

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2022

I. The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m.

II. It was confirmed that the meeting had been properly noticed. Attendees were asked to silence their phones.

III. A quorum was established with the attendance of committee members Mike Jacobs, Becky Kutska, Dona Lasseter, and Angela Potter. Nancy Rechcigl participated by phone. Also, in attendance were Rizzetta Field Services Manager, John Toborg; ArtisTree Account Executive, Tim Drumgool; CDD Liaison, Tom Tosi; General Manager, Steve Dietz; and Executive Assistant, Mary Paige Huisman.

IV. The draft of the minutes from the 9/2/2022 meeting was reviewed. Following discussion, Becky moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Angela, and unanimously approved.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Per Mike, a resident in the Day Lily cul-de-sac (Dave) has asked that the Firebush in that cul-de-sac be cut shorter. Mike also noted that some of its branches appear to be in various stages of decline. The other residents adjacent to the cul-de-sac will be surveyed, and if the majority agree, ArtisTree will be instructed to maintain this hedge at a height of 3 feet.

VI. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

- A. Before continuing our discussion, we thanked Tim for ArtisTree's team being on property so quickly after the hurricane.
- B. Many of our specimen trees were severely damaged by Hurricane Ian. By Mike's count, these include one Ribbon Palm, five Bougainvillea, eight Tree Ligustrums, nine Hong Kong Orchid Trees, one Cabbage Palmetto, and a significantly tilted Magnolia.. The uprooted Ribbon Palm has been fitted with a drip line to prevent the roots from drying out until the tree can be righted.
 - 1. Proposals for remediation (not including Hong Kong Orchid Trees):
 - a. Ameri-Tree's proposal for removing 14 Tree Ligustrum and grinding the stumps is \$6000 (emergency pricing, date TBD. Otherwise, first availability is in January 2023).
 - b. ArtisTree's proposal for righting the Ribbon Palm, Bougainvillea, and those Tree Ligustrum that can be salvaged, and flush-cutting the Tree Ligustrums that cannot be salvaged is \$2400, plus the cost of the Duck Bill Anchoring System needed to secure the Bougainvillea. ArtisTree can schedule these items for next week.
 - c. Mike moved that we recommend that the CDD approve ArtisTree's proposal. Dona seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.
 - 2. Hong Kong Orchid Trees
 - a. Ameri-Tree proposed \$9650 to remove and grind the stumps of nine Hong Kong Orchid Trees and one Cabbage Palmetto and crown reduce/structurally prune and remove dead wood from three additional Hong Kong Orchids. Entirely removing nine Hong Kong Orchids will dramatically alter the appearance of Waterlefe along Upper Manatee River Road, and some members feel some of the trees could be righted. John's opinion is that established Hong Kong Orchid Trees are quite hardy and could survive this. Mary Paige was asked to followup with Ameri-Tree and request a proposal that would include righting and stabilizing some of the trees.

- b. We asked Tim to evaluate the Hong Kong Orchid Trees and the Cabbage Palmetto for ArtisTree and submit a proposal, keeping in mind that we want to save as many as possible.
- c. Mike moved that to expedite resolution we ask the CDD Board for approval of a NTE amount of \$9650 and permission for the committee to select a vendor without further approval from the Board within this limit. Angela seconded the motion, which then unanimously approved.
- 3. We asked ArtisTree to submit a proposal to fix the Magnolia tree in the Discovery East cul-de-sac.
- C. Additional but less severe damage elsewhere includes Hibiscus in the Waterlefe Boulevard median significantly bent by the high winds. Tim thinks they can gently pull the shrubs to a more upright position and that the shrubs' phototropism will resolve the problem. We also recognize that repairing storm damage may cause or disclose additional damage and that continued inspection of Waterlefe may reveal yet unidentified damage that will need repair.
- D. The metal and wood fencing at the SE corner was damaged. Steve will followup on this.

VII. JOHN TOBORG REPORT: For complete details, please see the Waterlefe Landscape Inspection Report dated September 26, 2022. Specifically discussed at this meeting were:

- A. It was noted that this inspection was performed prior to the significant damage caused by Hurricane Ian, which may have rendered some inspection items moot.
- B. Of major concern to John are longstanding turf issues. Tim responded that ArtisTree has addressed some areas and evaluation and treatment of remaining areas will continue. It is an accepted fact that Florida's harsh and inconsistent climate plays a role in all vegetation, and this year's unusually wet and hot summer has created its own set of problems, especially combined with the round of fertilizer that was missed earlier this year. Tom asked if we should consider soil sampling to help ferret out the underlying causes and whether we should adjust our fertilizer regimen. John explained that our contract stipulates 8-2-12 +4, which provides superior nutrition compared to the usual turf fertilizers, if properly applied. We are on schedule to catch up on our fertilizer applications by the end of the year, but if we do not see improvement by getting back on track and after the dormant period, the expense of soil testing might be worth considering.
- C. Tim was alerted to palms that were overlooked on the last round of pruning, including the palms on the sides of Maritime, and was also reminded that rather than simply removing the brown foliage, we want fronds pruned to 9 and 3 to maintain an attractive appearance as long as possible between pruning.
- D. John clarified that, while we do want the Firebush in the WLB median outside the maintenance shed high enough to mask the shed, these shrubs do need to be pruned and should not be allowed to grow into the Tree Ligustrums.
- E. Irrigation equipment needs attention. For example, the rain shut-off device at Misty Pond inbound appears to be missing parts, and the controller on the WLB median between Field Brook and the roundabout needs remounting.
- F. Several beds are again being encroached upon by adjacent turf and overrun with weeds. This is a persistent problem in Florida, especially during the warmer months, and must receive consistent attention.
- G. Tom asked John how he would rate our community compared to his other clients. John rated Waterlefe as a middle B also stated that all communities have their ups and downs, and none is perfect.

