

**UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 TREE SUBCOMMITTEE  
 CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
 CITY HALL 4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
 100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
 FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301  
October 9, 2008 – 4:00 P.M.**

2008 Cumulative Attendance

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Fred Stresau, Chair	P	2	0
Bunney Brenneman, Vice Chair	P	1	1
Robert Caine	A	0	2
L. Thomas Chancey	P	2	0
Dr. Magdalene Lewis	A	0	2
Bernard Petreccia	A	0	2
Debora Van Valkenburgh	P	2	0

**City Representatives**

Peter Partington, City Engineer & Staff Liaison  
 Gene Dempsey, Urban Forester  
 Hilda Testa, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

**Guests**

Wade Jollimore, Vegetation Management Supervisor, FPL

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Fred Stresau called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

**II. Roll Call & Announcements**

Roll was called and attendance noted. A quorum was present.

**III. Self Introductions**

Chair Stresau introduced all guests and City representatives present. Wade Jollimore from FPL advised that he was temporarily taking over for Bill Slaymaker, who has taken a position in north Florida, until the position can be posted. Mr. Jollimore explained that he has previously worked with different utilities, such as Long Island Power, PG&E, NStar in Boston, and with Nelson Tree Company and Carter Tree Service. For the most part, Mr. Jollimore stated, he has held positions as Utility Arborist and now is serving as FPL's interim Vegetation Management Supervisor.

#### **IV. Tree Planting and Utility Easements**

Chair Stresau said that he spoke with Vice Chair Brenneman earlier in the week and asked her to define her concept of the two display boards to make sure everyone was on the same page this evening.

Chair Stresau related that Vice Chair Brenneman indicated that there would be two display boards as follows:

1. Tree planting under power lines; and
2. Homeowners and trees.

Chair Stresau advised that both boards would be specific to Fort Lauderdale.

As to the first board, Chair Stresau stated that he had asked the members of the Tree Subcommittee to look around locally and to come up with photographs that exhibited good and bad plantings under power lines. He confirmed that Vice Chair Brenneman has made arrangements for a local photographer to augment the photographs taken by the members.

As to the second board, Chair Stresau advised that it will include correct tree pruning. Chair Stresau related that as he went out and looked for examples of tree pruning, which was difficult. Chair Stresau expressed that if tree pruning is done properly, you can not see it, and if it's done poorly it looks awful.

Chair Stresau asked Gene Dempsey to discuss what he believes should be on each one of these boards.

Mr. Dempsey expressed at a previous meeting between himself, Vice Chair Brenneman, Mr. Chancey and a PIO representative, it had been difficult to "nail things down." In fact, he and the PIO representative left the meeting not knowing any more of what was wanted on the boards. One thing that was clear from the meeting was that Vice Chair Brenneman wants very large photographs, such as poster size, and that she does not want any text. Vice Chair Brenneman would like the pictures alone to tell the story, however, Mr. Dempsey believes that text should be included. Mr. Dempsey recalled that Vice Chair Brenneman liked displays that were done by Hal Barnes, which show photographs of entranceways and neighborhoods. At that time, Mr. Dempsey said, Vice Chair Brenneman suggested that each display show three large photos.

Chair Stresau expressed that he believed it would be very difficult to explain the displays without some kind of text. In fact, he said, it is difficult for even himself to look at a tree and understand exactly what to tell a layperson why it is good or why it is bad. Therefore, Chair Stresau stated that the boards should be couched in such a way that it is expected that the people who will be viewing them will have no training and no idea what they are looking at. As such, the specific problem must be explained to them.

Chair Stresau stated that he found it was difficult to try to show the good and the bad. He assumes that the second board, depicting correct tree planting in South Florida, has nothing to do with utility lines, but instead deals with selecting trees and vegetation for a specific condition. Chair Stresau asked if he was correct that the second board would have nothing to do with FPL's utility lines. Mr. Chancey responded that this was true in the past, but not any longer.

Mr. Chancey expressed that the problem is that Fort Lauderdale does not have a planned community, like those that exist out west that were built in the past 10 to 15 years by new standards, which standards are still being upgraded as of this year. They have new ordinances that are based on past mistakes from probably 12 years ago. In addition, he said, most everything is underground in the planned communities.

