



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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**Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso
RE Anti-Hate Legislation
June 11, 2024
Minutes**

Location: Don Davis Room, City Hall at St. James, 117 West Duval Street, Jacksonville, Fl 32202

Attendance: Council Member Jimmy Peluso, Council Member Dr. Rahman Johnson, Council Member Michael Boylan, Council Member Ken Amaro, Attorney Jason Teal, Auditor Trista Carraher. A full accounting of the attendance can be found on the sign-in sheet.

Meeting Convened: 3:33 p.m.

Council Member Jimmy Peluso opened the meeting. He gave a small update from the prior noticed meeting on 2024-0334 and opened public comment.

Lanelle Phillmon of League of Woman Voters Jacksonville spoke in support of the legislation. Lanelle shared this legislation was a step forward in healing from the events of August 26, 2024. Raymond Johnston shared his opposition to this legislation due to concerns that it would supplicate state statute and would not help Christians. Echo Nova of Jax Queer Coalition spoke in support of the legislation. Kandace L. Knutson shared concern for those who wished to speak gospel of her lord Jesus Christ. She shared she was unclear who would interpret the law. Jon Harris Maurer of Equality Florida spoke in support of the legislation. Rhianna Scyster of 904ward shared her support of the legislation and its steps to prevent hate. She expressed the need for Council Members to prevent murder and hate in all forms. Wells Todd of the Northside Coalition of Jacksonville voiced his support for the legislation and emphasized the need for more than protections from City Leaders, seeking support from the State Leadership. JoAnn Brooks of the Northside Coalition of Jacksonville seeks the day all are judged for the content of their heart and not the color of their skin. Gerrie Woodlam shared that she is a Chaplin and speaks for Christians. She shared her concerns that church's would be silent, as they were during "Nazi years". Jessica Wilson voiced her support of the legislation. Blake Harper spoke in opposition of the legislation, reporting that Mr. Charles Schumer stated US population needed 2.1 children per household to maintain the population and that this bill might threaten this.

Council Member Peluso closed public comment and opened discussion amongst Council Members on 2024-0334. Council Member Peluso noted that this bill was a multi-month process

to get to filing. This was because of the due diligence to respect First Amendment rights. Attorney Jason Teal confirmed this route, to enhance fines on existing law was well tested in courts and had been adopted by cities all across Florida. He confirmed that he had not seen an uptick in violations against Churches.

Council Member Michael Boylan distributed an amendment for consideration. He explained he preferred the language he provided due to its clarity.

Council Member Dr. Rahman Johnson confirmed this bill is deterrent for hateful action and a symbol for those who have been victimized. He shared the lived experience of Ms. Johnnie M. Chappell and requested the bill be referred to as “Johnnie Mae’s law” to honor her.

The Council Members briefly discussed the process. Attorney Teal confirmed the Planning Commission supported the Planning Department’s recommendation of “No position”, which fulfills their obligation. Council Member Peluso shared his intention to give the Council time to work through the bill. With the Stadium Negotiations, the Council Members acknowledged the multiple full day committee meetings scheduled this and the following week, after which the Council recessed for two weeks. Council Member Peluso confirmed he was open to deferring the legislation with the intent to have another noticed meeting to work on the amendments proposed. Council Member Boylan agreed and noted the need for more education to dispel misinformation in the community.

Council Member Ken Amaro inquired who determines hate; Attorney Teal confirmed a country judge would determine if a law had been broken and then could add this enhancement, if evidence demonstrated. He then confirmed this route was not duplicative as the State passed enhancements on Criminal actions (assault, batter) but there was a shortfall with civil infractions. Enacting local law would allow local entities to enforce, without waiting on a state agency to prosecute. The legislation is in response to an incident in Jacksonville in August.

Council Member Peluso thanked all for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Brooks Dame, Executive Council Assistant to Council Member Jimmy Peluso. The following items were submitted for public record and can be accessed by contacting the Legislative Services:

- 06112024 Agenda Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso RE 2024-334
- 06112024 Twice Amended Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso RE 2024-334
- 06112024 Sign In Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso RE 2024-334
- 06112024 Public Comment Cards Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso 2024-0334
- 06112024 Handout 1 Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso RE 2024-334
- 06112024 Handout 2 Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso RE 2024-334
- 06112024 Minutes Noticed Meeting Council Member Peluso RE 2024-334

cc: Council Members and Staff
Margaret “Peggy” Sidman, Director/Council
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