**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING**

DATE: Thursday, August 29, 2019

TIME: 9:03 a.m. - 11:47 a.m.

PLACE: Jacksonville City Council Chamber First Floor

City Hall at St. James Building

117 West Duval Street Jacksonville, Florida 32202

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lindsey Brock, Chairperson

Ann-Marie Knight, Vice Chairperson Jessica Baker, Board Member

Frank Denton, Board Member

William "W.C." Gentry, Board Member Charles Griggs, Board Member

Chris Hagan, Board Member Nick Howland, Board Member Heidi Jameson, Board Member Emily Lisska, Board Member Nelson McCoy, Board Member Celestine Mills, Board Member

Hon. Matt Schellenberg, Board Member

ALSO PRESENT:

CRC Staff:

Carol Owens, Chief of Legislative Services Ladayija Nichols, legislative assistant Jeff Clements, Chief of Council Research Anthony Baltiero, Council Research

Paige Johnston, Office of General Counsel

This cause came on to be heard at the time and place aforesaid, when and where the following

proceedings were reported by:

Amanda E. Robinson, RPR, Notary Public, State of Florida

1. P R O C E E D I N G S
2. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Good morning,
3. everyone. We're waiting for the system to
4. catch up, or it could simply be that the
5. funky tablet has -- there we go. Thank you.
6. It's following me. My tablet yesterday
7. at the Waterways Commission was not
8. registering and voting.
9. Any idea how long it will take for it to
10. catch up?
11. (Brief pause in proceedings.)
12. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Good. All right.
13. Thank you.
14. Is everyone joined up?
15. While we're waiting for technology to
16. catch up with us, reminder to everyone to
17. please silence your cell phones, tablets, or
18. other electronic devices that go bing.
19. All right. So our first item on the
20. agenda is for the approval of minutes. And
21. it actually should be for the July 31st, as
22. well as the August 16 meetings. Those have
23. been circulated around. Are there any
24. changes, revisions?
25. Okay. Hearing none, then I'll entertain
    1. a motion.
    2. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I'm on it.
    3. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I'm sorry.
    4. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Through the
    5. Chair, I would just like to -- you know, I
    6. asked specifically, and I appreciate
    7. Ms. Owens providing the actual transcripts.
    8. And I don't know if the minutes actually
    9. reflect my concern about the Board, or this
    10. Commission, acknowledging that the previous
    11. ten years Charter Revision Committee, we're
    12. going to basically move forward on that,
    13. which included the appointed School Board
    14. members.
    15. And, quite frankly, in addition to that,
    16. I think that not only is that a terrible
    17. idea, but we should discuss it, but
    18. Mr. Fischer is trying to change his J Bill
    19. to make it appoint the Superintendent of
    20. Schools, which I think we should opine and
    21. say this is a good idea or bad idea.
    22. My positions are clear that I think it's
    23. a terrible idea on both the appointed School
    24. Board Members, as well as the appointment of
    25. the Superintendent.
        1. And I think this Commission should be
        2. clear that we don't -- we can agree or
        3. disagree, obviously, on the thing of
        4. non-appointment of school board members.
        5. But I also believe that we shouldn't take
        6. what happened ten years ago and just glance
        7. over it and move forward.
        8. I think there's an amazing amount of
        9. things that we can discuss that has happened
        10. in the last month --
        11. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Schellenberg,
        12. are there any changes to the minutes?
        13. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Yes. I want
        14. you to change that I oppose the presentation
        15. on appointed School Board Members; and
        16. recognizing the position of whatever that
        17. was done ten years ago, I'm not in favor of
        18. just glancing over it.
        19. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Okay. Do we have
        20. someone that will make those changes to the
        21. minutes?
        22. MS. OWENS: Yes. Research is back
        23. there.
        24. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: All right. Those
        25. changes will be made.
            1. Anything else?
            2. All right. Then entertain a motion to
            3. accept the minutes as revised.
            4. COMMISSIONER LISSKA: So moved.
            5. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Any second?
            6. VICE CHAIRPERSON KNIGHT: Second.
            7. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: All in favor, say I
            8. aye.
            9. COLLECTIVELY: Aye.
            10. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Any opposed?
            11. All right. Thank you very much.
            12. Now remarks from the Chair -- oh, yes.
            13. COMMISSIONER MILLS: Am I on?
            14. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, you are. Chair
            15. recognizes you.
            16. COMMISSIONER MILLS: Good morning.
            17. Through the Chair, I also agree with
            18. Councilman Schellenberg. When I read the
            19. minutes after I got home, I was opposed to
            20. passing over anything that was submitted
            21. within the last ten years; we do need to
            22. revisit that. I wasn't in favor of the
            23. appointed School Board or the
            24. Superintendent. So I just wanted to add
            25. that, that I was not in favor of that at
26. all. Thank you so much.
27. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: All right. Thank
28. you.
29. Now remarks of the Chair, and perhaps
30. this will help provide some guidance to our
31. Commission. As we've all seen, there has
32. been a decision by the School Board to move
33. forward with litigation regarding the issue
34. of the school sales tax.
35. In my view that -- I'm sorry. In my
36. view, that brings an issue of the
37. fundamental relationship between the School
38. Board and the City Council within the
39. Charter. So given that that relationship
40. and the powers and authorities of the School
41. Board vis-à-vis the City Council are going
42. to be litigated in the courts, it is not the
43. job nor would it be proper for this
44. Commission to interject an opinion one way
45. or the other with regards to how those two
46. bodies should interplay within the Charter,
47. because we are going to get a decision
48. through litigation on that. So any changes
49. we will be making would be to something that
50. is going to be determined one way or the
51. other by the courts.
52. So while I appreciate and I've shared my
53. views on the fact that, the recommendations
54. from the previous Charter Commission are
55. still out there. And as Jason Fischer,
56. Representative Jason Fischer, demonstrated,
57. they can be acted upon, because that is the
58. purpose of his J Bill in that regard.
59. So, again, that is a policy debate that
60. is happening amongst the elected and would
61. be outside of the purview of our group,
62. which is to look at the Charter as it exists
63. and to propose changes to the Charter, not
64. affirmations as to what the Charter says or
65. doesn't say now, but what can we change, how
66. can we make government more efficient, more
67. responsive to the citizens of Jacksonville.
68. So, with that, just want to make that one
69. clear.
70. And then so let's go on to updates of
71. Commissioners. And, again, this is where,
72. you know, we've had some conversations
73. within the community, had some people that
74. we've talked to, we think there are some
75. good ideas that we can bring to the Body for
76. discussion, speakers that we want to invite,
77. this is the time when I'm hoping that we can
78. have those discussions in there.
79. So is there anyone? Rather than going
80. around the room, is there anyone that wants
81. to speak on that?
82. Yes. The white button on the panel
83. there.
84. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: I miss a meeting,
85. and I forget how to operate the equipment.
86. Mr. Chairman, this is not exactly
87. what -- I guess this comes from talking to
88. people in the community as well, but I just
89. want to say for the record and with all due
90. respect to the Chair -- and I appreciate
91. your taking this role on, it seems to get
92. more and more difficult every week -- the
93. fact that you make these announcements as to
94. your view as to what the Commission does or
95. doesn't do is not binding on the Commission.
96. And the only thing that will be the decision
97. of this Commission will be something that is
98. brought before the Commission, debated,
99. discussed and voted upon.
100. So I just want to make that clear for
     1. the record, the fact that you just said what
     2. you said doesn't make it true for purposes
     3. of how this Commission operates.
     4. For example, I understand your point
     5. about matters being in litigation right now.
     6. The fact that there are, obviously, two very
     7. different views about what is or isn't
     8. allowed under the consolidated government

9 may be a reason to visit the Charter and see

1. if there are ambiguities and things that are
2. unclear that could be clarified to make
3. that -- to deal with some of those issues
4. that are out there.
5. So I just want to make the point that
6. these comments that are being made about the
7. status of the previous ten years ago
8. Commission report vis-à-vis us are comments.
9. And I want someone to tell me I'm wrong if
10. I'm wrong about this.
11. But in terms of adoption of the previous
12. Commission's report, acceptance of the
13. previous Commission's report or giving any
14. weight to the previous Commission's report,
15. that would be something this Body has to
16. vote on. And we haven't voted on that.
    1. And so if we wanted to talk about the
    2. previous Commission's report, I think it
    3. would be incumbent upon a member of the
    4. Commission to bring up something
    5. specifically that was done or recommended
    6. before to this Commission, we look at it,
    7. and then we go forward.
    8. In my opinion -- and I think we're just
    9. all saying our opinions here. As long as
    10. that's understood, that's fine. I just want
    11. to make sure that in this process, there is
    12. not some belief that we have made some
    13. decision about these things simply because
    14. we've talked about it.
    15. And that was really the point of my
    16. email, that, as I understand the important
    17. responsibilities of each of us as
    18. Commissioners and of this Body collectively,
    19. it is to reduce items that are brought
    20. before us in a deliberate fashion. And
    21. then, ultimately, as a body, vote one way or
    22. another and decide what we want to push
    23. forward. And other than those items, there
    24. will be nothing this Commission does that
    25. will be binding on anyone.
        1. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Well, there is
        2. nothing this Commission does that is binding
        3. upon anyone regardless.
        4. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: Well, binding on
        5. the Commission --
        6. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Well, my point
        7. simply being, because that is one of the
        8. issues that I'm hoping that we can address,
        9. an issue to move forward is, in fact,
        10. looking at the recommendations of this
        11. Commission and having some mechanism to
        12. where there is closure. Because I believe
        13. that is one of the issues as to why we're
        14. talking about looking at a previous
        15. Commission's report, instead of, in my view,
        16. following our charge, which is to look at
        17. the Charter. Because how far back do we go
        18. in looking at Commission reports?
        19. The fact that one of them has come up
        20. and is being acted upon, again, would seem
        21. to me that we should stay out of certainly
        22. the issue of appointed school board, because
        23. it was a previous recommendation, and
        24. legislation is now pending upon that.
        25. But my view is we are the Charter
            1. Revision Commission. We're not the previous
            2. Charter Revision Report Revision Commission.
            3. And that's the viewpoint that I've
            4. maintained on that.
            5. But you're right, as we move forward,
            6. and as we go through, if we need to get an
            7. opinion of counsel or if I make a decision
            8. and you guys want to appeal the decision of
            9. the Chair, that's what this process is all
            10. about. So I'm never going to say that I'm
            11. always right, because I always prove myself
            12. wrong.
            13. And I don't know if I'm -- I'm not
            14. seeing -- if you want to speak, please raise
            15. your hand, because my technology -- we'll
            16. bounce back and forth.
            17. Mr. Schellenberg.
            18. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I would like
            19. to speak about speakers. The sooner we can
            20. get a date for October and November, I think
            21. it's important. We're all busy people.
            22. This is volunteer. I need dates as soon as
            23. possible. And I was talking briefly to
            24. another colleague, and she's got to
            25. rearrange the schedule. We need dates as
17. quickly as possible. If you could get those
18. out, that would be great.
19. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I have the schedule
20. from everyone who has submitted dates.
21. Ms. Owens gave that to me this morning.
22. It's been updated. I guess we should go
23. ahead and recognize former Judge Lawson
24. (sic) who is sitting in the audience today.
25. There has been legislation filed to have
26. Judge Lawson as the replacement Commissioner
27. for Scott Shine. So I invited him here.
28. MR. SWANSON: Swanson.
29. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Swanson, I'm sorry.
30. I had him update the schedule as well.
31. So one of our items that we're going to try
32. and get done today, housekeeping-wise, is
33. set our meeting schedule for October.
34. Mr. Hagan.
35. BOARD MEMBER HAGAN: Thank you,
36. Mr. Chairman.
37. And I appreciate the comments on what's
38. being said so far of kind of the -- what's
39. happening as a snapshot in Jacksonville
40. right now.
41. At the last meeting, I tried to make
    1. this comment, and it probably didn't come
    2. across exactly the way I meant it to happen,
    3. but the way I see this Charter Revision
    4. being made up is that we're all brought
    5. together every ten years. And right now I
    6. want to be careful -- and I'm not making my
    7. opinion on the matter of the School Board
    8. public right now by any means.
    9. But I want to be careful, because we
    10. meet every ten years. If we put all our
    11. focus on this issue right now, we're
    12. saying -- we're not even caring what
    13. happened the past ten years, we're caring
    14. about only what's happening right now.
    15. What if this happened year five, five
    16. years ago? Would we be talking about it
    17. right now and putting this much emphasis on
    18. it in this Body where we sit right now?
    19. So I just -- you know, I don't have a
    20. position on it right now, but I just say to
    21. the Commission, let's be careful about how
    22. we just take a snapshot of what's happening
    23. in our government right now in putting so
    24. much of an emphasis on it right now.
    25. So I'm not saying it's not an important
        1. issue, but I'm just saying there are a lot
        2. of things that we can discuss that have
        3. happened the past ten years as well.
        4. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: And, in response to
        5. that, everyone should have received the
        6. preliminary list of issues. I appreciate
        7. Carol and staff who went through the
        8. transcripts and tried to go through and
        9. glean those issues. So I would encourage
        10. everyone to look through those and see if we
        11. can begin to refine them, because that's
        12. ultimately what we're going to do is rank
        13. these issues and pick the top ones.
        14. Yes, sir. The white button for your
        15. microphone.
        16. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you,
        17. Mr. Chair. I appreciate your comments
        18. earlier.
        19. I think that I'm going to have to
        20. piggyback a little bit off of Mr. Gentry's
        21. comments. My exercise here has been one
        22. of -- early on, especially one of learning,
        23. and to get a better understanding of, you
        24. know, how the Charter works to benefit the
        25. total community.
            1. And some of the things just happen to
            2. be, you know, coming into focus right now,
            3. some of the areas that we focus on -- we're
            4. providing some focus on is coming now. All
            5. that is a discussion. It just happens to be
            6. an opportunity for us to talk about some
            7. things and how they can be -- how they can
            8. be better for the entire community and how
            9. people feel like that they have
            10. representation as part of the process.
            11. I don't see a problem with excusing
            12. conversation and discussions in any
            13. particular area. And just because we talk
            14. about it doesn't mean that it is anything
            15. that's going to be acted upon.
            16. I would probably caution us from trying
            17. to be conservative in our approach to
            18. address the revision. We don't know what we

19 may come up with.