Mr. Chancey expressed that this Subcommittee is dealing with the City of Fort Lauderdale, which has been here for 100 years and has been built out. He stated that since 1973 the City's tree cover has gone down to 5%; then in 1994 came back up to 20%; and then has gone to 14% before Hurricane Wilma. Mr. Chancey said this is because the area where trees are located is limited and because we need the shade. He explained that there is a competition for overhead power lines and trees.

Mr. Chancey claimed that the right tree/right place concept has been discussed as to newly planted trees underneath power lines. He opined that the big conflict is the trees that are not under the power lines, which are on the property of the homeowners providing tremendous shade, yet have grown through neglect and allowed to get a spread on them until they get a connection with danger on the easement existing around the power lines.

Mr. Chancey recalled that the reason Mayor Naugle suggested Mr. Chancey serve on the Utility Advisory Committee was because of what was happening with power lines in Colee Hammock. At that time, he said, FPL was going through this existing neighborhood and was going to impact existing canopy trees as originally designed. Mr. Chancey stated that FPL decided to get higher and above it, which brought in hundreds of people in protest. The City then established the Utility Advisory Committee to bring in expertise from the outside that could possibly give suggestions of how to live with it, have safe power, and not have conflicts. Mr. Chancey stated that he was brought in for the established line clearance practices that are acceptable around the North America continent which are almost identical from south Florida to Maine with relation to line clearance. Mr. Chancey said that his input has been that Fort Lauderdale exists in the tropics, not in the northern temperate zone. He contended that our tree canopy is made up of hundreds of species that do not exist anywhere else in the United States, and they grow faster and grow horizontal, not vertical. Therefore, this Committee has attempted to come up with methods where there can be trees that are located not real close to the power lines, so they do not need to be cut back until they look like an "L" shape.

Mr. Chancey stated that one of the down sides of that methodology with the trees that are back 20 feet, for example, and which still have to be cleared, is that it creates epicormic growth, which grows six to ten times faster than the growth that was originally cut off.

Mr. Chancey related that some of the ancient oaks in Colee Hammock only put on ¼-inch to ½-inch of growth a year. Once a cut is made by line clearance people with the methodology that is used, he has measured epicormic growth was 12 feet, rather than 12 inches, in a span of five years. He stated that he had been trying to get a communication going that there is a certain kind of methodology where pruning can be utilized, such as crown reduction pruning, which can be utilized to the benefit of FPL, to the benefit of clearing the lines, and to the benefit of the tree owner. However, this does not apply to all trees and all situations.

Mr. Chancey stated that through the assistance Gene Dempsey, the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks Department, Fred Stresau, as well as Lynn Shatas of FPL, the City has gone into neighborhoods to specifically get newly planted trees out from under power lines -- specifically those trees that cannot ever be maintained to miss the lines, such as palm trees. In some cases, these trees have been moved across the street to where there were no trees. Mr. Chancey expressed that this has shown to be an excellent problem solving method.

Mr. Chancey said that there were other trees that needed to be maintained on a regular basis. There was a conflict because FPL's schedule called for going through a particular distribution line to clear trees every three years. Mr. Chancey had recalled reading a proposal where FPL wanted to change that to every five years in certain circumstances. Mr. Chancey expressed that the methodologies in certain circumstances should change. For instance, the homeowner should take the responsibility to keep their trees maintained in a crown reduction-type pruning technique, which was proven four years ago by Dr. Ed Gillman, University of Florida Professor of Tree Biology. Four years ago, Dr. Gillman showed in his book methods of crown reduction on power lines for clearance, which Mr. Chancey stated he has himself being trying to promulgate for 12 years.

Mr. Chancey explained that he understood that Mr. Dempsey wanted to provide presentations for educational purposes. For example, there were numerous cities, including Plantation and Coral Springs, as well as Broward County that have flyers that are prepared in order to educate the public on how to prune correctly.

