

MINUTES

University Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee

March 5th, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Planning, Design & Construction Division, 245 Gale Lemerand Drive

Members attending:

Adam Dale – Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology Department – Chair
Carrie Bush – Interim Assistant Vice President, Planning, Design & Construction
Cydney McGlothlin – University Architect, Planning, Design & Construction
David Conser – City Arborist, City of Gainesville
Gail Hansen De Chapman – Environmental Horticulture
Grace John – Assistant Professor, Biology
Jason Kruse – Associate Professor, Environmental Horticulture
Jordan Benton – Assistant Director of Business Operations, Facility Services
Latrell Simmons – UFPD, Major, Support Services Division & Community Service Division
Nancy Chrystal-Green – Assistant Vice President, Student Engagement
Ryan Klein – Assistant Professor, Environmental Horticulture

Members not attending:

Aseña Goren – Post Doctoral Associate
Brandi Renton – Vice President of Business Affairs
Colt Little – Vice President for Construction, Facilities, and Real Estate
Gerardo Nunez – Assistant Professor, Horticultural Services
Gregg Clarke – Director of Operations, Facilities Services
Lisa Strange – Extension Agent II
Monika Oli – Master Lecturer, Microbiology and Cell Science
Richard Dolson – Student
Tom Schlick – Assistant Director of Grounds, Facilities Services

Visitors attending:

Amy Quillen – General Counsel’s Office
Brett Bartek – NV5
Charles Kammin – Utilities & Energy Services
Cole Menhennett – NV5
Francisco Oquendo – Planning, Design & Construction
Jamie Lindsey – Planning, Design & Construction
Mark Helms – Facilities Services
John Michael-Simpson – NV5
Juliana DeFilippo – The Alligator
Kate Farmer – Planning, Design & Construction
Karen Garren
Kristin Rubin – Sierra Club
Tamara Robbins
Laura Scott – Planning, Design & Construction
Laurie Hall – NV5
Matthew Webster – Planning, Design & Construction
Rick Falcon – Planning, Design & Construction
Susette Martinez – Planning, Design & Construction

I. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Adam noted one name to be corrected on the draft minutes.

Motion: Gail Hansen De Chapman made a motion to adopt the agenda and approve the February minutes with the change noted above.

Second: Ryan Klein

Motion Carried Unanimously

II. MAJOR PROJECTS

None.

III. MINOR PROJECTS

UF-708 Graham Stormwater Improvements

PRESENTING: Kate Farmer, Laurie Hall, Brett Bartek

DISCUSSION:

Kate presented additional information the committee had requested on tree impacts and mitigation, comparable successful projects, management plan for Graham Woods, and quantification of energy/water movement trade-offs.

Regarding energy/water movement trade-offs Kate also read the below statement from Cole Menhennett of NV5:

It is true that trees are effective at mitigation of stormwater energy, however the source of erosion within Graham Woods is primarily related to stormwater captured from impervious areas upstream and routed into Graham Woods through failing infrastructure. The trees within Graham Woods only provide substantial energy dissipation over the Graham Woods area itself, not the upstream contributing areas. The watershed that flows through Graham Woods is roughly 63 acres. This includes the Graham Woods area, which represents roughly 8 acres (13%) of the watershed. The remaining 87% of the watershed consists primarily of developed/impervious areas which represent the main source of flow through Graham Woods. The erosion issues must be addressed by replacing failing infrastructure. The existing pipe outlets have been undermined and exposed with vertical drops from pipe outlets onto bare soil. Over time, these sources of vertical discharge have eroded and destabilized root systems which can, and ultimately will, result in tree loss. New structures will intercept existing sections of pipe and provide intermediate drops to limit pipe slopes. New pipe outlets will be submerged, greatly reducing the potential for erosion. The proposed ponds will provide additional storage and reduce the rate of discharge through the area and downstream at

the Graham Pond outlet. Any loss in energy dissipation from existing trees will be offset and greatly improved by infrastructure improvements and added storage volume.