1. From my research, what it looks like
2. what happened ten years ago was -- you know,
3. sort of the flavor of the month was the
4. ethics around Duval County. And one of the
5. recommendations, I believe it was one of the
6. top ones and the only one that got enacted
7. was, you know, some revisions around how we
8. deal with ethics here in Duval County.
9. So just because we are -- a certain item
10. is getting some -- you know, getting a lot
11. of attention right now, doesn't mean that we
12. should shy away from discussing it. We
13. never know what we may come up with.
14. And I'm interested in hearing more
15. information about how these items came to
16. be. I thought the people who came forward
17. in the last discussions from the previous
18. meeting and our first meeting were very
19. useful in helping to understand, and not
20. only me, but for the public to understand
21. why things happened the way they happened.
22. So I would caution us from shying away
23. from having open discussions about any item
24. that comes across for potential revision.
25. We never know what we may come up with in
26. terms of a recommendation that can go
27. forward.
28. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: And along those
29. lines of other studies that have been done,
30. I am meeting with Lori Boyer later today,
31. who, obviously, chaired the blueprint report
32. on consolidation number two, I believe it
33. is, to schedule a time for her to come and
34. address what they did and her ideas as well
35. with government.
36. Anyone else?
37. Mr. Schellenberg.
38. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I think you
39. missed my point about -- the point. I think
40. what we're seeing right now is we have a
41. strong mayoral Mayor. And I think there is
42. a complete imbalance about the power that
43. he's exerting in the community at this point
44. in time. And I think that there is a --
45. that one of the most important things on
46. this thing, in my opinion, is the power of
47. the Mayor and the imbalance that is
48. happening, he's exerting, and the lack of
49. balance that the legislative body is
50. balancing it out going forward.
51. And there are multiple ways you can look
52. at it, but that's one of the -- if you look
53. at everything we're looking at, it all boils
54. down to one person. What the Mayor wants,
55. generally speaking, he gets. And there is
56. no buffer, no parameters, in which he cannot
57. do at this point in time. And you can see
58. it over the last, 30, 60 days.
59. So it's not the School Board
60. specifically. It's generally. If you've
61. been reading the paper and seeing what's
62. happening in the community, it all goes back
63. to the imbalance of the power of the Mayor.
64. And it's not a balance with the legislature
65. or any other entity, including the Office of
66. General Counsel.
67. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, Ms. Knight.
68. VICE CHAIRPERSON KNIGHT: Good morning,
69. Chair.
70. A couple of things, and mine is really
71. more general, but some points that I would
72. like to kind of reemphasize. You mentioned
73. the idea of closing on points. And I think
74. that's important. We all are spending a
75. significant amount of time here. And I
76. would hope that our Council would look at
77. our points and actually acknowledge them and
78. speak to them. So that's one thing I'm
79. thinking about.
80. The other thing relates to the
81. discussion on the power balance. And I have
82. to tell you my thought is we all only are as
83. good as the sum of our parts. And I'm going
84. to define those parts as the expertise that
85. sits here, the value of our citizens, and,
86. naturally, the community at-large.
87. So what's really been on my mind of
88. recent is how our neighborhoods are impacted
89. by the work and -- the work that comes out
90. of our Charter. So I really want to see how
91. our power, whether it needs to be divided
92. differently or so forth, is really getting
93. to the benefit of our community,
94. particularly at the neighborhood level.
95. Thank you.
96. COMMISSIONER DENTON: Mr. Chairman?
97. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, sir,
98. Mr. Denton.
99. COMMISSIONER DENTON: At the last
100. meeting, I could not be there because I was
101. out of town; I couldn't change the plan.
102. But I read the minutes. And you asked all
103. the Commissioners for their ideas or talks
104. about subjects that we should address. And

24 may I offer mine now?

25 CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Absolutely.

1. COMMISSIONER DENTON: A lot of these
2. have been mentioned before, so I'll just
3. mention them briefly. The Office of the
4. General Counsel is one that -- not just the
5. current events, but some events in recent
6. years, I said that I think we ought to take
7. a look at city-employed residents
8. requirements, term limits, and staggered
9. terms. Somebody mentioned staggered terms.
10. I'm not sure if anyone did term limits, at
11. least for the Mayor and differently for the
12. Council President.
13. I was going to add I agree with
14. Mr. Gentry and, I think, Mr. Schellenberg
15. on -- I'm not saying that we should go back
16. and revisit the last Charter Revision
17. Commission report ten years ago, but I think
18. the topics in that report should not be off
19. limits to this Charter Commission -- Charter
20. Review Commission.
21. I like the idea Mayor Delaney suggested,
22. the possibility of a DIA for our most
23. challenged areas in Northwest Jacksonville.
24. And that has a lot of appeal to me given the
25. effectiveness that the DIA has had on
26. downtown.
27. I also am very interested in the
28. appointment, whether administrative
29. officials, as I think they are, on the
30. Property Appraiser and Tax Collector and
31. Supervisor of Elections should be appointed
32. rather than elected.
33. The children's -- the idea of a
34. children's trust fund, which we almost
35. passed ten years ago or more, is something
36. that weighs heavily on me.
37. And then, finally, the members of the
38. independent commission boards and
39. commissions that somehow change with a
40. different mayor -- I think Commissioner
41. McCoy mentioned that -- but that concerns --
42. every time we elect a new mayor, suddenly we
43. have to change everything else overall. My
44. feeling about the importance of continuity
45. with staggered terms and so forth is very
46. important.
47. So those are the issues that came to
48. mind for me as I read the Charter and read
49. the minutes of the last meeting. Thank you.
50. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you very much.
51. And perhaps -- it was never my intent to
52. say we're not going to go and look at issues
53. that have been issues of previous Charter
54. Revisions. My concern was, if we're coming
55. in saying, for example, we think we ought to
56. have an appointed school board, because that
57. was one of the recommendations of the other
58. Board, I don't think it's beneficial for
59. this Body to spend time looking and studying
60. that issue when it has already been looked
61. at, studied at, and a recommendation made
62. with regards to it. And, in fact, now there
63. is legislation.
64. However -- and I'll take the School
65. Board because -- and I will be reaching out
66. to the General Counsel to see about the
67. propriety of us opining on the School Board
68. within the Charter structure given the
69. impending litigation.
70. But, if we are looking at an issue, the
71. staggered terms or term limits or something
72. like that, I don't want us to simply go back
73. and rehash what has already been restudied
74. or previous solutions that are out there and
75. that can be acted upon. That is one of the
76. reasons why I truly want us to look at
77. proposed revisions with this Charter
78. Revision Commission.
79. Perhaps it moves from ordinance into the
80. Charter itself, and having as some sort of
81. action be taken on our recommendations,
82. because what that does is it provides
83. closure on the issue and on the
84. recommendations. Because ten years from
85. now, there may be an entirely new power
86. structure that a recommendation that was
87. brought forward and rejected previously can
88. be brought forward again, and rightfully so,
89. because there was closure with regards to
90. the earlier report.
91. That is one of the things that I'm
92. hoping we can do, because it provides a
93. clean process. And it provides the
94. opportunity to do what I understand, you
95. know, a lot of folks in here want to do,
96. which is opining on previous solutions that
97. have been offered.
98. So I don't mean to say that we're not
99. going to look at those issues, but I do hope
100. that, when we are looking at proposed
101. solutions for those issues, that we're not
102. going back and simply saying we want to do
103. what's previously been recommended. So that
104. is on that.
105. Yes, sir.
106. COMMISSIONER HOWLAND: Thanks,
107. Mr. Chair.
108. And a couple things, after glancing over
109. the running issues list and along the lines
110. of some things that I heard that are in
111. here, you know, my focus has always been,
112. and I have been clear about it, crime and
113. education, what can we do with the Charter
114. to, you know, improve our City's performance
115. in those two areas.
116. And one thing I think should be on the
117. list again is the Kids Hope Alliance,
118. stabilizing and strengthening it,
119. potentially creating a dedicated funding
120. source for it.
121. Second thing I'd like to see on the list
122. is I know we have all this -- the City's --
123. all the Twitter about the sales tax issue
124. with the School Board. I think that's a
125. good thing, because it brings out some key
126. issues. As long as people don't get
127. personal, and I'll never support that, and
128. I've seen that happening, but it's been a
129. heated debate that brought up some really
130. good issues. One of which I haven't seen
131. explored in depth before and I would like to
132. add to the list, and that is the eighth
133. elected at-large school board chair issue
134. that has popped up during this discussion.
135. We've talked a lot about
136. underrepresentation or how can we amend the
137. Charter in order to increase representation.
138. You know, I have two boys in public schools
139. that go to a school in one school board
140. member's district, and I live in another
141. school board member's district. They were
142. having a big debate about allocation over
143. potential funding from the half penny sales
144. tax.
145. Each district member represents their
146. district, and they're probably going to look
147. at minimizing school closures in their area
148. or making improvements in their area. So
149. there is, by nature, an underrepresentation
150. there. So, to me, potentially an eighth
151. at-large school board chair is an intriguing
152. idea that we can explore.
153. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, sir.
154. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: I want to go back
155. to your last comments. It sounds like we
156. need to put something on this list. I just
157. want to make sure I heard what you said,
158. because I agreed with what I think I heard
159. you say, which is one of the things we need
160. to look at, either through ordinance or
161. Charter proposal, is to make the process for
162. handling the recommendations of this Body
163. clear. And instead of coming out with
164. hopefully not 20, but 6 or 8
165. recommendations, whatever they may be, and
166. they just kind of fade off into the darkness
167. because the Council doesn't either adopt or
168. reject them, some process to make it clear
169. that's been dealt with and some resolution
170. done.
171. I think it's a really good idea. But it
172. was a little unclear to me, because you
173. mentioned several things in your comments.
174. And it would seem we need to put that on the
175. list of things to look at.
     1. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes. And that is
     2. on -- I mean, that was one on my personal
     3. list. I hadn't really voiced it clearly
     4. before today. But I've been doing my