Mr. Chancey said that this Subcommittee's assignment was to relate trees to the power lines. Certain things cannot be seen on a display without explanation. For instance, there could be photographs that show "no," such as photographs of trees in power lines. Mr. Chancey advised that his suggestion to homeowners would be to get someone to professionally reduce their trees under power lines and to have them done every year so

that the power company does not have to worry about them and they will look full and natural. Mr. Jollimore voiced that he thought this would be a perfect solution, but that he did not see people doing this.

Mr. Chancey expressed that this Subcommittee should show people that if they do not trim their trees, then FPL will do it, and the result may not be desirable. Mr. Chancey believes that homeowners should learn how to treat a tree so that it will be an asset to their property. In addition, if trees have to be cut so severely by FPL, then those trees should not be there. Mr. Chancey expressed that he believed these trees to be ruined and Mr. Jollimore said that "ruined" was too strong of a word.

Mr. Dempsey suggested that this Subcommittee find an oak tree (that is one of the main concerns) that is in or near power lines, then trim it correctly and perform a crown reduction, have the photographer there to take the photographs, and then display those photographs to homeowners. This could provide an example to homeowners that have similar looking trees as to what can be done in the way of trimming and what the finished product should look like. Mr. Dempsey expressed that this would be a good display to utilize. Mr. Chancey said that this is exactly what this Subcommittee is trying to do.

Mr. Chancey referenced four black olive trees across from a park in the City of Lighthouse Point that have grown really large. Mr. Chancey explained that Bill Slaymaker of FPL had brought in Asplundh and, under Mr. Chancey's supervision, they reduced those trees, and a certified arborist finished them off to matched small trees and so they were nowhere near the power lines, without "L" shaping them. Mr. Chancey agreed that the power company has a responsibility to get trees away from the lines, but that is the extent of their responsibility.

Mr. Chancey then referenced trees in Disney World, which he has visited many times. Mr. Chancey said that when Main Street was designed, there were little oak trees going down the sidewalks towards Cinderella's Castle. These were perfectly matched live oaks and they were in harmony in size to the buildings, as they were meant by the Disney Landscape Architects to have a certain look. Mr. Chancey stated that these trees were not meant to grow to 50 feet.

Mr. Chancey explained that the same thing was done at Epcot, as one heads toward the sphere. In that case, the live oaks were shaped like cones and kept at 12' x 6'.

Mr. Chancey related that when this was first started, he gave a lecture at the University of Florida Agriculture Service and showed slides of 50 trees that looked like teacups and cones, that were all matched and in double rows. At Disney World, it is acceptable to take a live oak and shape it into whatever shape is desired. At Magic Kingdom the live oaks on Main Street were controlled, but looked very natural. He recalled that they were kept there in that way for 27 years until they were removed six years ago.

Mr. Chancey agreed that this is not FPL's job, but there are areas where people have trees that want them kept maintained. If these homeowners do not catch Asplundh coming through, they will cut the "L" off that tree simply because Asplundh is going down the street and no one informed them that a particular tree is controlled and does not require cutting.

Mr. Chancey suggested coming up with a colored tag so that people who are themselves maintaining their trees can alert Asplundh as to certain trees that should not be cut. There are opportunities to straighten out problems by either removing the trees or by private owners choosing to do a crown reduction. Hopefully, Mr. Chancey said, training can be offered free of charge to an Asplundh crew, for the benefit of FPL, in certain areas where there are ancient trees, in order to implement crown reduction methodology.

Chair Stresau stated that it still needed to be defined what would be on each of the two display boards. He said that when Mr. Chancey used the term "ruined," he thought about the trees under power lines and explaining line clearance. He believed the boards should show the "before" and "after" and what one could expect their tree to look like if it is the wrong tree and it is not kept under control.

Chair Stresau showed two photographs of trees that were located in his own neighborhood, being two Royal Poincianas – one under the power lines and one out in the open. He suggested that if a board is going to be developed that shows what to do and what not to do, there needs to be comparative photographs to show people what happens in each situation. Chair Stresau suggested that the second board demonstrate pruning, and showed a photograph he took that was a close-up.