Kate confirmed that 67 heritage trees and 221 exotic invasive species need to be removed, and 447 will be replanted. Laurie clarified that most tree impacts are due to the need to regrade all slopes surrounding Graham Pond, adding that heritage trees are being prioritized for retention despite significant grading challenges.

Kate provided examples of successful comparable projects, including Sweetwater Wetlands Park and Depot Park in Gainesville. She also presented before-and-after photos of a campus erosion project from 2008, showing how tree canopy recovered over time. Kate also included information on campus stakeholder support, project urgency and need for action, core improvements, and expected outcomes.

The committee discussed tree protection, retention and removal, tree replanting and plans to irrigate newly planted trees. The committee also discussed the importance of arborist supervision throughout the project. Adam added that the level of arborist involvement required for this project alone is an excellent case for having a campus arborist.

The committee discussed tree mitigation funds being used for conservation or to fund a campus arborist. The committee discussed similar projects and the urgency and need for action on the project, with support from the Faculty Senate Infrastructure Council.

The committee noted that they received a written inquiry from a member of the public requesting an additional project factoring in wildlife. Brett Bartek stated that campus is already doing camera trap studies of the area, adding that wildlife is minimal due to poor habitat quality and that the project would improve Lake Alice's ecosystem by opening it up to more state-listed wading birds and that fixing broken stormwater pipes will better serve wildlife.

The committee requested a list of tree species scheduled for removal, with particular focus on the 221 exotic invasive species, and a list of tree species that will be used for replacement trees and to see a landscape plan and the plans for the shoreline and littoral plans of the basins. They also requested more fully developed tree protection zones.

The committee requested a report from Facilities Services of how tree mitigation funds are spent. Facilities Services has presented this information to the committee in the past and will provide an updated report to the committee.

Some members requested more information about how the conservation area will be managed, with other members reminding the committee that site management is outside the scope of the committee. Jordan reminded the committee that it is too early in the project to have a management plan but stated that a good management plan is a high priority for UF and will be developed. She emphasized that it is currently impossible for the facilities department to maintain the health of the area given the current state of the site hence the reason for the proposed project. She added that getting the watershed area functional and safe is a high priority for UF.

Committee members agreed, stating that erosion threatens nearby buildings which creates a health, safety and welfare issue. Charles stated that this is one of the main drivers of the project, adding that the project addresses one of the top life safety issues on campus, while also addressing stormwater and wildlife concerns.

Motion: Gail Hansen De Chapman motioned to forward the project to the VP for Construction, Facilities and Real Estate with a recommendation to approve as presented but requested that the project come back to the committee to review the items the committee would normally review for a major project.

Second: Jason Kruse

A majority approved the motion.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Carrie noted that some members of the public want the ability to attend meetings remotely. She explained that UF is getting advice from the General Counsel's office and is looking to standardize committees throughout UF.

Grounds Report

Jordan presented the grounds report including tree removal, stormwater maintenance and a bridge addition. The committee discussed the definition of hazardous trees and the need for a campus arborist.

V. Chair's Report

Adam Dale

Adam noted that there are 2 heritage live oaks at the beef unit that are obstructing trucks from entering the beef unit. The 2 trees to be removed will be replaced with 10 trees on site. A heritage size Shumard oak at the entomology and nematology building is 80% dead and will be removed.

Public Comment:

Kristen Ruben from the Sierra Club proposed a tree-first plan that prioritizes heritage trees.

Tamara Robbins stated that this seems like a major project and that she does not understand the need for stormwater facilities and clearing this area. She stated that the current project seems counter to the Campus Master Plan and raised concerns about destroying insect habitat.

Karen Garren highlighted conflicting goals between stormwater management and ecological preservation, expressing that the project seems over engineered and should mainly address erosion, adding that Lake Alice is not a real lake.

Juliana DeFilippo from The Independent Florida Alligator asked about why the project is classified as a minor project, and it was explained that the state defines a minor project by a dollar threshold for construction budget. She then asked why the reported budget is larger than the threshold for a minor budget and it was explained that there are costs beyond construction which make up the difference. In addition, she noted that tree mitigation funds appeared to have paid for work by tree removal companies in 2019 or 2021. Facilities will research this and report back to the committee.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:49 AM.