     5. homework and looking at other Charter
     6. Revision Commissions that are functioning
     7. around the country. There are different
     8. ways. Some are similar to our own
     9. constitutional revision, to where whatever
     10. came out of this Body would automatically go
     11. to a ballot, or ones where whatever would
     12. come out of this Body would go to the
     13. Legislative Body, and then for a vote up or
     14. down, do we pursue or do we not pursue.
     15. I don't have a viewpoint either way on
     16. that, but I do think it is beneficial for
     17. this process in the future that we have
     18. something that provides closure on these
     19. recommendations and some sort of action so
     20. that we all feel like that our time spent
     21. here is time well spent on that.
     22. So I would like to break off now,
     23. because I see Mr. Holland is here. I want
     24. to be respectful of his time.
     25. Mr. Holland, if you would come forward
         1. and educate us with your erudite discourse.
         2. MR. HOLLAND: Thank you.
         3. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: What was it that I
         4. heard Dr. Quinton White say yesterday at the
         5. Waterways Commission? Push back the
         6. boundaries of ignorance.
         7. MR. HOLLAND: That's a challenge.
         8. Jerry Holland, Duval County Property
         9. Appraiser. Thank you all, one, for serving
         10. on this and, one -- I remember the one ten
         11. years ago. And I remember all the effort.
         12. And sometimes when you see all the effort
         13. and you see so little come out of it, you
         14. get disappointed.
         15. And that's -- you know, going into it as
         16. you're going into it, and knowing that it's
         17. a challenge to change, it's truly, you know,
         18. just altering the ship of a supertanker just
         19. by a degree or two. But sometimes that can
         20. make a difference of the world as we go down
         21. the road.
         22. A couple things I wanted to talk to you
         23. about. As someone who's served 5 and a half
         24. years on the City Council, a year as Council
         25. President, 10 and a half years as Supervisor
176. of Elections, and now 4 years as Property
177. Appraiser, I definitely have seen 20 years
178. of service with the City. And I think I've
179. seen some things that I think would be
180. advantageous to change.
181. But I never want to do something on
182. change that's an advantage to me. So when
183. I'm talking about term limits, let me first
184. clarify that, is that I don't think they
185. should apply to anyone in the office seat
186. that they currently apply. You know, so I'm
187. not speaking of something that can ever be
188. said, well, they wanted to do something with
189. term limits because it would benefit them,
190. or it would change, you know, give them
191. additional time. That is not what I want to
192. do.
193. But I do think, when you look at the
194. five constitutional offices, which is your
195. Tax Collector, your Property Appraiser,
196. Supervisor of Elections, Clerk of the Court
197. and the Sheriff, these are administrative
198. positions. And I couldn't imagine, as
199. Property Appraiser, if I told my staff,
200. listen, as you come into this administrative
201. position, I only want you here eight years;
202. and at the end of eight years, don't worry
203. I'm going to hire someone who has never done
204. it before and pay them the same thing, and
205. that should work out great.
206. And that's what we're really doing in
207. these administrative positions of
208. constitutional officers is do just that. We
209. basically say, you know, at the end of eight
210. years, you've got it, doing a great job,
211. but, you know, it's time to go, and let's do
212. someone who hasn't done it before.
213. I don't necessarily want to get rid of
214. term limits. I was a proponent of it in
215. '92. You know, I saw merit in it, you know,
216. because sometimes we say, you know, there is
217. just such a power to incumbency, how do we
218. turn that over.
219. But in these constitutional positions,
220. these are not policymaking positions. These
221. are administrative positions. And I think
222. there is a lot to keep in the continuity of
223. that.
224. What I would like to see -- now, Orange
225. County and Orlando, that area there, has
226. gone to 16 years. We're currently at 8. I
227. would love to see it change to 12. I do
228. think that would help longevity as far as
229. the continuity of what the person comes into
230. and is able to accomplish in the time that
231. they're there in these administrative
232. positions.
233. So that is my recommendation is to
234. change the term limits for constitutional
235. officers from 8 to 12, three terms, but not
236. to have it apply to anyone in a current
237. position so that it's not self-serving and
238. it's not something looking like we're
239. promoting this in order to get an extra
240. term. That is not what I want to do.
241. The second thing is, and I've seen this
242. both in my service as -- on the Council, as
243. well as Supervisor of Elections, and now as
244. Property Appraiser. Believe me, if I was
245. Mayor, I would want the selection of our
246. General Counsel the way it is today, because
247. I think the Mayor has a closer relationship
248. with the General Counsel than the other
249. agencies it represents -- is represented by
250. the General Counsel.
     1. And I've known all three as personal
     2. friends, but it's the nature of it. It's
     3. the nature of the person who makes that
     4. selection of who is going to be the General
     5. Counsel, who makes that selection when
     6. they're going to remove them.
     7. It creates something that's difficult to
     8. take away, which is that alignment of that
     9. General Counsel to, it seems like,
     10. specifically on issues of the Mayor. And I
     11. don't point to this Mayor or any other
     12. Mayor. It's just the natural tendency if
     13. you've got the General Counsel and the
     14. General Counsel reports to you, that it has
     15. an amount of power that is greater than I
     16. think it should be.
     17. I think this selection process should be
     18. such that there is a committee of at least
     19. five that makes the approval. The Mayor may
     20. have two votes on that committee of five,
     21. something of that nature, but somehow where
     22. that -- the job of General Counsel is not
     23. totally reliant on the desire of the Mayor
     24. to keep them or not keep them.
     25. And I think that autonomy for the
         1. General Counsel would be better served for
         2. all agencies, from the School District to
         3. all the constitutional officers, as well as
         4. the City Council.
         5. I won't go into, you know, issues or
         6. specific issues, because, you know, that's
         7. between me and General Counsel. But from
         8. the standpoint I think it's worth looking at
         9. and talking to the other bodies that are
         10. represented by the General Counsel to see if
         11. they truly feel that they are represented
         12. the same way as other parts that are
         13. represented by the General Counsel.
         14. So those are two things that just in my
         15. 20 years of service that I think could make
         16. our Charter better and make the process
         17. better and make it serve the public better.
         18. So -- but I would be glad to answer any
         19. other questions of the history that I've had
         20. or anything else that you have.
         21. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Gentry.
         22. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: You mentioned --
         23. thank you for coming this morning --
         24. MR. HOLLAND: Thank you, sir.
         25. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: -- and for your
             1. long service to the City.
             2. That's what I want to ask you about.
             3. You mentioned term limits with respect to
             4. administrative offices. What do you think
             5. about expanding term limits for the City
             6. Council? Because some are saying, although
             7. they're elected, there is a certain degree
             8. of experience that comes with that job. And
             9. do you have any thoughts about term limits
             10. for Council Members?
             11. MR. HOLLAND: You know, I remember the
             12. days -- I came in right after term limits
             13. were put in. But I remember the days when
             14. some of the Council Members served 20 years
             15. and 20-plus years, you know. And in my
             16. service on the Council, I will say there is
             17. a learning curve, as there is in any
             18. position.
             19. But in those policymaking positions, I
             20. don't know. I mean, I'm going to defer to
             21. the Council Members and those serving now.
             22. I want to speak specifically to the
             23. constitutional officers, I feel like I have
             24. longer longevity in those two positions that
             25. I've held. But on the Council, they're
251. policymaking. And sometimes it is good to
252. have fresh blood when you come into
253. policymaking.
254. Now, in saying so, you know, you do get
255. the turnover. You know, we talked in the
256. past about even alternating the terms so
257. that, you know, they don't all come up at
258. the same time and, theoretically, you could
259. lose all 19 at the same time, although
260. that's never happened. We typically lose
261. about half each time. I don't know if this
262. is as critical as these administrative
263. positions, but it's worth the discussion.
264. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: Thank you.
265. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Griggs.
266. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you,
267. Mr. Holland.
268. MR. HOLLAND: Thank you.
269. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you for your
270. comments and thank you for being here.
271. I want to go back and talk a little bit
272. about your recommendation for the
273. constitutional officers given the fact there
274. is so much -- the talent in those places
275. being potentially moved around because of a
276. new elected official coming in. But isn't
277. it up to that elected official, that
278. administrative officer, to hire and fire
279. people at will? And they just keep people
280. who have knowledge in place that they felt
281. like were valuable in that position?
282. MR. HOLLAND: They can. They don't
283. always do that. You see sometimes major
284. changes when someone comes in. So it does
285. change the continuity of the office.
286. Now, even when you come in, you'll hear
287. often that sometimes someone will come in
288. and ask everyone to resign or do something
289. of that nature. The reality is there are
290. still -- many of the offices have a lot of
291. civil service employees. So there is
292. continuity there that they can't be
293. automatically replaced.
294. But in some appointed positions, there
295. is a big changeover there. You know, and
296. that's going to change every eight years
297. also. I saw it when I left the Elections
298. Office, a large change in the staff that was
299. running that. So not as much change as when
300. I came in the Property Appraiser's Office,
301. when I came in, but I have seen that happen
302. in the past.
303. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: So, given your
304. experience, you chose in your -- in the
305. Property Appraiser's Office not to, you
306. know, do a whole lot of turnover.
307. MR. HOLLAND: I did not come in with the
308. idea, I'm bringing all my people, quote.
309. You know, I came in and I met with everyone
310. and said, you know, I want you to have the
311. opportunity to prove whether or not you can
312. do the job. And there was people that we

