

Turnbull Creek Land Preservation Committee
January 12, 2026

Meeting and agenda can be found [here](#) for Part 1 (Meeting begins at 4:00 on counter) and [here](#) for Part 2. (Note: There are sound problems throughout the videos and Part 2 begins in the middle of a. Closed Caption can be seen in Part 2.)

Present: Randy Hartman, Donna Athearn, Chip Weston, Robert Werner, and William Robitzsch.

New Business

First item for discussion was the update regarding the purchase of the Milton property. **Background:** Last year, Linda and Walter Mitton's parcels of eight acres (69 and 77 in Turnbull Trace, west of Ellison Acres) were reviewed for purchase. These parcels with their Turnbull Creek frontages and connections from SR 44 to Jungle Road would complete the corridor passage to the parcels the city already owns. The asking price of \$1.5 million was deemed too high, especially since the taxable value was \$500,000 per the County Appraiser. Chair Athearn stated that the parcels are zoned B-4 General Commercial and most of the area is wetlands. The committee made a motion to recommend that the city Commission approve getting appraisals. They were completed a few months ago.

The new Natural Resource Manager, Ralph, "Tony" Miller, gave the committee the two appraisal amounts: \$380,00 for parcel 69 and \$352,000 for parcel 77.

- Parcel 77 has a pond in the middle owned by FLDOT. Chair Athearn asked if FLDOT could deepen and widen the pond which would help us with flooding if the city owned the parcels. Mr. Miller said he'd reach out to them about this.
- If we purchase parcel 69, it will provide access to the county trail and could be used for parking. It was suggested the city investigate obtaining an ECHO grant to help pay for these parcels as part of the trail system and monies would also help us to keep that area clean/cleared.

Discussion followed about the acquisition of parcels 76-79. They are individually owned, with Linda Milton's brother owning parcels 78 and 79. He has approached the city about selling parcel 78 as it floods. The city asked about purchasing parcel 79 in 2020. Parcel 79 is where Ellison Acres Christian Preschool is located. If parcels 69 and 79 are both purchased, the city would own property on both sides of the creek. The city could also alternatively ask to purchase part of the parcel for a conservation easement.

The city has offered the Miltons \$742,000 for parcels 69 and 77. They are considering the offer.

Other areas discussed for possible purchase and/or conservation easement are parcels behind the Publix shopping center on SR 44, and an area around Mission Oaks where there are 100 acres that is approximately 60% wetlands and 40% in Edgewater. Mr. Miller suggests the city work with Edgewater to buy this acreage and turn it into retention ponds and/or a wetland park.

The second agenda item was to review and update the Turnbull Creek area parcel maps and priority list for 2026. The Priority 1 parcels would be those that are “underutilized, prime for development and complete the city’s plan to preserve Turnbull Creek”. Priority 2 parcels would be those not an immediate developmental threat. If a parcel has wetlands and/or is in a flood zone, the city can argue that their highest and best use is as conservation land.

After the discussion, Chair Athearn gave Mr. Miller a map marking parcels either Priority 1 or 2 and asked him to update the priority list and map accordingly for the February 16th meeting. Using the data provided on February 16, the committee will vote on recommendations to the City Commission for appraisals.

- **Priority 1** – 4, 9, 11,12, 68-69, 77-79, 97-98
- **Priority 2** – 2, 3, 5-8, 14-26, 28, 30, 32, 34,37-41, 44, 46, 47-49, 51, 106-107

The parcels are mapped for reference on two maps and can be found on the coalition website under the Turnbull Creek Preservation Committee meeting summary tab or click on links [Map 1 - Parcels south of trail](#) and [Map 2 – North of Trail](#).

There was discussion concerning parcels near the Sugar Mill Ruins Campground (97-98, 101). The committee feels that if the owner does not wish to sell these parcels, pursuing the idea of a conservation easement will help both the city and the owner as an easement would prohibit development, and the owner would be compensated. Member Weston also suggested that any negotiations include a provision giving the city first right of refusal when the property is sold.

Property Fire management Strategy

Member Robitzsch talked with the State and David Ray, NSB Maintenance/Operations Director, regarding fire management of preservation lands and will meet again in February. The committee will make a fire management priority list for that meeting. He added that fire management requires clearing out the underbrush to reduce fire risk, especially if in a drought.

Chair Athearn commented on the clearing off Burma to make a firebreak and widening the 5-foot fire break in the Jungle Rd. area.

Member Weston suggested contacting Farmton as they have an effective fire management plan, especially regarding controlled burns. Discussing effective fire management now for the future is advantageous and thanked Member Robitzsch for doing this.

Mr. Miller added that creeks are firebreaks and feels that the density of the underbrush, tree trimming and removal of invasive plant species should be included in the management plan. He called the UDSA and found that there is an EQUIP program that can assist the city and supports the idea of using herbicides that control invasive species.