Chair Stresau said that when referencing trees that are pruned too severely, the displays should show photographs of what happens when the wrong tree is planted and they are cut back severely. If the second board talks to encouraging people to select the right trees, Chair Stresau suggested showing what happens if they are cut back too severely because they picked the wrong tree. Chair Stresau recommended showing a before and after or people may not be convinced to pay attention.

Chair Stresau then referenced photographs that he claimed was particularly annoying to him that were "before" and "after" photographs showing Royal Palms planted next to power lines. Chair Stresau handed the photographs to Mr. Dempsey and asked him to sort them.

Chair Stresau showed photographs of two solutions, one tree being planted in 1978 and then a photograph of the same tree less than six months ago. The second example was a tree planted in 1990. Both examples were planted under power lines and show trees that have been growing for 12 and 28 years. Mr. Stresau, in his practice, believes that if you plant a tree and it lasts for 25 years, you are ahead.

Mr. Jollimore opined that this was like playing Russian Roulette. Chair Stresau stated that this is why this needs to be discussed. He is suggesting that in the photographs on board no. 1, the way to promote it is to have before and after photographs that show the general public that if you select the wrong tree, you will have problems that generate into something that looks like this [holding up photograph]. Chair Stresau took both vertical and horizontal photographs of the subject trees as he believed verticals should be kept next to each other, as should horizontal photographs be placed next to horizontal photographs.

Mr. Dempsey said that there were three panels for each display, each panel being about 3-ft. wide. He stated that he would bring the display to the next meeting to show the members what it looks like.

Chair Stresau said that he did not want to choose photographs at this meeting, but instead wanted to throw out information for discussion.

Mr. Jollimore said that there is awareness that the top line is the high voltage line, but the customer does not normally think about the wires below. He stated that it would be important to show the public that they should consider the bottom lines as well in order to keep the street lights on. Mr. Stresau agreed that this should be discussed further because he has been led to believe that Comcast and Bellsouth are the lines below. Mr. Jollimore reiterated that there was also a street light feed below.

Chair Stresau expressed that part of the written description on the boards needs to be the safety guidelines that should be followed, and that this needed to be explained to the general public.

Chair Stresau stated that he believed the only way to show the general public what is right and wrong is to show them the consequences of doing it the wrong way. Mr. Dempsey added that most of the "public" to see these displays will be homeowners' associations. Mr. Chancey stated that they need to be shown that when they plant swale trees or trees near the sidewalk, they must choose the right tree.

Chair Stresau then showed a photograph he took in Coral Springs that he claimed to be one of the best examples of planting under utility easements.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh asked whether permits could be required to plant trees, just as they are required to remove trees. Mr. Partington said that strictly within the right-of-way, it is required to obtain a permit to plant a tree, however, it is more ignored than adhered to. On rare occasions, when people plant trees right next to the road, or obstructing a site line, the City will go out and enforce. Basically, the City is not equipped to enforce it and to go see every new planting in the right-of-way. It is thus dealt with on a reactive basis. Strictly, Mr. Partington said, one is supposed to obtain a permit.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh recalled that Mr. Chancey referred to universal line clearance throughout the United States, and asked if there were not procedures and policies in effect that deal with this through the National Urban Forest governmental agency. She asked why we did not just adhere to the codes that are already in existence. Mr. Chancey said that this is being done by the municipal arborists and line clearance people, but that trees in Florida grow back differently than trees in other parts of the country.

Mr. Jollimore agreed with Mr. Chancey and offered that Florida is different than any other utility where he has ever worked. Mr. Chancey said that some cities are happy to keep their trees with a flat top because they do not want to take the shade off of a street.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh asked why pressure is not put on whoever writes the procedures so that they refer to the species that are unique to south Florida. Mr. Chancey explained that their reference is a book that shows the same pruning technique used all over the country. Mr. Chancey believes that this must change in south Florida through horticulture and tree biology. He expressed that what is being done is not wrong, but that understanding the biology of a species and pruning it separately from the way done in Jacksonville, for example, in order to get the desired results must come from the top down.