13 may not have seen eye to eye on it, or

1. people I had a different, you know, path
2. down the road, and we took that path a year
3. or so later down the road. But we still --
4. I came in with the idea of, let's see what
5. we've got, how we can improve it, and not
6. necessarily bring in the people that I know,
7. or the friends that I have.
8. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: So is that what
9. you're trying to protect against, is your
10. recommendation for extended term limits --
11. MR. HOLLAND: That's part of it. If you
12. have -- I mean, it's twofold. It's both the
13. experience of the constitutional officer
14. continuing on, but it's also the continuity
15. of the office too, of what it offers
16. continuing on. So it's a combination of
17. both.
18. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: I'm wondering if
19. that would be true for all of our elected
20. positions, because most of them, they bring
21. in their own people, they have the
22. opportunity to do that. And they believe
23. that change is good, and I understand what
24. you're saying about that.
25. But I think, if we look at your scenario
26. and your recommendation, we're probably
27. forced to use that recommendation across the
28. board, which would frighten me because I
29. probably wouldn't be in favor of
30. expanding -- extending Council Members, per
31. se, because, like you mentioned, the policy
32. change offers would be better, at least it
33. is to me in my opinion.
34. But I'm wondering if that is your only
35. reason for the continuity piece is
36. consistent across all of our elected
37. environment.
    1. MR. HOLLAND: It's the knowledge that
    2. you possess as you progress through the
    3. office. Walking out the door with the
    4. knowledge of being Supervisor of Elections
    5. for ten years -- I was a partial term and
    6. then two full terms -- you know, seeing that
    7. is very difficult for someone to come in,
    8. very difficult also to come in sometimes and
    9. bring new staff that hasn't done that
    10. before.
    11. You know, who loses there is not just
    12. the employees who lose their positions, but
    13. the public if you don't offer the same
    14. service. And so that's part of that
    15. continuity of do you provide the same
    16. service.
    17. In our case, the Property Appraiser,
    18. it's the taxing districts. That's the
    19. service we provide to them, as well as the
    20. exemptions to the taxpayers.
    21. But I think it's really the level of
    22. service and do you change that level and
    23. risk it more often by changing, in the same
    24. way that you wouldn't want to change all
    25. your staff every eight years.
        1. I mean, I've got people, the employees
        2. at the Property Appraiser's Office, 20, 25,
        3. 30 years. That knowledge that they have is
        4. so valuable, you know. And that's what you
        5. respect in these administrative positions
        6. that takes a professional license to hold,
        7. as an appraiser would hold. So that's where
        8. you want that continuity.
        9. And as a Property Appraiser, we get
        10. licensed as we go along, you know, but yet
        11. when someone comes in and they start all
        12. over -- is change good? For the sake of
        13. change by itself, not necessarily. You
        14. know, you can change something good to
        15. change something bad. So the question is,
        16. you know, is just change for the sake of
        17. change good. And I don't think that's
        18. always the answer.
        19. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: I honestly -- I'm
        20. wondering what is the incentive to someone
        21. who is in office if they know they have
        22. potential to be there 12 years versus 8
        23. years, what is the incentive to deliver on
        24. the services if this could be potentially,
        25. you know, a 12-year run?
            1. If they know they're serving for a
            2. specific period of time, the incentive
            3. should be to provide the best quality
            4. services during your tenure; correct?
            5. And I'm wondering if extending that to
            6. three terms or however many terms, would the
            7. incentive be, the motivation be there, would
            8. the service be there. Those are the things
            9. that concern me about extending any type of
            10. term limits, because the public when -- you
            11. know for yourself, when you're dealing with
            12. incumbency, it's very difficult to move
            13. someone out of that seat unless they've
            14. proven, like, they've fallen down on their
            15. job. And, in some cases, not even then. I
            16. would be concerned about tampering with that
            17. opportunity for people to make a choice.
            18. MR. HOLLAND: I can see your point
            19. there, but I see also from a standpoint when
            20. you're there eight years, there are things
            21. that will come up that, if you're only there
            22. eight years, you will defer to the next
            23. term, you know, because the nature of do I
            24. want to make that major change now. You
            25. know, so there's continuity.
                1. I'm the kind, I like to leave it at the
                2. highest level to the next person coming in.
                3. They may change it the day they come in, but
                4. I try to have the highest technology, you
                5. know, as we did in the elections, get the
                6. election warehouse going, get everything
                7. going, turn it over at the highest level.
                8. But on the same way, when you're turning
                9. over at eight years and you're not running
                10. for reelection in the second term, what's
                11. the motivation there, you know, to foster
                12. and promote the office to go further?
                13. There is a ying and yang, and a pro and
                14. con to everything. I just look at it from
                15. the standpoint of just seeing my employees,
                16. I wouldn't want to turn them over. The
                17. logic of not turning over your staff every
                18. eight years ought to have the same logic in
                19. not necessarily turning over your CEO of
                20. that organization every eight years.
                21. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: I appreciate that,
                22. and I appreciate your service. You're doing
                23. a great job.
                24. MR. HOLLAND: Thank you.
                25. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Ms. Lisska.
38. COMMISSIONER LISSKA: Good morning,
39. Mr. Holland. How are you?
40. MR. HOLLAND: Fine, thank you.
41. COMMISSIONER LISSKA: Just wanted to
42. ask, you know, why 12? Why not 16? Why not
43. 20? Why not make it unlimited? And that's
44. it.
45. MR. HOLLAND: It's a good debate. The
46. question is twofold. One is what will the
47. public accept. You know, you can say take
48. away term limits. And I will tell you, I
49. talk to people all the time about term
50. limits, and they'll say, you know, I really
51. don't want you to be term-limited, Jerry,
52. but I really want that congressional member
53. that's on another state to be term-limited.
54. So they like the concept of getting rid
55. of someone that they don't vote for, you
56. know. But the concept sometimes is they'll
57. sacrifice that to maybe move someone else
58. out, you know. So from the standpoint, as
59. your question is, why 12, why 16, why not do
60. away with term limits, as I think the
61. overall of the public, you have to justify
62. why change anything, you know.
    1. And I think, as Orange County went to 16
    2. years, maybe that's a better number, you
    3. know. But I think from a standpoint 8 is
    4. definitely not it, that I know for sure.
    5. Twelve would be better, 16 may be the best
    6. thing.
    7. I'm not -- I'm still not one of those
    8. that says no term limits. I still believe
    9. in that -- the powers -- Mr. Griggs said,
    10. the power of incumbency is so great, you
    11. know, that you can't -- you have to put
    12. something in there to make sure that that
    13. cycle ends. That's why we did that to the
    14. president, that's why we did that to
    15. executive positions and those things,
    16. especially in the policymaking and the power
    17. that that position has.
    18. But when you look at these
    19. administrations, my office doesn't have a
    20. power. It's a service to the public. It's
    21. not anything that I can change the policy
    22. of. It's about how I administer that. And
    23. that's why I think it's a different nuance
    24. than the Council or the Mayor or something
    25. of that nature.
        1. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Ms. Baker.
        2. COMMISSIONER BAKER: Hi. Through the
        3. Chair to Mr. Holland. Commissioner Griggs,
        4. I think, touched on this. I was going to
        5. ask sort of the same question on your reason
        6. for making it 12 years instead of 8 was
        7. continuity. Theoretically, the staff can
        8. change. And so I was going to ask in
        9. reality does it. Is it all staff? Is it
        10. just a high level staff that generally
        11. changes, in your two -- in the two offices
        12. that you held?
        13. And maybe we need to ask the other
        14. constitutional officers if they also saw the
        15. same thing. Is it most staff? Is it some
        16. staff? Is it really reality that it changes
        17. or is it just theoretical.
        18. MR. HOLLAND: I think there is a reality
        19. that it changes. And I think you can go
        20. back and actually go into each of the
        21. constitutional offices and look at the
        22. changes that was made. It's normally on
        23. the -- what I call the senior staff, which I
        24. mean, by that, the senior leadership of the
        25. staff, those positions typically is where
63. it's changed.
64. And then again, as I mentioned, my
65. office does not have any civil service
66. employees. So, theoretically, you know,
67. they're all at-will. But in some of the
68. offices, there is anywhere from two-thirds
69. to greater numbers of civil service, they're
70. protected. But there are appointed
71. positions within those.
72. But it's not theoretical. I have
73. definitely seen in offices where there's
74. been many changes made on their senior staff
75. level when they came in. And I think
76. that's -- as I look back on some of those
77. things, I think that doesn't always serve
78. the public well. And in the nature of you
79. have to look at what errors occur, what
80. mistakes occur, what do we lose because of
81. that.
82. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Schellenberg.
83. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Thank you,
84. Chair.
85. Hey, Mr. Holland. How are you doing?
86. MR. HOLLAND: Fine, thank you.
87. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Jerry, it's
    1. kind of interesting listening to this and,
    2. of course, being in the maelstrom of the eye
    3. of the hurricane.
    4. There's a couple things: It's kind of
    5. interesting that the citizens, at least in
    6. Jacksonville, have basically said two terms,
    7. and that's it. It's been polled many times;
    8. it comes back in the same number.
    9. But what's interesting is I think they
    10. voted for -- not that I think this, but they
    11. thought two terms, you go back and live
    12. under the rules in which you have passed and
    13. you never come back. But that really hasn't
    14. happened. The two terms doesn't really mean
    15. two terms. You can skip a term and come
    16. back.
    17. And I just wrote down four people that
    18. basically have left and come back and can do
    19. another four years building on their pension
    20. or whatever. That would be Hazouri,
    21. Carlucci, Doyle Carter, and Crescimbeni.
    22. And I'm pretty sure there's substantially
    23. more.
    24. So I tend to agree with you that term
    25. limits is not particularly an attractive
88. thing for legislator policy.
89. So did you ever look at two 6-year terms
90. when you were doing this or have you ever
91. thought about doing two 6-year terms? That
92. would get you to 12, which is a reasonable
93. number. And part of it is you can't run
94. anymore, which is anathema to democracy that
95. you can do whatever you want.
96. MR. HOLLAND: Interesting from a
97. standpoint -- I've never looked at six-year
98. terms, you know. I like the aspect that you
99. still have to go to the voters and you still
100. have to perform. And I think having
101. elections every four years, I think you're
102. still striving for those achievements that
103. you can tell the public, this is what we've
104. done. And so I probably would gravitate
105. more toward four-year terms than six-year
106. terms.
107. But what's interesting about term limits
108. too is we have an interesting thing right
109. now, with three constitutional officers that
110. have all served in other constitutional
111. positions. Now, we were term-limited, you
112. know, but yet the public still, obviously,
113. by their vote, said, we still want you to
114. administrate even if it's in a different
115. office, you know. And I respect the public,
116. because they gave me an opportunity to do
117. something else, you know. But is that what
118. term limits is supposed to be? You know,
119. serve eight years and -- in the early days
120. of the country, serve in the legislature and
121. congress, and go back to your farm. I mean,
122. is that the intent of it or are we really
123. trying to make sure that these offices are
124. operated to the highest level of efficiency?
125. Two different types of philosophy there.
126. But --
127. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: So when you
128. look at where we are downtown, generally
129. speaking, and compare it to other Mayors,
130. specifically Charleston, South Carolina, he
131. was there for 20, almost 30 years, and he
132. was able to work on his -- what he wanted to
133. do for a long period of time, make sure it
134. got done.
135. This Mayor or any Mayor in his second
136. term, he has great plans, but the next Mayor
137. can basically say, I'm out, and he doesn't
138. have to follow any of the rules of the
139. previous one, which goes back to term
140. limits.
141. And, basically, you're taking a right
142. away from the citizens to vote who they
143. want. Even though I want to get rid of
144. everybody else, I still want that right to
145. vote for that one person and you're
146. taking -- term limits takes that right away.
147. MR. HOLLAND: There is no doubt. I
148. agree with you from the standpoint of the
149. voters making that selection, you're taking
150. the right away.
151. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Well, I
152. think that inside baseball you can look at
153. Tallahassee, and it's an absolute disaster,
154. term limits over there, in my opinion.
155. But we also, on the other side, in my
156. tenure as -- Crescimbeni basically wanted 11
157. years, and sort of like you want 10 years,
158. and probably helped you during the 10 years
159. to get reelected twice. Crescimbeni did
160. consecutive 11 years. Doyle Carter did 9,
161. and Reggie Brown did 10.
162. Okay. Let's go back to a couple other
     1. things I would like to ask you. Would you
     2. term limit the Sheriff?
     3. MR. HOLLAND: Yes. I mean, as far as
     4. all four constitutionals -- or five
     5. constitutionals, I would do the same
     6. proposal that I'm saying right now.
     7. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Great. So
     8. what is your feeling about rules that are in
     9. the City Council that are there for a
     10. purpose and they get waived? Should the --
     11. if you're waiving something, should it not
     12. come back to the City Council and say, hey,
     13. we agree with you or we don't? What's your
     14. thinking on this?
     15. MR. HOLLAND: Can you give me an
     16. example?
     17. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Really?
     18. MR. HOLLAND: Yeah.
     19. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Really?
     20. MR. HOLLAND: Yeah.
     21. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Well, in
     22. the -- the CAO, we have a description of
     23. what he has to meet. And this
     24. administration basically said, no, he
     25. followed the previous -- basically, he
163. waived it, and now he's in charge. The
164. concern is he turns around and waives
165. something on a former CAO to do something
166. that doesn't ever come back to City Council.
167. And they clearly have rules about how these
168. things are supposed to operate.
169. So I'm kind of curious on waiving things
170. without engaging the policy people, which
171. put it in place. How does that build trust
172. with the citizens or even elected officials?
173. MR. HOLLAND: Well, to respond,
174. basically, I've always been -- when I was a
175. coach for over 20 years, I loved an umpire,
176. I loved the officials when they followed the
177. rules. Because if you were following them
178. for my team and you were doing the same for
179. the other team, it was fair.
180. When you alter from rules, when you
181. alter from what's put in place, it does lose
182. trust. Are we playing on the same, you
183. know, level playing field?
184. So those are the kind of things that
185. then comes back to my second proposal was a
186. lot of times they're justified by General
187. Counsel, you know, and the question is would
188. they ever be challenged by General Counsel.
189. And I haven't seen that in the past.
190. I've seen very little challenges by the
191. General Counsel of any Mayor. I'm not
192. picking on this one, of any Mayor. So that
193. goes back to the rules. You almost need an
194. umpire, someone who fairly calls the rules
195. out. And I think in many ways that's your
196. General Counsel. So that's my best response
197. to you.
198. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I apologize.
199. These are things that are happening over the
200. last 30 days that bother me.
201. So help me out: The previous General
202. Counsel, she never got approved by the City
203. Council. And she opines that it was okay
204. when the rules -- again, she went against
205. what the rules say. And the General Counsel
206. is not only the lawyer, but, as mentioned,
207. the supreme court.
208. Is there some way that you see the
209. General Counsel both -- you mentioned five
210. people, and that's supposed to be -- have
211. done, but I would say inside baseball the
212. Mayor always gets what he wants.
     1. But if he gets reappointed, should the
