

President Young's Focus Group/Task Force

by T. J. Walker, Chair, Natural Area Advisory Committee, 5 Sep. 2003

Summary On March 26, 2003, the day after he wrote the Alachua County Commission that UF would amend its Master Plan to provide right-of-way for an extension of SW 24th Avenue, President Young appointed a Focus Group to consider the academic impact of the extension and how to mitigate it. The Focus Group was assigned no chair, and VP Poppell convened the Group for its first meeting only after Spring Semester had ended. After two meetings, the Focus Group adjourned for the summer still lacking a chair and a work plan. By Fall Semester the Focus Group had been renamed a Task Force.

25 Mar 2003

UF President Charles Young writes to the Alachua County Commission that the University “will recommend through its Master Plan amendment process that sufficient right-of-way be given to the City of Gainesville/County of Alachua to provide the necessary land to connect SW 24th Avenue to Archer Road.”

[Young’s letter is at <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/young.pdf>.]

26 Mar 2003

President Young appoints these six persons to a “focus group” to consider the academic impact of the proposed SW 24th Street extension and the possible mitigation of this impact and/or the transfer of these programs to other locations:

Charles Frazier (Assoc. Provost of Academic Affairs)

Tom Crisman (Environmental Engineering Program Director)

Joseph C. Joyce (Executive Assistant to VP of Agricultural Affairs)

Gail Sasnett-Stauffer (Lecturer and Assoc. Law Dean and chair of the Transportation and Parking Committee)

David Stopka (Assoc. Director of Student Affairs and chair of the Land Use and Facilities Planning Committee)

Tina Gurucharri (Assoc Prof. Landscape Architecture, chair of the Lakes, Vegetation and Landscaping Committee, and ex official member of the Natural Area Advisory Committee.)

1 April 2003

Paula Fussell (Assoc. V-P of Finance and Administration) announces the formation of the Focus Group at a meeting of UF's Land Use and Facilities Planning Committee and hands out an appointment letter and a roster.

[The letter is at <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/24youngFG.pdf>.]

8 April 2003

At separate meetings of the Transportation and Planning Advisory Committee and of the 34th Street Committee, UF administrators mentioned the Focus Group as an example of the Administration seeking input on their proposal to donate campus land for a road ROW.

(continued on back of sheet)

11 April 2003

Tom Walker learns from VP Poppell that no chair has been named for the Focus Group.

15 April 2003

In response to Tom Walker's query as to the latest date that the Administration expects to receive a report from its Focus Group, Poppell responds that there is "no preconceived deadline for a report" and that "drafting [of a proposed change in the Master Plan] would begin after the focus group has completed their task."

prior to 6 May 2003

John Ingram, Associate Director of University Libraries and chair of the Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites Committee, is appointed as the seventh member of the Group.

6 May 2003

The Tuesday after Spring Commencement, the Focus Group meets for the first time. Vice-President Poppell chairs the meeting and gives the Group these two charges:

- Identify and assess the potential impacts the proposed road may have on the University's academic and research programs,
- Identify or develop measures or alternatives that could mitigate or minimize any impacts the proposed road may potentially create for the University.

Maps of the area of concern and background material on the MTPO's 2020 Transportation Plan are handed out and discussed. No one volunteers to chair the Group, and Poppell agrees to convene its next meeting.

19 May 2003

The Focus Group meets for the second time. North Central Florida Regional Planning Council's Transportation Director Marlie Sanderson tells the Focus Group about the history and prospects for the proposed SW 24th Avenue extension. The Group agrees to postpone further deliberations until Fall Semester.

[Both meetings were informal, and no minutes were taken (at least no minutes of the first meeting were mentioned at the second).]

3 Sep 2003

In a letter to Gainesville City Commissioners and Alachua County Commissioners, VP Poppell wrote that UF "has a task force reviewing and evaluating the impacts of this road as well as the mitigation or compromises that may lessen the impact." The letter states that the Task Force report is due in January 2004.

[Poppell's letter is at <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/24poppell.pdf>.]

For images and more information and documentation relevant to the UF Administration's proposed donation of right-of-way from the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory, visit <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/24thAve.htm>.