

**MINUTES**

**University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee**

**June 05, 2025, at 9:00 AM**

**HYBRID MEETING**

**The University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee (ULVLC) met Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for a meeting hosted in the PDC Conference room and online.**

**Members attending:**

Gail Hansen De Chapman – Environmental Horticulture – Chair  
Linda Dixon – Director, Planning, Design & Construction  
Matt Williams – Director, Office of Sustainability  
Adam Dale – Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department  
Rachel Mallinger – Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department  
Monika Oli – Master Lecturer, Microbiology and Cell Science  
Latrell Simmons – UFPD, Major, Support Services Division & Community Service Division

**Members not attending:**

Fernando Alferez – Assistant Professor, Citrus Horticulture  
David Conser – City of Gainesville – City Arborist  
Lucas Majure – Assistant Curator, FLMNH  
Tim Martin – Associate Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conservation  
Cydney McGlothlin – AVP, Planning, Design & Construction  
Gerardo Nunez – Assistant Professor, Horticultural Sciences  
Pawel Petelewicz – Assistant Professor, Agronomy Department  
Brandi Renton – Associate Vice President, Business Affairs  
Nancy Chrystal-Green – Assistant Vice President, Student Engagement  
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facilities Services  
Gregg Clarke – Director of Operations, Facilities Services  
Ryan Klein – Assistant Professor, Environmental Horticulture  
Wesley Freeman – Student

**Visitors attending:**

Rick Falcon – Planning, Design & Construction  
Jamie Lindsey – Architectural Designer, Planning, Design & Construction  
Frank Javaheri – Director of Construction, Planning, Design & Construction  
Thomas Feather – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction  
David Wood – Project Manager, Planning, Design & Construction  
Laurie Hall – Landscape Architect, NV5  
Jordan Benton – Assistant Director of Business Operations, Facility Services  
Matt Webster – Program Director, Facilities & Real Estate  
Derek LaMontagne – Visitor

**I.      Adoption of Agenda and Minutes**

**Motion:** Adam Dale made a motion to adopt the agenda and approve the April minutes.

**Second:** Rachel Mallinger

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**II.     MAJOR PROJECTS**

**UF- 689 – Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education**

**PRESENTING: David Wood & Laurie Hall**

**DISCUSSION:** David and Laurie presented the advanced schematic design for the Hamilton Center project, highlighting significant excavation work to expose the basement level on the east side of the building. Laurie discussed the impact on trees, including three heritage trees that will be removed, and explained that the project will require extensive utility work in the front lawn area. The team is still working on how to modify the utilities while preserving as many trees as possible. The project will pursue LEED gold certification and will go to the Historic Preservation Board for approval.

The design plans presented include an accessible route with alternating ramps and steps to the lower level, and a retaining wall removal to address stormwater drainage. Laurie explained that the project aims to make the basement more usable as a library and entry point, with a focus on keeping ramp slopes below 5 degrees to avoid handrails. The landscaping plan, which will comply with the historic precinct's plant list, will be presented in more detail at the design development phase.

**Motion:** Rachel Mallinger made a motion to approve the project as presented.

**Second:** Monika Oli

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**III.    MINOR PROJECTS**

None

#### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Landscaping and Natural Resource Projects**

Jordan Benton presented data on palm tree removals during April and May. The committee discussed the reasons for tree removals, with Adam inquiring about the specific causes of tree deaths. Monika suggested having the plant path lab analyze samples to diagnose diseases. Jordan mentioned ongoing landscape enhancement projects and conservation area fencing work. The conversation ended with Adam addressing the topic of tree disease diagnosis on campus.

The committee discussed the need for a dedicated campus arborist to protect and preserve campus plants and trees, with Adam sharing an example of improperly handled tree roots that led to a pine's death. Gail expressed frustration that previous attempts to secure this position have been unsuccessful, and the group agreed that additional support from facilities and influential stakeholders would be needed. Jordan acknowledged the grounds team's care in their work but agreed that having an arborist could elevate their practices, while Adam shared his concerns about Tom Schlick's responsiveness to his comments about improper pruning.

The committee continued to discuss the benefits of hiring a campus arborist to provide training and develop long-term tree management plans, with Gail emphasizing the need for comprehensive data to demonstrate cost savings and environmental benefits. Jordan acknowledged the value of such a position but noted challenges in securing funding, while Adam suggested including both tree removals and new plantings in any future reports to provide a complete picture of campus re-greening efforts. Jordan mentioned ongoing efforts to improve data collection and tracking of plant materials added to campus.

The committee discussed organizational changes, noting that the reporting structure and budget allocation have shifted under the new Construction, Facilities, and Real Estate group led by Colt Little (Interim VP). Matt Williams highlighted the need for a new “pitch” to the appropriate administrative decision-makers and mentioned pending budget clarity later in the month. Monika and Gail emphasized the importance of highlighting positive campus improvements, such as the changes around areas like the Baughman Center. Monika suggested starting a part-time faculty position to oversee arboriculture, combining academic insight with practical experience, and Gail shared her past workshops with the crew to enhance their design skills. The group also considered including updates from NATL (Natural Area Teaching Laboratory) on campus improvements and replanting efforts.

The topic of NATL continued with the committee expressing the need for more frequent reports. Gail plans to seek help from committee members to gather information for a report to support their request for a new position.

A public visitor, Derek LaMontagne, expressed concerns about tree preservation on campus, suggesting better pruning practices, accountability for tree damage, and mitigation efforts. Derek also requested that the committee meetings be made more accessible to the public online, recorded, and that email notifications be sent to interested parties.

He mentioned difficulties in communicating with the grounds department despite their stated openness to public input.

Derek expressed concerns about an unprofessional email response from grounds regarding damaged personal plants and requested more transparent communication. He also inquired about the protection of a memorial garden at the Maguire site, which the committee had approved of fencing for in January, but no confirmation of its boundaries or fencing is known. Gail noted that the exact boundaries of the memorial garden were unclear and that efforts to determine them had not been completed.

#### **Chair Report**

#### **Gail Hansen de Chapman**

Gail discussed the election of committee chair and vice-chair with all the members, with Adam expressing interest in becoming chair but noting his unavailability through December 2025 due to professional development leave.

Due to low attendance and upcoming member turnover, they decided to table the chair election until the fall semester when more members are expected to be present.

The group also addressed scheduling concerns, with Monika unable to attend Thursday morning meetings, and agreed to create a poll in August to find a more suitable meeting time that works for all members and project managers.

**There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.**