Chair Stresau stated that, in all fairness, Mr. Jollimore's crews do not have any choice once the damage is done. Mr. Chancey agreed. Mr. Jollimore said that there is a unique climate here in south Florida as there are species that never existed here and it is difficult to effectively deal with those using the standard for things that are grown in North America, Maine and areas such as that. It is, however, a standard that must be followed as a utility.

Chair Stresau suggested that, excepting the individual homeowner and speaking now to the commercial developer, this is the fault of the City of Fort Lauderdale, the designer and the developer. He said that this is not happening in Fort Lauderdale today, as people now reviewing the plans will keep 95% of this from happening. Mr. Stresau explained that he has tried to promote those certain trees being removed because it costs money to do the line clearance every three years, which cost is then passed on to the FPL customers.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh said that she would like to see on the displays for the homeowners the cost of maintaining these trees. She believes that homeowners feel they cannot afford to maintain their own trees. Chair Stresau and Mr. Chancey both expressed that the homeowner should then not plant the trees, or alternatively, should not complain about the trimming.

Mr. Jollimore says that often homeowners say they are going to take care of the trimming themselves. They then get an estimate for a tree that has not been properly maintained for some 20 years, and they are then shocked at the cost for trimming such an overgrown tree. Mr. Jollimore said alternatively they get someone who is not licensed or a company that is just trying to make a quick buck.

Mr. Dempsey suggested comparing the cost of letting a tree go for 20 years versus trimming it every three years or every year. Mr. Chancey, referring to bonsai, stated that there is a method of containing your tree that is not costly. Chair Stresau stated that he did not want to go there. He said that this morning he had an argument with Dave Gennaro about the calophyllums that are on the west side of the Waverly near U.S.1. Mr. Stresau believes they are trying to keep them relatively small because Royal Palms are planted between them. Chair Stresau related that Mr. Gennaro told him that this was not legal. Mr. Stresau had replied to Mr. Gennaro, "don't tell me it's not legal, because you approved their plan."

Chair Stresau stated that while those trees were only 15 feet away from the face of the building and were 20 feet high, the Royal Palms will grow much taller. If that is what is desired from a design standpoint, one must understand that the Royal Palms that are on the west side of City Hall are now almost 60 feet high. Mr. Chancey added that they have not been properly pruned in 30 years. Chair Stresau claimed that this was a poor selection of plant material for the specific job, and that this is what both of these boards need to speak to – the proper selection of plant type. Chair Stresau expressed that he did not know how to do this other than to exhibit the before and after pictures of what someone can expect. Chair Stresau agreed that 40 species cannot be covered in three panels. Mr. Chancey added that it should also not be limited to three that might get there is neglected forever.

Mr. Chancey said that there are Crepe Myrtles in Orlando that are 40 feet tall, so it cannot be said that if one plants a Crepe Myrtle, it will never grow into the power lines. However, Mr. Chancey said, it can be trimmed. He asked that the choices not be limited to those trees that grow to 50 feet, or anything that will never go over 20 feet, or there will be nothing to use.

Mr. Jollimore agreed not to limit the choices, but also agreed that Ms. Van Valkenburgh made a good point of recommending that the cost be part of the exhibit. Mr. Chancey stated that this is why one should select a species that grows slower and is more controllable.

Mr. Chancey said that the board should get the alert and the alarm on display and then be presented at homeowner's associations. Then when one is ready to put in street tree plantings, one should get on-site drive-thru quick advice. Ms. Van Valkenburgh said that she loved the idea and suggested having a pilot program in the City for six months to a year to offer free permits for planting a tree. Mr. Jollimore added that there could be an

agreement that if the homeowner goes outside of the realm of a planting that can be maintained, the homeowner should sign an agreement that they will then maintain it themselves.

Mr. Dempsey stated that he is considering taking the photographs to look through them, choose some photographs and make them 8-1/2 x 11 size, and then meet again. He said that one thing to consider is that they are not static, and that the photographs on the displays can be changed. It was agreed that the photographs would need to be in color.

Mr. Dempsey said that if a date could be set for the next meeting, he would bring an actual display board with some photographs.

Chair Stresau stated that some of the photographs should be larger than others in order to grab one's attention. Perhaps a good example of plantings could be shown in a smaller size.