VIII. ARTISTREE REPORT

- A. Palm trimming was done. Tim will followup on those John reported as having been missed. He also expressed an understanding of John's preference for pruning to 9 and 3.
- B. The next annual rotation is scheduled for 11/8. We discussed the suboptimal performance of past installations and factors that should be addressed: location, nutrition, and irrigation. Plant source could also play a role. ArtisTree will amend the annual beds with Command soil before installation, as per our contract and "stadium stack" all beds so that the annuals show better. Nancy (plant pathologist) asked that low spots be filled to remedy accumulating water and drown roots and said annuals should be spaced 12 inches away from concrete curbs. We/Steve will designate bed designs by means of paint, stakes, etc., prior to installation. We also asked ArtisTree to contact Bloom Masters as a potential source for our upcoming spring rotation and communicate two types of pricing information back to us. Bloom Masters will deal only with landscape companies, not directly with us.
- C. Fertilizer application for turf, shrubs, and palms will be performed before mulch installation that is scheduled for later this month. Tim was reminded to not fertilize the damaged Ribbon Palm in the roundabout at this time,
- D. After the Ribbon Palm is stabilized, its irrigation will need to be enhanced.
- E. Tom asked Tim to rate us and himself. Tim replied he finds the people at Waterlefe nice, and he enjoys working with us, but the length of time for us to make decisions is frustrating. He rates himself highly and feels he is engaged and responsive.

IX. CHAIRMAN UPDATE

- A. The first phase of the Bird Island project is scheduled for mid-October. ASI Landscape Management has submitted a proposal for installing a 65-gallon Jacaranda Tree and a Treegator bag at a cost of \$3145.73. This will be discussed in November.
- B. The upcoming annuals rotation will be red and white Petunias since ArtisTree cannot source the red and purple petunias we wanted this time. There is confusion as to whether American Farms will or will **not** custom-grow varieties and colors that we request, even if given sufficient notice. Tim will check and report back to us.
- C. The CDD Board was informed that our attempt at reducing to three annual rotations per year is not yielding satisfactory results. There were no objections to reverting to four annual rotations, though we will continue our efforts to reduce the expense. Please see XIII.A.
- D. An ArtisTree crew appreciation day proposed several months ago may require special action to get funding. Tim feels this would be well received, and discussion will continue.
- E. The Rainbow Court median island continues to need attention. Tim is awaiting results from the soil analysis before adding plants. Nancy shared her concern that this design will never do well as many of the plants are the wrong plant in the wrong place (e.g., the Gardenia is not the grafted variety that gets planted directly into the ground and will likely succumb to nematode). Similar beds in the community use Pringles Podocarpus for the short hedge, and the Gardenia will be replaced with Pringles Podocarpus.
- F. Mulch installation is scheduled for this month.
- G. We were reminded that if the committee is to undertake a formal study of the annual beds, we need to adhere to the Sunshine Law. We briefly discussed alternatives for acquiring this information were.

X. PRIORITY LIST

Due to time constraints, discussion of which projects to eliminate from our two-year plan was held over for discussion at the November 4, 2022, committee meeting.

XI. GENERAL MANAGER UPDATE

Steve reminded us that Landscape Committee subcommittees are subject to the Sunshine Law (Please see IX.G.). We will continue research on how to collect data so that we can make appropriate recommendations to the CDD Board without violating the law's statutes or intent.

XII. LIASON COMMENTS

- A. Tom again expressed his appreciation and that of the CDD Board for the committee's continued dedication and involvement in the community.
- B. Tom shared his observation and frustration that we revisit the same issues repeatedly with little apparent progress. Each of us has voiced this same frustration at some point; however, our limited decision-making ability and having to communicate within the constraints of the Sunshine Law stymies efficient progress, thereby causing issues to remain active far longer than may seem reasonable.
- C. Tom suggested a road trip as part of our research into best practices. We discussed how to incorporate this into a regularly scheduled committee meeting and the need to adhere to the Sunshine Law.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS/COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

- A. Because our attempt to transition to three annual rotations has not gone well, and we expect to revert to four, we discussed other ways to reduce the expense without sacrificing, and perhaps enhancing, the beauty of Waterlefe.
 - 1. Since annuals at cart paths across the roadways have been especially problematic, replacing these with an attractive array of low-growing flowering or other colorful shrubs (e.g., dwarf Ixora) could be an excellent alternative. Though a bit more expensive initially, a shrub will last for years and is much less finicky than annuals once established.
 - 2. We noted some of annual beds have become misshapen, some extending far beyond the original design and even under bushes. To communicate with ArtisTree more effectively before installation, we/Steve will outline our intended design of these areas.
- B. We discussed a concern about the how the cost of storm damage repair will be categorized within accounting. Dona moved that we ask the board not to assess these expenses to the Landscape Committee Operating Budget but that they come from reserve funds. Becky seconded the motion, followed by unanimous approval. Dona remembers that the CDD Board addressed the issue of future Acts of God landscape issues from the reserve in their 9/22 meeting. Dona will check on this.

XIV. Committee members were reminded to check CDD e-mail on a regular basis.

XV. The Sunshine Law was reiterated to committee members.

XVI. The next Landscape Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 4, 2022.

XVII. Angela moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mike, and unanimously approved at 4:59 p.m.