     2. same situation occur that they have to go
     3. back, or the same committee or a different
     4. committee looks at what he's been doing and
     5. says, okay, you seem to have grown into the
     6. job and you can have it for another four
     7. years if the Mayor reappoints you.
     8. MR. HOLLAND: I think that would be
     9. easier to review the person rather than the
     10. option now is, no, we're not bringing them
     11. back up again for renewal; if you don't want
     12. them, then start the process to terminate
     13. them. And that makes a more difficult way.
     14. And it also puts them in a different
     15. posture, both the people he's challenging.
     16. So from a standpoint, bringing back up a
     17. renewal of a General Counsel on a four-year
     18. basis to the legislative body or to a group
     19. that is represented by the General Counsel
     20. would probably be a good way to put checks
     21. and balances so that that General Counsel
     22. realizes there is more than one person maybe
     23. that they answer to.
     24. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: So if you're
     25. in charge of the law firm -- well, Jason
213. Gabriel has an attorney for the school
214. Board. And Karen Chastain said, you cannot
215. hire this body of people. And the supreme
216. court, which is Jason, comes out and says,
217. no, you can't hire anybody. He is
218. ultimately the lawyer for the School Board
219. and opining -- he can't disagree with
220. himself. So how would you correct -- how do
221. you see the General Counsel operating in
222. this environment that everybody really has a
223. fair shot at challenging a position that he
224. opines about and the next General Counsel
225. can basically change the thought process
226. going forward?
227. MR. HOLLAND: There is a lot of serious
228. issues in there that probably would take a
229. little more time to really delve into. But
230. from a standpoint, you need some checks and
231. balances. Whether that's a committee of
232. those represented by the General Counsel to
233. oversee him, but we do have set up. And it
234. was designed that way, so almost that no --
235. and believe me, and it's happened years ago,
236. I've always thought you could work something
237. out. I've never seen the Property Appraiser
238. wanting to sue the City for something,
239. although that happened years ago.
240. In those kind of situations, there is a
241. reason that we don't want to necessarily be
242. fighting among ourselves, but you still have
243. to have that person that's in charge really
244. to be independent of anyone particular.
245. And then with the privy of going, did
246. they make the right decision. And if we
247. don't think they did, then when they come up
248. to renewal, we don't have to renew them. We
249. make another selection. That's that checks
250. and balances I don't think we have today.
251. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Right. And
252. one other thing, you mentioned five people.
253. One group that is excluded from that panel
254. are the independent authorities that have a
255. voice in who is the General Counsel that can
256. give substantial input because of his power
257. over the independent authorities.
258. MR. HOLLAND: And when I say five,
259. that's a number I --
260. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I know.
261. MR. HOLLAND: I would be happy with any
262. number, but not the way that it's set up
263. today.
264. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Okay.
265. And --
266. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Can I interject real
267. quick? I want to update everyone. My panel
268. is fixed. So, if you do want to speak, you
269. can hit the request to speak button, and I
270. will see it on my panel. Just want --
271. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: And this is
272. my final issue, because it's coming up.
273. Help me out. If an independent authority,
274. which is supposed to be the Kids Hope
275. Alliance, they have the authority to hire
276. and fire the executive director, or
277. president, or whatever, and then -- does it
278. demonstrate independence when some of the
279. administration basically puts them on leave
280. and the Board doesn't affirm that? Where is
281. the conflict and how do you deal with it
282. when the general -- going forward?
283. MR. HOLLAND: I will say that's outside
284. of my purview, but it's a good question.
285. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Thank you,
286. Chair.
287. MR. HOLLAND: You're welcome.
288. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Certainly. We've
289. got him here, and he's got certainly an
290. experienced brain to pick.
291. Anyone? I don't see anyone on the queue
292. here. I did have a few --
293. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Chair.
294. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Oh, sorry,
295. Mr. Griggs.
296. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: I'm sorry. I
297. didn't want to -- my intention was not to
298. get into the whole General Counsel
299. conversation, but since the door opened,
300. I'll ask questions that I posed to Mayor
301. Delaney last time we were here.
302. One of my recommendations around General
303. Counsel would be to stagger the terms and
304. have General Counsel serve in the second
305. year of a Mayor's term, be appointed in the
306. second term of the Mayor's term. That way
307. that person would come -- when a new Mayor
308. comes into office, that General Counsel will
309. already be in place and be independent of
310. whoever the Mayor is. Then in the second
311. year, the Mayor gets to appoint whoever he
312. wants, or make his recommendation for
313. appointment.
314. Do you think that would -- that would
315. help build some confidence, public
316. confidence, in how the General Counsel
317. operates independently of, you know, all the
318. agencies, the Mayor's Office, the City
319. Council, and everyone?
320. MR. HOLLAND: I think it's a step in the
321. right direction, I do.
322. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: So, from your
323. experience, you've kind of felt like -- I
324. mean, we're talking about independent
325. authorities as well and those constitutional
326. officers. Everybody needs to feel like
327. they're being properly represented. And I
328. think what the conversation is going to be
329. around on this Body is some of the
330. recommendations like have been offered is
331. that we look at ways to build confidence
332. that no one entity is being perceived as
333. having more of an advantage than the other
334. one when it relates to representation.
335. MR. HOLLAND: Well, that's definitely
336. the goal. Now, obviously, in any situation,
337. where even though you have that overlap and
338. you can come in the first term to the same
339. one you had in the previous one, you know,
340. that General Counsel still, that decision is
341. going to be primarily the Mayor making that
342. decision. That allegiance is still going to
343. be primarily with the Mayor, that's my
344. concern.
345. The overlap is good in a sense of not
346. starting day one and building a regime of
347. these are the people that see it the same
348. way I do. And you do have that coming in
349. independent of that. So it's a good step.
350. But I still think you need more independence
351. of the General Counsel than just to the
352. Mayor's office.
353. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you.
354. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Ms. Baker.
355. COMMISSIONER BAKER: This is less of a
356. question and more of an observation. But I
357. believe the current General Counsel was
358. actually appointed by our previous Mayor,
359. Alvin Brown, and then reappointed by our
360. current Mayor. And I believe the previous
361. General Counsel to that was appointed before
362. Mayor Alvin Brown and then reappointed.
     1. And so maybe this is a question for
     2. Ms. Johnston, if she can look into the
     3. history of how many General Counsels have
     4. actually overlapped since, I believe, the
     5. last -- our current and the previous one
     6. have actually overlapped not withstanding no
     7. Charter requirement of that.
     8. MR. HOLLAND: I think part of that is --
     9. it almost takes an overlap to get the next
     10. General Counsel in too. If you look at the
     11. appointment process, it wouldn't be on day
     12. one on July 1st of a Mayor's term would he
     13. be able to even appoint the General Counsel
     14. that quickly. So I think there is a natural
     15. overlap anyway.
     16. The question is does it go four years.
     17. Does it really help in a sense of how long
     18. that overlap is? Or is there a frustration
     19. and that General Counsel is gone, you know,
     20. for a period of time?
     21. COMMISSIONER BAKER: Right. And our
     22. current one did, actually, extend pass the
     23. four years.
     24. MR. HOLLAND: Yes.
     25. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Okay. I see
         1. Mr. Schellenberg again.
         2. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I
         3. respectfully -- I appreciate that
         4. Ms. Johnston is going to check it out, but
         5. the huge problem was Cindy Laquidara was an
         6. interim. And then she can only be an
         7. interim for a year. And then we basically
         8. said you have to get approval. And
         9. basically she overrode the rules.
         10. Now, Jason, I believe, who is there now,
         11. was also interim. So the difference between
         12. interim and going through the process is
         13. huge. And he did go partly through a small
         14. group of people that were appointed by the
         15. Mayor, and he got what he wanted.
         16. And I think this is the huge problem.
         17. You have to make sure that these panels are
         18. independent and appointed not -- you know,
         19. that he doesn't have overriding power to
         20. appoint whoever he wants, and indicate to
         21. him, as the conversation with Wyman Duggan
         22. occurred last time. I clearly knew that he
         23. had an interest in being the General
         24. Counsel. But the interest only faded when
         25. he realized that Jason Gabriel, right or
363. wrong, was the Mayor's pick.
364. And the only other person that went in
365. there was Patrick Kokowski (phonetic),
366. okay --
367. MR. HOLLAND: Kilbane?
368. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: No, no.
369. Patrick K. something, I apologize for
370. butchering his name. And so there were --
371. that position is an incredibly prestigious,
372. powerful position. And I think that we need
373. to be a better community. Because he's not
374. representing the Mayor, he's actually
375. representing the Charter. The Charter is
376. the overriding -- what he should be looking
377. at at all times.
378. So my point is this, you get people on
379. the panel or that are appointed by a
380. specific person, and everybody knows what
381. the outcome is going to be, why would you
382. apply.
383. And that's basically what Wyman Duggan
384. said at last meeting. He looked at it, saw
385. the landscape and said, I'm not going to get
386. it and I'm not going to put my name in
387. there. Thank you.
     1. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Ms. Baker, are you
     2. still on the queue?
     3. COMMISSIONER BAKER: No.
     4. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Okay. I want to
     5. change topics, because I think it's clear
     6. that one of the issues that seems to keep
     7. rising up is Office of General Counsel in
     8. some respect.
     9. And, Mr. Griggs, you took my question,
     10. because I had your view on the issue of
     11. staggered terms to where there is that
     12. overlap in there.
     13. Again, you know, I think the whole goal
     14. with that is to foster independency and also
     15. for the public to have that view that there
     16. is an independency with that office.
     17. Everyone we've spoken with who has had
     18. experience in that office has described it
     19. as the glue that holds the Charter
     20. government together. So it is an important
     21. role.
     22. I want to completely flip off this and
     23. ask you to dust off your Supervisor of
     24. Elections hat and talk to us about rank
     25. voting. Number one, explain it, because I
388. tried to explain it, and I believe that I
389. pretty much butchered it. So, A, explain
390. it; and then, if you could, offer some pros
391. and cons on it.
392. MR. HOLLAND: Sure. Rank voting
393. eliminates runoffs, that's first of all.
394. It's designed to have one election; and from
395. that one election, determine the outcome.
396. As in any election, if in that first
397. election a candidate gets 50 percent plus 1
398. vote, forget about the rank, that person
399. wins. So that's the first step. It's just
400. like any other election if a candidate gets
401. 50 percent plus 1.
402. Here is where it changes: Rank voting
403. says -- gives you the opportunity, doesn't
404. require you to, to say, this is my first
405. pick, this is my first pick as they tally
406. the votes, call it candidates A through C.
407. I like candidate C, you know. And you may
408. feel like, well, candidate C probably
409. doesn't have a chance, but, you know, I just
410. really want to vote for C, you know. It's
411. really between A and B, but I'm voting for
412. C.
     1. Well, you haven't lost the game yet,
     2. because what happens is, if A and B, the two
     3. leading candidates, don't get the 50 percent
     4. plus 1, then what you do is the lowest
     5. candidate of A through the five letters, A
     6. through D -- E, that last one drops off, the
     7. one with the least amount of votes drops
     8. off.
     9. Now what you do through rank voting is,
     10. as you are a voter, you specified which one
     11. would be your first pick. You can go first,
     12. pick, second pick, third pick, fourth pick,
     13. you know. And, therefore, it's rated on
     14. that, so that now there is another vote
     15. since candidate -- the fifth candidate
     16. dropped off --
     17. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: You said another
     18. vote. You mean another count?
     19. MR. HOLLAND: Another count, thank you.
     20. Another count, so the fifth candidate drops
     21. off.
     22. So really what happens is, is what
     23. happens with those who voted for that fifth
     24. candidate, in that theory they didn't now go
     25. to that, now you're looking at those votes
413. for that fifth candidate. And since it
414. happens to all of them, but their vote now
415. goes to who their second candidate was, you
416. can stay -- the way that works is
417. basically -- and it goes to a gyration of
418. you eliminate the first candidate with the
419. lowest amount.
420. You then recalculate based on the -- who
421. was their second choice as they went
422. through. You still stay with your primary
423. choice, you know. It's really where do the
424. votes go on that losing candidate. And they
425. get kind of redistributed to who their
426. second pick was, you know. And so it
427. recalculates.
428. And, once again, if someone doesn't get
429. 50 percent plus 1, it drops off the lowest
430. one again. Most of the time it doesn't go
431. too many variations because, typically, the
432. races are kind of close at the top.
433. But that's what you're doing. You're
434. getting the opportunity to pick your
435. next-favorite choice. And if that was one,
436. the next-favorite choice was the one that
437. dropped off, then your third-favorite choice
438. moves up the slot.
439. You have to ask -- I always ask this
440. question: What are you hoping to achieve by
441. rank voting? Obviously, one thing that you
442. achieve by rank voting is that you achieve
443. not having a runoff, the cost of a runoff.
444. City elections, it's about 1.2 -- 1 million
445. to $1.2 million, so you save that.
446. You typically have lower turnouts in the
447. second election. So you get a greater
448. amount of people voting and making choice on
449. the first election. That's the true theory
450. of what you're doing there.
451. You'll hear sometimes, well, what it
452. really does is, if we had rank voting, then
453. really the one who won through the normal
454. process wouldn't have won, because
455. everyone's second choice, you know, would
456. have been if they had voted for the
457. candidate that was they're fourth or fifth
458. down the line as far as ranking, would have
459. really got in.
460. And so now the question is do you like
461. the system the way it is. In other words,
462. does it foster the candidates that you think
463. best represent the constituency in the
464. county.
465. I kind of compare it to the electoral
466. college. You will hear every time we have a
467. presidential election, if there is someone
468. who didn't win by the poplar vote, doesn't
469. matter what party, but if someone wins and
470. they got the popular vote but they didn't
471. get the electoral vote, the first response
472. is, we need to do away with the electoral
473. college, because after all it didn't get
474. their candidate won and the other one had
475. more votes.
476. So the truest sense of rank voting is
477. are you doing it to eliminate a runoff and
478. save the money? Are you doing it because
479. somehow a candidate will come out and may be
480. able to get, you know, the top leading --
481. and what we've seen historically in Duval
482. County is, even though we have unitary
483. elections, what you see historically is the
484. candidate, if there is a democratic
485. candidate, will typically get a certain
486. amount of votes just being a democrat, as
487. well as the republican, if they were all
488. democrats, will get a certain amount of --
489. that will only vote party.
490. So what we typically get, if there is a
491. runoff, if there are two different parties
492. in the runoff, is we'll somehow, even though
493. it's unitary, will gravitate to a republican
494. and democrat runoff. That's what we've seen
495. in the past historically if we've had two
496. parties in the first race.
497. What some people have said is, you know,
498. the candidate we ended up with, we really
499. had a number two and number three, which I
500. mean in popularity, that if they weren't
501. both running, one of them would have
502. probably got it, you know, are we splitting
503. the vote and does this keep us from
504. splitting a vote whether you're splitting
505. the vote is your ideology meaning we're
506. splitting the vote of the conservative vote,
507. or are we splitting the vote of the liberal
508. vote, of the moderate vote.
509. So it's really a way of saying, can I
510. still have a second bite at the apple in a
511. sense of my ideology when sometimes you do
512. rank voting. Because a lot of times it will

