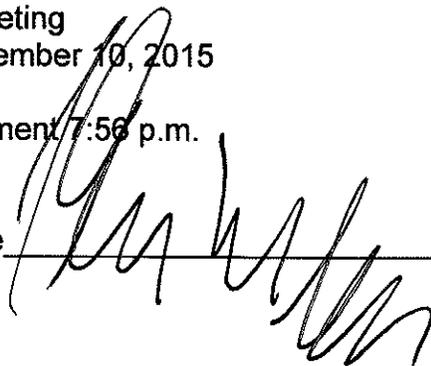
The NCC recommends putting more detail on the signage. Charlie asked that a summary of how the effort worked for the summer season be presented in October or November to the Policy Committee. Leslie will bring in more information on testing toxicity levels from different sources. Sediment stabilization grants may be available for dealing with erosion.

There was discussion of the muddy conditions at the Loblolly trail joining 8th Ave. and 16th Ave. It terminates at a utility easement, and no filling or boardwalk installation is allowed. Charlie recommended talking to someone about using geotextile or some other material, such as the Florida Aquarium uses in Tampa on their wetland walk. Amy will find out how to get permission to use geotextile on this stretch.

- V. Next Meeting
 - a. September 10, 2015

- VI. Adjournment 7:56 p.m.

Chair Signature



Date

10/8/15