Mr. Jollimore asked how many photographs would be shown on each board. Mr. Dempsey said that perhaps one larger photograph could be displayed with several smaller insets.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh said that she was in support of positive reinforcement, rather than shocking homeowners with the negative. Therefore, she suggested the desired tree being the larger photograph, with the undesirable tree being made to look very negative. Chair Stresau agreed that it may not be necessary to have a lot of negative examples. Mr. Jollimore agreed and said that this would just reflect poorly on him.

Chair Stresau stated that he wanted to use FPL line clearing in the top board as an excuse to try to get across to the public that they need to change their habits so that FPL does not have to do drastic line clearance. Mr. Jollimore agreed that this was a good idea, but asked that he be able to see the picture that is used as he wants to make sure that it reflects correct utility pruning.

Mr. Partington added that there should be photographs showing undesirable trees having grown up into the power lines, rather than show pruned tree photographs. He believed that people will know that something will have to be done about it, without having to show pruning techniques.

Chair Stresau indicated that there is a brand new home in Victoria Park where four perfectly matched, probably \$800 live oak trees were installed in the swale. Ms. Van Valkenburgh said that if they were just installed in the swale and they are not the appropriate tree, then that would be an opportunity for reactive enforcement of code. She said Code enforcement should just get right out there before this becomes a problem. Mr. Stresau said that the City employees are expressing that they do not have the time to do so.

Ms. Van Valkenburg suggested contacting the appropriate Commissioner to advise what has been done and asking what can now be done. Chair Stresau asked how this can be done on a board.

Mr. Partington asked if there will be photographs of pruned trees, as it seemed that there really needs to be. Mr. Partington recalled that FPL wanted to have input as to any such photographs that will be used.

Mr. Jollimore said that he really liked Ms. Van Valkenburgh's suggestion of being proactive. He believed people needed ideas of what trees need to be planted there.

Mr. Jollimore stated that if two pictures are shown, the homeowners are being told if they keep their trees trimmed then FPL will not have to trim their trees. But, they are not told about the cost or the other factors that are involved.

Mr. Stresau said that David Gennaro will say that if you trim a live oak that this is illegal and the City ULDR allows him to site you at any given time for trimming such a tree.

Mr. Partington expressed that the display that would make the most impact on himself, being a layperson, would be to show trees that you should have and then show the trees that you should not have, including examples of undesirable tree pruning. That makes the point very clearly, he said, that if you plant these types of trees, then this is where they are likely to finish up.

Chair Stresau said that this is why Ms. Van Valkenburgh is on the Committee, because there must be someone that is a relative novice looking at what the professionals are throwing out on the table to advise what is good and bad.

Mr. Jollimore stated that it is hard to communicate without words. Mr. Dempsey expressed that this is why Bunney Brenneman wanted to have brochures to provide to the public.

Mr. Partington said that because the photographs are all the same size, you cannot really see that some trees grow to 80-feet and another grows to 30-feet.

Mr. Dempsey claimed that he has received more direction at this meeting than he has had in the past. Chair Stresau expressed that this meeting has definitely addressed that some verbage is needed on these boards to tell people what they are looking at. The best thing that has come from this meeting is the comment about the cost of maintaining the trees.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh asked how many tree pruning personnel were injured or killed within the last two years doing this type of work, as she intends to contact OSHA herself

as she would like to do something from the health and safety angle.

Mr. Jollimore responded that it was not FPL's people, but people that were unqualified, such as the people hired by the homeowners that have no awareness of electrical safety. He indicated that he did not know the statistics, but that he could probably provide them. Ms. Van Valkenburgh said she would very much like the statistics on the actual health and safety impact in pruning the trees.

Chair Stresau stated that it was key that what was being done is under a Federal mandate.

Mr. Partington stated that the Minutes for the August 14, 2008 meeting of the Tree Subcommittee had been distributed.

#### **V. Next Meeting – To be Determined**

Mr. Dempsey indicated that he would need a month to prepare for the next meeting of the Tree Subcommittee. Chair Stresau advised that he would schedule the next meeting on or about November 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

#### **VI. Adjourn**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.