1 gravitate the one that comes out of it. You

2 may have multiple candidates that split a

1. similar vote.
2. So that's what you're achieving. As I
3. go back to, again, what do you hope to
4. achieve out of it and what does it
5. accomplish. It accomplished eliminating the
6. second election. It can accomplish, in a
7. sense, of one ideology getting elected that
8. didn't get elected because it was split
9. through many candidates with the same
10. ideology. That's kind of what it
11. accomplishes in that sense of how it works.
12. So I may not have explained the ranking
13. as well.
14. Now I will say the process. Even if you
15. decide today -- and I think there is a
16. county -- I think Sarasota County voted to
17. have rank voting. The equipment, one, is
18. does Duval -- does Duval equipment allow
19. rank voting or do you need to change
20. equipment.
21. The second thing is, is the equipment
22. certified with the state to do rank voting.
23. Because the State Division of Elections
24. certifies the election equipment. You
25. can't, as Supervisor of Elections say, you
26. know, I don't like what everybody is using,
27. there is a new vendor on the market, I'm
28. going to go use that equipment. It can't
29. work. It has to go through all these tests
30. with the Division of Elections. And we test
31. for what it's going to be used for.
32. From my understanding, the Division of
33. Elections has not tested any of the
34. equipment in the state of Florida for rank
35. voting, to the last time I checked. So that
36. is a process it goes through.
37. I think it's interesting in a
38. perspective of what is the outcome you hope
39. to achieve. It can definitely achieve a
40. different outcome than what we've achieved
41. in the past, if that makes sense.
42. But it's a great question. I love
43. talking about rank voting and some of the
44. other options.
45. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Well, it has come up
46. in some of the discussions. And so are you
47. aware, are there any studies out there with
48. regards to how -- I know you talked about
49. that it sometimes splits the vote with
50. regards to certain ideology, conservative,
51. liberal, obviously, in that, but are you
52. aware of any studies that have looked at
53. rank voting versus traditional voting and
54. maybe comparing it with polling or something
55. that's been done?
56. MR. HOLLAND: Interesting from a
57. standpoint I don't know of any. I would
58. imagine the Pew Center would have some of
59. those. They would probably be the one from
60. a national perspective that would have that.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 13 | But I have not specifically looked at any | in |
| 14 | the past four years. I've been kind of |  |
| 15 | working on property appraisals. |  |
| 16 | CHAIRPERSON BROCK: That's why I said |  |
| 17 | dust off the SOE. |  |
| 18 | MR. HOLLAND: I did. |  |
| 19 | CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Okay. Well, we, |  |
| 20 | obviously, got a good topic here. |  |
| 21 | Mr. Griggs. |  |
| 22 | COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you, |  |
| 23 | Mr. Chairman. |  |
| 24 | Mr. Holland, I'm actually going to ask | a |
| 25 | question about property value. |  |

* 1. MR. HOLLAND: Okay.
  2. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: So where you are
  3. right now. In your opinion, on where you
  4. sit in the property appraiser's office,
  5. where are the areas of town that are
  6. struggling with property values? I'm going
  7. to guess that's in the urban core; correct?
  8. MR. HOLLAND: It is. I mean, here is a
  9. good example, the Beaches have been going up
  10. in value double digits, 12 percent, 14
  11. percent. Springfield, as an example, has
  12. gone up 5 percent in five years, okay, so
  13. just as an example.
  14. And everything that drives it is supply
  15. and demand, is a desire for that. You know,
  16. we react to the market. When we do an
  17. appraisal, it's based on the value of that
  18. property on January 1st based on the sales
  19. and demand of that property in the prior
  20. year.
  21. So but to answer your question, the
  22. urban core is the lowest values -- rate of
  23. increase in values.
  24. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Can you talk a
  25. little bit about what conditions that are

1. setting the market for the urban core to
2. keep the urban core struggling in terms of
3. property value, as well as market presence?
4. MR. HOLLAND: You go down to what is the
5. buyer looking for. I mean, what always
6. drives the highest increase is what's
7. limited value -- I mean, a limited
8. opportunity. For example, in our county,
9. it's waterfront property. Waterfront
10. property, there is only so much of it.
11. Oceanfront property, only so much of it.
12. Those are where the values are the highest
13. because of a demand to have it, but a
14. limited supply.
15. Then you go into other areas where a
16. person is truly saying, you know, I'm buying
17. my first home, where do I get my best value.
18. But then the question is what do I achieve
19. when I get that best value.
20. You know, there is no doubt that if you
21. buy a home in the Duval section of Nocatee,
22. you're going to pay a different price than
23. if you buy a home, the same home, on the
24. west side or north side; and if you bought
25. the same square footage home in the urban
26. core, a lot lower cost. But the question is
27. what do you get out of it.
28. What normally drives that, and you hear
29. it all the time, schools. You know, is it
30. near a good school? Is it near that
31. situation? Is it near amenities? What is
32. the safety of that neighborhood? That will
33. drive it also. And, ultimately, those are
34. the biggest factors is usually schools,
35. safety of the community, and what does the
36. community look like, you know.
37. And, unfortunately, you see communities,
38. once they start to deteriorate, it's hard to
39. turn them around, because, again, people go,
40. there is more opportunity, I'm going to go
41. over here.
42. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: So the Chair
43. brought up earlier in his comments about we
44. talked last meeting about maybe a dedicated
45. authority, like something like an urban core
46. investment authority, which would deal with
47. some of these issues. What would be your
48. recommendations or what would you suggest to
49. help turn things around? And would that be
50. an idea that would be useful for this Body
51. to look into?
52. MR. HOLLAND: Well, you know, there are
53. things in place today that you can see
54. certain areas doing. For example, in
55. Arlington, creating a taxing district,
56. creating an area where -- and, obviously,
57. what's driving that also is Jacksonville
58. University saying, you know, we have been
59. here for years, but the community has
60. deteriorated, the values have dropped. This
61. is our -- we have to bring people from out
62. of state to come here to look at the
63. University, do they want to come where this
64. is at.
65. So what they've done is trying to both
66. change everything from signage to what the
67. businesses look like, trying to make it more
68. attractive.
69. But, in every area, you almost -- it's a
70. very large problem. And it's not in one
71. area. It's in large low income areas. And
72. it's very expensive. I mean, end of the
73. day, it's everything from the -- from
74. cleaning up and beautifying and the
75. businesses that are there and the type of
76. businesses that are there and the crime
77. element that's there. You know, all that
78. fosters into it.
79. But you have to give -- you almost have
80. to break them up into sections, which they
81. are in many ways, and you have to give that
82. focused attention. And it does drive by
83. money, it has to fix it.
84. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: So would your
85. recommendation for something like this be
86. prioritized -- should this be a priority of
87. the City to address these conditions, maybe
88. paying special attention to some of the
89. things that have not been done over the last
90. 50 years since consolidation?
91. MR. HOLLAND: It would probably -- yes,
92. it is. And I think from a perspective of
93. what would be most successful, as much as
94. some of the urban core would be more needed
95. than anything else, you almost have to start
96. with the areas that are on the tipping, that
97. are moving to the point of being less
98. desirable. And when they're in that tipping
99. point, doing something there so they don't
100. tip. And then, you know, saving that area,
101. and then moving on until you solve that.
102. Otherwise, it's almost like starting in
103. the middle of a forest fire and trying to
104. put it out from the middle. You almost have
105. to start on the outside edges and try your
106. best to save communities from being lost or
107. turned.
108. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: And I just -- I
109. would like for you to tell me if -- in your
110. opinion, if you think this should be a
111. priority. And this is why, is because it
112. seems to me, in my opinion, that our
113. community too often looks at issues as ways
114. to solve it from the outside. You know, we
115. develop on the outside, we provide
116. incentives to other areas of town hoping
117. that we'll provide more jobs, those jobs
118. will provide more economic opportunity, and
119. those areas will uplift themselves from the
120. outside.
121. But, in my opinion, I think these should
122. be prioritized from the inside, from the
123. inside out, whether need actually occurs.
124. And we haven't really done a good job of
125. that. We haven't done a good job at all,
126. because if we look back over the history of
127. consolidation, we've sort of let these
128. areas -- most of which I've lived in for
129. most of my life -- just kind of decay on
130. their own with other areas, at the expense
131. of the community.
132. So what I would like to try to find out,
133. from as many people who come to the podium
134. as possible, if this is an opportunity for
135. us to prioritize within our recommendations
136. something that can be done for underserved
137. communities.
138. MR. HOLLAND: It is definitely worthy of
139. the prioritization. It is definitely -- a
140. reflection of the community is not the
141. greatest part of it sometimes, but also the
142. lesser part of it. You know, that's how we
143. get characterized sometimes by our schools.
144. Even though we have many A schools, we get
145. characterized of, oh, you want to go to
146. St. Johns County. They have failing schools
147. also, you know, mostly in low income areas.
148. But from a perspective of it does paint the
149. City as less attractive if you don't fix all
150. of the City.
     1. So if you can find a way to prioritize
     2. that, I don't have a solution of how you do
     3. that within the Charter, you know, or how
     4. you address that. There is no doubt that
     5. it's an expensive venue. There is no doubt
     6. that to fix the cure that has taken
     7. literally decades to get where some of these
     8. communities have gotten, it is not a quick
     9. fix, and that's a problem too.
     10. We've kind of thrown in term limits, but
     11. it goes back to what Matt was saying,
     12. Council Member Schellenberg was saying, is
     13. that sometimes if someone has that
     14. long-term, you know, plan, they actually
     15. stick around long enough to see it all the
     16. way through and it changes priorities.
     17. That's what we give up sometimes.
     18. It's a real question of how do you get
     19. that long-term plan that you know can't be
     20. fixed in eight years, and who is going to
     21. pick up the ball and carry it in the next
     22. eight years.
     23. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Do you think an
     24. independent authority, much like the
     25. Downtown Investment Authority -- we pay a
151. lot of attention to downtown. We're
152. invested in bringing back downtown. We've
153. made a lot of incentives, you know, offered
154. a lot of incentives. Do you think an
155. independent authority to address these
156. issues would be appropriate, an appropriate
157. start to something like this?
158. MR. HOLLAND: I think it has merit, but
159. it comes always back to the funding source
160. and, you know, what is going to be the
161. avenue for that. But it definitely has
162. merit, because it deserves the attention.
163. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you.
164. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Holland, I want
165. to be respectful of your time. I've got
166. four other people on the queue. We've had
167. you here for about an hour. Are you okay?
168. MR. HOLLAND: Hey, I love it. Thank
169. you. Y'all are the ones doing the hard
170. work, heavy listening.
171. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I just want to make
172. sure. I looked at the clock and realized
173. how long you've been here.
174. Ms. Jameson.
175. COMMISSIONER JAMESON: Hi. Good
     1. morning. Thank you so much for coming
     2. today.
     3. MR. HOLLAND: Good morning.
     4. COMMISSIONER JAMESON: I had a couple
     5. questions about the elections. First of
     6. all, you had mentioned about 1 million, 1.2
