

King Street median landscaping renovation moves forward

Thanks to a lawsuit, King Street's tree medians will soon be getting a makeover.

Filed in 2015 by the Public Trust Environmental Legal Institute of Florida, the suit challenged the City of Jacksonville's use of the Tree Mitigation Trust Fund – approximately \$20 million – established in 2000 by charter amendment. Developers pay into the fund when they cut down trees and the money is supposed to be used to mitigate the loss by paying for new trees to be planted elsewhere in the county.

The settlement, which occurred July 25, 2017, resulted in establishment of a Tree Commission, the hiring of an urban forest manager and a City arborist, and tougher penalties for developers who neglect to obtain permits to remove trees. The settlement also freed up \$20 million in funds, so District 14 Councilman Jim Love was quick to take advantage of the boon, and put in a requisition to update the King Street planters.

Approximately 25 trees will be replaced, at a ballpark cost of \$40-60,000. The trees selected by Urban Forest Manager Richard Leon and City Arborist Kathleen McGovern include 12 American Hornbeam, 13 Bald Cypress, and six Silver Saw Palmetto to plant under existing Sabal Palms at the corners of Forbes and King, and College and King, as well as seven crape myrtles on the sidewalks. Asiatic jasmine will be used for ground cover. The soil in the seven medians will be replaced to give the new trees and grasses a healthy growing environment.

After City employees cut down the existing trees, Davey's Trees will excavate the root balls, said Fred Pope, City of Jacksonville landscape architect. Once the order is placed to purchase the trees, the project is estimated to be complete in about eight weeks.

Riverside gets new parking lot across from Arts Market

Federal Department of Transportation crews are working on operational improvements and enhancements to the interchange at Interstate 95 and Interstate 10, the Fuller Warren Bridge, and along the east side of U.S.17 northbound between McDuff Avenue and Rosselle Street. Crews began filling in ponds under I-95 in June 2017 to make way for a public parking lot, which opened in January 2018, west of Riverside Avenue with access via Peninsular Place. Visitors to the Saturday Riverside Arts Market can take advantage of the free lot.

A traffic shift was recently made along Interstate 95 southbound on the Fuller Warren Bridge to create a work zone allowing crews to begin expansion work, and will remain in place for approximately two years, subject to change.

During the traffic shift, southbound lanes will shift to the inside of the Fuller Warren Bridge beginning at the Park Street ramp, and return to the former configuration after the exit ramp to San Marco Boulevard.

Root Ball 2018 – Irish for a day, green all year

For the first time in seven years, Greenscape of Jacksonville is pulling up the roots of its largest fundraiser of the year and returning to The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens for the annual Root Ball. Scheduled for Saturday, March 17, the Root Ball, produced by the Late Bloomers Garden Club, has as its theme "Irish For a Day, Green All Year."

According to Anna Dooley, executive director of Greenscape, the organization made the change in venue for several reasons. "We think the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is the perfect backdrop for promoting our mission of planting, protecting and promoting trees," she said. "And we've also been told that in addition to the wonderful exotic animals living at the zoo, several leprechauns are rumored to live there, too. There may even be a pot of gold."

Tying the event in with St. Patrick's Day will add another level of fun, Dooley said. Irish musician/songwriter (and Jacksonville transplant) Brendan Doherty will perform traditional Irish songs, as well as original

songs, which Irish Music Magazine compared to "John Denver at his very best." Doherty will be accompanied on fiddle by Philip Pan, former concertmaster for the Jacksonville Symphony and member of Canary in a Coalmine. Pan, of Murray Hill, currently performs with folk/rock band Folk is People and Mariachi Primera Costa.

The festivities begin at 6:30 p.m. with cocktails, festive food, music, dancing and a silent auction featuring a variety of original artwork, fine wines, gift baskets, a putter autographed by Arnold Palmer and a catered yacht cruise on Innisfail, an impeccably restored 1930 Mathis-Trumpy motor yacht that hosted several U.S. presidents.

Tickets are \$130 per person and are available through 904tix.com. Attire is "green casual."

A portion of the funds raised at the event will be used to purchase and replant trees throughout the city that were damaged and destroyed as a result of Hurricane Irma last year.

RAP to host historic preservation process overview

Whether you are new to the neighborhood or have been here for a while, you may have questions about the City of Jacksonville's process for historic preservation and how it applies to your house.

You may not be aware the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission and staff are the people who review and issue Certificates of Appropriateness for projects, not Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP).

RAP will host City Historic Preservation Planning staff for an overview of the process, how to apply to the JHPC, and get answers to your questions, Thursday, Mar. 15, 6:30 p.m. at Riverside Presbyterian Church, 849 Park St., in Bittering Hall.

The meeting is free for RAP members, \$10 donation at the door for non-members. Space is limited, so register early through Eventbrite to attend.

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