



Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Sep 13, 2017 - City Commission Meeting
Category	13. POLICY FORMATION AND DIRECTION
Subject	13.03 Approval to Transfer the Administration of the Tree Bank Policy from Public Works to Community Beautification and Waste Management Services and modify Tree Planting Opportunities (Policy 2001) -- Reginald Ofuani, Community Beautification and Waste Management
Access	Public
Type	Action, Discussion
Preferred Date	Sep 13, 2017
Absolute Date	Sep 13, 2017
Fiscal Impact	No
Budgeted	Yes
Budget Source	No Fiscal Impact
Recommended Action	Option 1: Approve the transfer of the administration of the Tree Bank from the former Public Works Department to the Community Beautification and Waste Management Department, and approve changes to the City Commission Policy 2001 to provide greater flexibility to expand urban forest management and tree planting goals.

Public Content

For more information, please contact: Reginald C. Ofuani, Community Beautification and Waste Management Services 891-5450.

Statement of Issue

City Commission Policy 2001, Administration of Landscape Fee-in Lieu Funds, most commonly referred to as the Tree Bank, outlines the administration, responsibilities, and allowable expenditures of funds for tree planting and urban forestry management. The recent reorganization of the work groups from within the now inactive Public Works Department necessitates the review of the administration component of this policy.

Additionally, this item seeks to update the approval limits for the City Manager and the policy administrator, and allow for greater flexibility to plant trees and manage the urban forest within our community.

Recommended Action

Option 1: Approve the transfer of the administration of the Tree Bank from the former Public Works Department to the Community Beautification and Waste Management Department, and approve changes to the City Commission Policy 2001 to provide greater flexibility to expand urban forest management and tree planting goals.

Fiscal Impact

Amending the policy will have no fiscal impact until projects are approved based on the procedures detailed in the policy.

Supplemental Material/Issue Analysis

History/Facts & Issues

The City Commission first approved the Administration of Landscape Fee-in-Lieu Fund (Tree Bank Fund) in April of 2002. It was established to provide an ongoing funding source to maintain and enhance the City's significant tree inventory. Tree Bank funds are generated when there is not sufficient space on a development site to accommodate required trees. In May of 2008, the City Commission amended the Tree Bank Policy, whereby the administration of the Tree Bank was assigned to the former Public Works Department. A prohibition against using Tree Bank funds for the removal of trees was also implemented. The Tree Bank Policy was renewed by the City Commission in December 2013, pursuant to Florida Sunset provisions.

In the nine years following the last amendment of this policy, Tree Bank funds have been utilized to fund 41 projects in the City, at a total cost of \$736,890. Currently, there are four active projects with a total budget of \$89,500. Past projects included tree planting along roadways, within parks, on private property, and tree preservation on City property and rights of way. Additionally, funds were used to conduct tree inventories within the downtown zoning district and along the canopy road system within the City.

The organizational changes made in January 2016, reassigned staff from the former Public Works Department that were responsible for the oversight and management of the Tree Bank to the newly formed Community Beautification and Waste Management Department. The proposed change of the administration of the Tree Bank from the Public Works Director to the General Manager of Community Beautification and Waste Management will update the changes needed within the policy to reflect current departmental roles.

The current guidelines limit the department's General Manager and the City Manager to thresholds outside of the standard purchasing policy. These lower limits have resulted in unnecessary delays in approving Tree Bank funded projects. Smaller tree planting projects far exceed the lower threshold limits of \$10,000 for the Department Director. This modification will put the approval limits in line with the current purchasing policy.

The central purpose to modify section 2001.06 (b)(2) which addresses 'Off-site replanting', is an effort to expand tree planting within the canopy road protection zone. The right of way area along the canopy road system is very narrow outside the roadway and typically extends only 25 feet from the edge of the pavement. These narrow confines provide few opportunities to replant along canopy roads. There have been two successful planting plans that were implemented within the canopy road protection zone. One site was a small planting plan on private property on Meridian Road, near Miller Landing Road that the Commission approved in February 2011. The other was a planting of 130 large trees on City-owned property in 2015 and 2016, also along Meridian Road. These plantings and another currently being evaluated on Centerville Road near Trescott Drive are a concerted effort by staff to work cooperatively with public/private landholders to enhance areas of the canopy roads system where tree canopy and native ecosystems are in decline. Adding this prioritization will further promote the planting of trees and ecosystem protection within the canopy roads protection zone.

The landscape planting authorization on non-City owned property within section 2001.06 (b)(2) has not resulted in enhanced tree planting. Requests for funding within this section often are submitted with ineligible non-native plants or planting plans that include few trees. It is recommended to eliminate the landscaping prioritization on non-City owned property.

Expenditures on non-City owned property have been subject to the approval of the Commission since the policy was adopted in 2002. This limitation has focused staff's efforts to plant areas such as public rights of way, parks, and conservation areas that the General Manager and City Manager can authorize. Often these spaces are narrow and have resulted in trees that affect sidewalks, driveways, and utilities as they mature.

The request to modify section 2001.07 would allow the City Manager to approve tree planting within 100 feet of the centerline of an adjacent roadway. This 100 foot limit is consistent with the canopy road protection zone and will

allow for trees to be planted away from public infrastructure where conflicts often arise many years after planting. This policy shift will give staff the opportunity to focus tree planting both on the public right of way or within the 100 foot approval area to plant larger maturing trees that will provide benefits to the homeowner and community for many years.

Options

1. Approve the transfer of the administration of the Tree Bank from the former Public Works Department to the Community Beautification and Waste Management Department, and approve changes to the City Commission Policy 2001 to provide greater flexibility to expand urban forest management and tree planting goals.

Pros:

- Tree Bank Policy would adjust and be concurrent with the reorganization of staff within Community Beautification and Waste Management from the former Public Works Department.
- Greater flexibility to address requests for planting trees promptly.
- An enhanced emphasis to plant trees outside of the usual confines of parks and right of way areas.
- Expands opportunities between the City of Tallahassee and private landholders to improve areas of the canopy road system within the City.

Cons:

- Increased expenditures from the City's Tree Bank for additional tree planting.
- Temporary construction easements may be needed for tree planting occurring on private property

2. Do not approve the transfer of the administration of the Tree Bank and amendments to City Commission Policy 2001 and provide alternate direction to staff.

Attachments/References

City Commission Policy 2001 Proposed Changes

City Commission Policy 2001 Proposed Changes.pdf (375 KB)