     7. million in savings if we didn't have a
     8. runoff, for instance. Are you able to
     9. produce a study on that or when was that
     10. last studied?
     11. MR. HOLLAND: The last time -- in fact,
     12. where we looked at that was there was a
     13. thought one time of moving the local
     14. elections to coincide with the federal
     15. elections, the -- and the presidential. The
     16. costs are there, they're in the budget.
     17. Basically, you can get them from the council
     18. auditors of exactly what, you know, is the
     19. need. And it's because we can see the cost
     20. broke down by election by election, that's
     21. approximately what it costs.
     22. We still have the same number of
     23. precincts, 199 when I left, couple more
     24. early voting sites. So the cost has been
     25. consistent with some increase in salaries
176. for poll workers.
177. COMMISSIONER JAMESON: Okay. Thank you,
178. appreciate that. Also, as far as this
179. ranking goes, this is kind of confusing for
180. me. I'm curious how this would work.
181. Again, how does the ballot look? And you
182. kind of alluded to that. But then, also,
183. what if people don't rank all four, if they
184. only wanted to rank one, and that's that
185. fifth person that now drops off, does their
186. vote not count? How does that work as far
187. as -- it seems like you would need every
188. person to rank at least four candidates.
189. MR. HOLLAND: They don't necessarily
190. have to. In every study I've done and
191. looked at it is -- it's not -- because
192. you'll get people coming in there that are
193. not going to rank the candidates of the
194. different party. You know, they're not
195. going to be my second, third, or fourth
196. choice. If my party doesn't get it, I don't
197. want everybody else. So you can't take away
198. that and say, okay, rank the other party
199. candidates.
200. But from the standpoint, if you don't,
     1. it's just a matter of it adds additional
     2. votes to the remaining candidates if they
     3. were chosen as -- if you're in the first --
     4. or second round, in the second round. So,
     5. again, what it does is it just recalculates
     6. the vote based on your second choice when
     7. your first choice is no longer there because
     8. it's been removed.
     9. COMMISSIONER JAMESON: Thank you for
     10. that explanation. I appreciate it.
     11. MR. HOLLAND: Okay.
     12. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: All right. Next up,
     13. Mr. McCoy.
     14. COMMISSIONER McCOY: Hello. I have two
     15. questions dealing with two different
     16. offices. The first question would be, when
     17. you're looking at rank choice voting, do you
     18. think that it would eliminate this idea that
     19. we only have two choices, or this -- by
     20. choice when we go into the thing, whether
     21. it's liberal, conservative, democrat,
     22. republican, and also kind of like end the
     23. political tribalism. Do you think it would
     24. be possible for that, people to start
     25. looking at candidates more than just
201. parties?
202. MR. HOLLAND: I think they might from a
203. perspective of a couple things. One is, if
204. I'm looking at -- and, you know, the most
205. informed voters as they're going along are
206. looking at when polls are published, who has
207. an opportunity to win. They may be shifting
208. their vote, you know, in the standard
209. conventional election that we're doing now.
210. But it really, I think, may give
211. opportunity for more people to want to run,
212. because they know necessarily they're not
213. diminishing their ideology if they run.
214. In other ways, it makes all candidates
215. important because, quite honestly, you know,
216. if I'm out there campaigning, you know, I'm
217. saying, you know, you may want to vote for
218. Matt, but, as your second choice, I sure
219. would like you to vote for me. So I'm
220. getting that interest where I'm appealing to
221. all voters even though I know I may not be
222. your first choice. So from that
223. perspective, I think it changes the
224. landscape some.
225. I mean, you know, but it can also change
     1. the outcome, you know. And that's the
     2. question is, is that the desire is to change
     3. the outcome. But it may be a good outcome
     4. if it's getting more of the majority of the
     5. ideology, but that's been deluded because of
     6. the number of candidates in a particular
     7. ideology.
     8. COMMISSIONER McCOY: And then the next
     9. question for the Property Appraiser hat, so
     10. all I know the Property Appraiser does is
     11. tell me the value of the property. But I
     12. know sometimes government functions a little
     13. bit more than just the obvious.
     14. So could you give us like what the major
     15. function of the property appraiser is; where
     16. it fits into the city as its function; and
     17. how it can be used for city development and
     18. prosperity?
     19. MR. HOLLAND: Okay. One thing is it's
     20. a -- the way government functions is kind of
     21. a three-legged stool when it comes to
     22. revenue. The City Council sets the millage
     23. rate, we set the values, and then the Tax
     24. Collector collects the money. That's kind
     25. of how the revenue moves and how it's kind
226. of determined how much revenue.
227. Our role as Property Appraiser is to do
228. three things. One is we have 366,000
229. parcels in Duval County. Our role is to
230. determine the value of all those parcels
231. every year. And so that's our role, because
232. though whatever the value is may not change
233. your taxes because it's based on the
234. legislative body determining the millage
235. rate, you know. So from that perspective
236. we're setting the values on all 366,000
237. parcels.
238. We're also maintaining all the
239. exemptions. You know, in other words, if a
240. person is due a homestead exemption, a widow
241. exemption, a disability exemption, a -- we
242. have about 30 different exemptions, all
243. those exemptions, we're maintaining those,
244. making sure that people who have them are
245. entitled to them, and people don't have them
246. that aren't entitled to them.
247. And the third part is tangible personal
248. property, which is the non-homesteaded
249. property, which is all -- for a business is
250. the restaurant equipment, the table, chairs,
251. computers, shelving, all that. We do not
252. value it, but we audit the values of what's
253. self-reported by the taxpayer. So those are
254. our three functions as Property Appraiser.
255. We also create a lot of data. Our
256. website is gone to by many, especially in
257. the real estate industry, because of our --
258. all our properties, when you go on there,
259. there is the dimensions of the property, the
260. history of the property, the ownership of
261. the property, the exemptions that are in
262. place, what the current taxes are on the
263. property. Those kind of things, we maintain
264. that record, which is very valuable for
265. people to know. And many people, it's
266. available to them to get that database from
267. us.
268. When it comes to the last part of your
269. question, you know, where do we drive.
270. We're, again, reactive to the market, we
271. don't set values, we react to what the
272. values are, and what the consumer is paying
273. for things.
274. When it comes to development or anything
275. of that nature, we're really not in that
276. arm. We're not in a policymaking position
277. in our role. We're really serving that
278. function to set those values to apply the
279. millage rate, the tax -- to apply that and
280. for that person to collect the revenue, the
281. Tax Collector.
282. So it's a function that definitely you
283. wouldn't have the revenue stream, because
284. you're doing ad valorem taxes, which is
285. taxes by value, unless someone sets the
286. value. And that's our role to do that.
287. COMMISSIONER McCOY: Thank you.
288. MR. HOLLAND: You're welcome.
289. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Gentry.
290. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: Mr. Holland, going
291. back to Mr. Griggs' question and to really
292. focus a little deeper and see if you have
293. any suggestions, and as a Property Appraiser
294. you've explained what drives property values
295. among other things.
296. In looking at the Charter, the Charter
297. established various districts of the City.
298. And the old city is considered the first
299. urban district. And the Charter guarantees
300. to the folks in the first urban district
301. that the City will provide child care,
302. electricity, fire protection, health,
303. hospitals, library, police protection,
304. recreation parks, schools, streets,
305. highways, traffic engineering and welfare
306. services. And particularly, for the first
307. urban district, in addition, water supply,
308. sanitary sewers, street lighting, street
309. cleaning and garbage and refuse collection.
310. I could probably ask Mr. Griggs what he
311. thinks about that, but the question is,
312. having made this promise in 1967 to the area
313. of town which by all accounts is the most
314. blighted in the City, what, if anything, be
315. it time limit, what, if anything, as a
316. Charter Revision Commission can we do? Or
317. do you have any suggestion as to any tact we
318. might take to assure that these promises are
319. finally carried out and performed that were
320. made to the first urban district 40 years --
321. 60 years ago?
322. MR. HOLLAND: You're exactly right.
323. When consolidation happened, it was a
324. promise that that could continue. From a
325. perspective of what the Charter Revision
326. Commission could do to codify or make sure
327. those were happening, I'll be straight out
328. honest with you, I'm not sure. It would be
329. something that would be worthy to find out
330. what the answer of that is. But I don't
331. have the answer of what would definitely
332. codify those services and promises when
333. they're not delivered. You know, because
334. that's basically it, it was a promise made
335. and a promise not delivered.
336. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Next,
337. Mr. Schellenberg.
338. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I would
339. suggest, and I'm going to suggest that it's
340. the failure of the administration for 50
341. years. And it partly is that they always
342. propose the budget, and the City Council
343. works on it. And they work on the fringe.
344. So to solve a lot of these problems, in
345. my opinion, is actually have the City
346. Council, as most cities and states and
347. federal government, the legislature actually
348. proposes a budget too.
349. So what I'm doing, what -- to solve this
350. problem is I want to empower the legislator,
351. the City Council, to do their own budget.
352. That means all the district representatives
353. and at-large, they go to the budget and say,
354. this is our budget, we want money for this
355. area, and carve out exactly what the
356. priorities of the legislature is, not what
357. the Mayor is, whoever the Mayor is, but
358. empowering the legislators to do their job.
359. And that job is to propose their own budget.
360. Now, it's going to take a lot more work, but
361. that's okay.
362. And this goes to my next position. This
363. is how you overcome almost everything I've
364. heard, have the power of the legislator
365. propose their own budget, the Mayor can do
366. his own budget, and then you have basically
367. a conference and say, Mayor, this is what we
368. have, this is what you have.
369. Because the way it works now he proposes
370. the budget -- think of it this way, he has
371. all spring to talk about all his what he
372. wants to do and, yes, sometimes he comes to
373. the District Council people and says, what
374. are your priorities. But my priorities
375. overwhelm what he's willing to give me. And
376. that's the same with every District Council
377. person.
378. I want more, I wanted more in my
379. district, but -- so but if I had the power
380. as a legislator to say, each district, I
381. don't care how it works out, gets $2 million
382. this year to improve the quality of life or
383. do this or do that for their district,
384. that's our budget. We go to the Mayor, he
385. proposes his budget.
386. He proposes his budget July 15th, and it
387. has to be affirmed before September 30th.
388. Now, how much time does it really give the
389. legislators time to really go into the
390. details of his budget, except on the
391. fringes? And understand the budget process
392. really doesn't start until August, is that
393. correct, because the Council Auditors have
394. to look at it and then they present it to
395. the budget people.
396. MR. HOLLAND: You mean for the Council?
397. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: For the
398. Council.
399. MR. HOLLAND: For the Council, late
400. July, yeah.
     1. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: So this is
     2. just a thought about what the CR- -- what we
     3. can do, is we can suggest that Council do
     4. their own budget, and you work it out. And
     5. this means that he has to propose it
     6. beforehand and instead of -- and he has from

7 July 15 to September 30th to work with the

1. City Council to make sure the final budget
2. works out.
3. The other thing is the City Council
4. should empower themselves. Again, I'm
5. talking about balance, get some more power
6. away from the administration and have the
7. legislators actually have power to do what
8. they are hired to do, elected to do.
9. And that means maybe there should be
10. another standing committee. And that
11. standing committee makes sure that what is
12. being done and how the money is spent, how
13. the budget is being spent is basically doing
14. what they want, and being much more engaged
15. in the process.
16. Let me see. And then -- but, now, so
17. the other problem is the legislators are
18. part-time. So the administration is
19. full-time. So how does this rectify that we
20. are trying to do the best we can for our
21. constituents, Mr. Griggs, the million people
22. that live in Jacksonville, Duval County, how
23. does this work?
24. And my opinion is that we should, as a
25. commissioned Charter, look at all these
26. things that we can that -- and I'm not
27. talking about advocating it, but is 19 the
28. number, 19 -- the reason why we have 19 is a
29. reason they didn't want -- it's like the
30. Missouri compromise back in 1776. But we
31. need to look at should we be full-time, or
32. stay part-time and going for it, or having
33. less representatives to bring balance back
34. to the legislators against the
35. administration.
36. And it's just a thought, but these are
37. some of the things that, you know, when
38. you're talking about money for various
39. areas, this is where you go.
40. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Ms. Baker.
41. COMMISSIONER BAKER: Through the Chair
42. to Mr. Holland, just a couple of questions.
43. I was wondering, and maybe you stated, how
44. many counties and cities have the rank
45. voting elections in Florida?
46. MR. HOLLAND: Only Sarasota County had
47. approved it. But, from my knowledge, it has
48. not been approved by the Division of
49. Elections. So, to my knowledge, no one else
50. in the state of Florida is currently using
51. the practice.
52. COMMISSIONER BAKER: It's not very
53. widespread. And what about around the
54. country?
55. MR. HOLLAND: In other places in the
56. country, I don't know the number, but it is
57. popular in some areas. But I don't have the
58. numbers on it.
59. COMMISSIONER BAKER: Okay. My second
60. question is about nonpartisan elections.
61. And you may have followed, the Florida
62. Supreme Court actually ruled that we have to
63. have partisan elections in our
64. constitutional office elections.
65. But what about, in your opinion, I just
66. wanted to ask your opinion of nonpartisan
67. and City Council, I think it would also
68. apply potentially to the Mayor, who is not a
69. constitutional office.
70. MR. HOLLAND: What I saw in elections
71. for ten years is it didn't matter if it was
72. school board, it didn't matter if it was a
73. judge that are nonpartisan, people knew the
74. parties. You can take the labels off,
75. people were still voting the parties.
76. People were still calling the elections
77. office saying, which they could, you know,
78. what party is that person running for judge
79. or school board, you know.
80. And they have the ability not in the
81. judicial, but on the school board side, a
82. nonpartisan race, although they don't
83. mention party, they can put in there they're
84. a member of the Republican Executive
85. Committee, you know. It doesn't say they're
86. republican, but it takes to be a republican
87. to be on the REC. So party is still there.
88. You know, often when people -- sometimes
89. people say, I want to do away with the
90. parties and do nonpartisan, because
91. sometimes when they do that, one party is
92. not winning as many elections as the other
93. party. And it doesn't matter which party.
    1. We saw that even with the introduction
    2. of unitary elections. At that point in
    3. Duval County, there wasn't a lot of
    4. republicans being elected or Mayor or those
    5. kind of things. And unitary was that
    6. thought of maybe now we don't have a primary
    7. where few voters are voting in that primary
    8. for republican and democrat. And it
    9. separated and made it kind of hybrid with a
    10. unitary election.
    11. But when it really comes to nonpartisan
    12. races, I don't think there is really such a
    13. thing, to be honest with you. I think the
    14. interested voter, if they're voting party,
    15. they find out the party.
    16. And the candidate, although they can't
    17. express the party, they express they are
    18. conservative values or moderate values or
    19. liberal values. And it comes back down to a
    20. party relates to that. So that's my views
    21. on that.
    22. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Griggs.
    23. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you,
    24. Mr. Chair.
    25. I wanted to sort of follow up or
        1. piggyback off Mr. Schellenberg's
        2. recommendation around dueling budgets. My
        3. recommendation or my thoughts on that would
        4. be I think it would be a good idea if the
        5. Council was able to -- were able to design
        6. their own budget.
        7. But the challenge is the timing, you
        8. know, because the new Council members are
        9. coming in at a certain time and the budget
        10. is due at a certain time, but the
        11. administration, you know, they start out as
        12. far ahead as they'd like. In fact, they
        13. review it, you know, quarterly, every six
        14. months.
        15. Perhaps, and I want to get your thoughts
        16. on this, one of the recommendations that
        17. I've heard from a citizen and I brought
        18. forth the last time in this Body was that we
        19. have an elected Council President, the 19th
        20. member would actually be an elected
        21. four-term -- not four-term, but four-year
        22. Council President. And that person would be
        23. on the off-year Mayor, again, looking for a
        24. way to be independent of those, how the
        25. timing lines up. And that Council President
94. would have the opportunity to budget
95. priorities that adhered to the priorities of
96. the Council Members. What are your thoughts
97. on an elected Council President for a
98. four-year term?
99. MR. HOLLAND: Having been Council
100. President and fortunate to have my picture
101. on the back wall there, I would not support
102. that. And the reason I say that is Council
103. President also sets the -- not just the
104. agenda in a sense, but all the committees.
105. It would be very powerful if it was elected
106. and that was your Council President.
107. You know, there is nothing that stops
108. the Council, it's only happened twice that
109. they've elected someone twice as Council
110. President, and it was really before term
111. limits. The reason for that is because you
112. didn't want to put that much power in one
113. individual. And it could definitely -- if
114. that individual didn't align, maybe as much
115. as we say the Council is not partisan, there
116. can be that. It can exist. But if they
117. don't align, then that district could really
118. be separated out.
     1. It helps to have those elections, you
     2. know, for Council President. It helps to go
     3. through that process.
     4. I was one that was -- in the process of
     5. Council President had 10 votes, you know.
     6. So I know when you get in with 10 votes and
     7. not 19 votes, you know. So but I know also
     8. what you have to do to build that collegial
     9. body.
     10. I think there is a spirit in there when
     11. it's every opportunity to do that. And also
     12. you look at how they move through the
     13. process to become Council President. They
     14. also have to continue that collegial effort
     15. to work with others.
     16. You know, so there is a lot of benefits
     17. for that group to, in a sense, elect their
     18. own president or, you know, Chair of the
     19. whole Council.
     20. So to have that my fear would be is that
     21. you basically have -- if the powers to be on
     22. the outside that supported elections, if
     23. they were pushing for one Mayor, they would
     24. be pushing for one Council President. And
     25. you just tie it up more than you can
119. imagine.
120. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Just from a
121. historical perspective, when you were on the
122. Council and you were Council President, did
123. you have what you considered to be long-term
124. priorities or strategies?
125. MR. HOLLAND: That's what makes it
126. difficult. Your priorities are one year.
127. You've got to move, you're setting
128. committees. I know I set a committee that
129. went away as soon as I was out, you know.
130. Things can change. It postures you to
131. really move quickly. But it also limits
132. your power.
133. For example, I was Council President the
134. last year that Mayor Delaney was Mayor.
135. Mayor Delaney had lowered the millage rate
136. every year. I went to him that last year
137. and I said, can we hold the millage rate the
138. same, you know, not lower the millage rate.
139. He said, no, I want eight years of lowering
140. the millage rate. And I said, you know
141. what's going to happen, the next Mayor is
142. going to come in and what is he going to
143. want to do. He said, I'm not in charge of
144. the next Mayor.
145. The next Mayor came in and lowered it.
146. And then he wanted to lower it more than the
147. previous Mayor had ever lowered it, and he
148. did. And then the recession came in '07.
149. And it was, oh, darn, you know, we're in
150. trouble.
151. Those are the kind of things you wish
152. you had more power -- going back to
153. Mr. Schellenberg, more power as Council
154. President to get across in a budget, you
155. know. So you would have more power if you
156. were elected, that's the advantage, you
157. know, but the power may be in the same hands
158. as the administrative position is. That
159. would be my concern.
160. You do come in and you can set the
161. agenda, you can set the priorities, you can
162. set your committees for that year, you can
163. go through those that you think will work
164. hardest on the budget to -- if it's in a
165. recession time, to try to find money.
166. And we've had some -- some Council
167. Presidents had some tough challenges where
168. they came in and the Mayor pretty much said,
169. this is your budget and you need to cut
170. eight percent, you find it, you know, we're
171. cutting across the board. Those kind of
172. things make it tough.
173. But all being said, I would rather have
174. that one year than four years just because I
175. would rather have that body deciding its
176. leaders, you know. And I think it's better
177. for that body as a whole to do that.
178. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Okay. Thank you.
179. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. McCoy.
180. COMMISSIONER McCOY: Just wanted to
181. answer Commissioner Baker's question about
182. where rank choice voting is. And according
183. to Ballotpedia, which they just do political
184. stuff and research, there are seven states
185. that have actually implemented it; there are
186. five states that have adopted it and not
187. implemented it; however, that comes with a
188. caveat, only one state has actually done it
189. statewide, that is Maine. Most of the other
190. states only have one in the seven cities
191. that actually have that provision, or
192. counties depending on the state. The one
193. with the seven is Utah.
     1. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Ms. Mills.
     2. COMMISSIONER MILLS: Through the Chair
     3. and the Commission, thank you, Mr. Holland,
     4. for coming in and speaking with us. I have
     5. really been enlightened by a lot of things
     6. that you've said.
     7. I do agree with you, that, you know,
     8. let's do the work, you should prove yourself
     9. if you want to be in any position. I also
     10. want to piggyback on what W.C. Gentry said
     11. about previous promises that were made to
     12. the urban core that have not been kept. You
     13. said it would be very expensive for us
     14. to revitalize that area. And I know that.
     15. So that's why I would like to see the
     16. Marshall Plan come into play, I'm sure that
     17. it won't. But it will take something like a
     18. Marshall Plan to be adopted and revitalize
     19. that area.
     20. Running for City Council in District 10,
     21. walking in that area a lot, and seeing the
     22. difference from one side to the next, it is
     23. an area that can thrive, but there will need
     24. to be -- we would have to have a lot of laws
     25. put in place to keep it to where it needs to
194. be. I see a lot of investors coming over
195. and buying up vacant properties and not
196. keeping them up. And then you're moving any
197. and everyone in. So it's going to take a
198. lot.
199. But I think those previous promises,
200. when you spoke about those amenities, the
201. schools that are in that area that are
202. failing, the crime, not just in the urban
203. core, but everywhere in Jacksonville.
204. So the amenities play a big part. I
205. know riding down Soutel, there is only one
206. gas station at the corner from Soutel up to
207. Lem Turner. So those are things that
208. are not -- that will not attract people to
209. move in that area because of the amenities.
210. So I would like to know is there a
211. report that shows the declining of the
212. property tax in the urban core. Is there
213. somewhere I can go and look at that to see
214. and compare it from year to year to see how
215. much the property tax has decreased in the
216. urban core?
217. MR. HOLLAND: Well, we definitely -- we
218. do it by City Council District, which could
219. show you some relationship there. I'll have
220. to look and see what other geographical
221. areas we do it by, you know. So it's
222. difficult if you just pull out an area and
223. say, let me just look at this particular
224. area. But there are some that we can look
225. at. And if you would give me a call, we can
226. probably do some further research for you
227. and help you on that situation.
228. And just to kind of morph on what
229. Mr. Schellenberg was saying, you know, part
230. of that priority is, and I always thought
231. that's where we -- as he mentioned, we kind
232. of lose that power as a Council, is you
233. know, when you get that budget, you pretty
234. much know, here is the budget, here is the
235. millage rate, here is this.
236. And all you're doing is trying to
237. critique each one that comes up there to see
238. if you can find a little extra dollars maybe
239. for one little project, or just at least go
240. through the process and have each of the
241. independent agencies and each of the
242. constitutionals justify their budget, you
243. know.
     1. It's very seldom that anyone comes --
     2. rarely comes to the Council and says,
     3. listen, it wasn't approved by the Mayor, but
     4. we really need this, and then they
     5. circumvent that.
     6. I can remember back when I was on the
     7. Council, at that time a fire chief said,
     8. listen, I can't do this, the Mayor won't
     9. allow it, but will y'all put this in the
     10. budget. And, sure, we wanted to do that,
     11. and we added certain things that they
     12. wanted. So that does happen at times.
     13. But the process he's talking about is
     14. does the Council need to formulate the
     15. budget for all the constitutional officers
     16. and all the budget? No. But what they
     17. probably need to look at is what are the
     18. priorities in their districts that is
     19. affected by the budget that they determine
     20. is the value.
     21. Part of it really comes down to what is
     22. the price tag to do whatever it is you want
     23. to do, and what are you willing to pay for
     24. that. Meaning are -- is the Council -- you
     25. know, the Mayor just says, here is my
244. budget, I present this, and I've kept the
245. millage rate the same, or, in some Mayors,
246. I've lowered it to say I've lowered taxes,
247. but this is my budget.
248. But is the Council willing to stand up
249. too and say, yes, those priorities cost
250. something, and we're willing to either keep
251. the millage rate the same or raise the
252. millage rate, how do we do that, how do we
253. generate that money.
254. The reality is there isn't enough money
255. to do everything. Even in the greatest of
256. times, you know, there wasn't enough money
257. to do everything. There was enough money to
258. do more prudent things, but not everything.
259. The question is, given that Council the
260. ability to weigh in and say, you know,
261. listen, we're going to stand as a body and
262. say this is a priority, you know, and we do
263. want these -- I've always said on a -- I was
264. a District Council person.
265. Those 14 Districts know that area of
266. town better than anybody else. I mean,
267. they've walked those streets, they've gone
268. to the neighborhoods door by door, you know,
269. walked them many times. They know the needs
270. in that community. That's where the
271. information should be going upward not
272. downward. And that's where part of the
273. budget process can help if there is some
274. information going upward, so.
275. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: All right. I see no
276. one else on the queue.
277. MR. HOLLAND: Well, I have thoroughly
278. enjoyed it. I would welcome to come back if
279. you forget anything or if you think of a
280. follow-up question, please send me an email.
281. I'll be glad to respond to that.
282. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I'm sure you will.
283. One of our goals is that we will be breaking
284. up into subcommittees and pursuing certain
285. of the issues. So appreciate you making
286. yourself available as a resource for this
287. Board.
288. MR. HOLLAND: Well, my hat is off to
289. y'all. Y'all have a very tough job to make
290. those changes and to get everyone to accept
291. and approve and realize there is some good
292. that needs to be done by changing some
293. things.
     1. Thank you all very much and I appreciate
     2. the opportunity.
     3. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you.
     4. Okay. Back to agenda.
     5. Paige, are you available to give us that
     6. update on campaign finance? So that was one
     7. of the issues that had came up about
     8. possibilities of changes with regards to
     9. campaign finance laws. And we had sent some
     10. information around and kind of updated it.
     11. So I thought I would have Paige go ahead and
     12. give us that update.
     13. MS. JOHNSTON: Yes. Thank you. Through
     14. the Chair to the Commission, I had requested
     15. of Legislative Services to send an email
     16. out -- I think they sent it out on Monday --
     17. where I just basically highlighted that laws
     18. regulating campaign finance are found at
     19. Chapter 106 Florida Statutes. And it was my
     20. understanding that that was solely a state
     21. derived power.
     22. However, I did reference the fact that
     23. the City Charter does reference that the
     24. Ethics Commission can make recommendations
     25. and changes on campaign ethics and lobbying.
294. And that's found in Section 1.202 of the
295. City Charter.
296. And so I had suggested that perhaps
297. Carla Miller of the City's Ethics Office
298. could be of more assistance in discussing
299. what exactly campaign ethics would include
300. for your conversations. And I believe she
301. is coming to speak in September on such
302. topics.
303. But after I sent that email, she
304. actually provided some additional
305. information, as she's researched this a
306. little more fully. And so she asked me to
307. read into the record this information for
308. you.
309. And, actually, she was here a little
310. earlier, but it looks like she stepped out.
311. So I'll go ahead and just read what she
312. asked me to provide.
313. So she said: Carla Miller has
314. researched the issue on whether or not the
315. CRC can take up campaign or election issues.
316. She has also spoken with an attorney from
317. the Florida Elections Commission. The
318. Florida Election Code does allow
319. municipalities to adopt local election or
320. campaign laws, those laws just cannot
321. conflict with state law. And she cites to
322. Section 100.3605 of Florida Statutes.
323. And then she says: That is the same as
324. ethics laws. You can have more specific
325. laws at the local level. In fact, we have
326. an entire section on local campaign ethics
327. in our Code, Chapter 350.
328. And she goes on to say: If anyone on
329. the CRC is interested in researching any
330. matters in this area, I can direct you to
331. informational resources. And her email is
332. [Ethics@COJ.net.](mailto:Ethics@COJ.net)
333. And, again, I believe she's coming to
334. speak in September at one of your meetings.
335. She had said, I believe, at the last CRC ten
336. years ago there were discussions on ethics
337. recommendations and I believe there had been
338. some legislation that had been proposed as a
339. result of that. And she said that her
340. Ethics Commission in Chapter 350 of the Code
341. does address campaign ethics, and they also
342. have discussed changes to campaign laws.
343. And so she's more than happy to discuss that
344. further with the group.
345. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, ma'am. I'm
346. trying to get her, as well as maybe the
347. Council Auditor and Inspector General to all
348. come, because that was one of the issues, I
349. believe, that we had discussed looking at,
350. and particularly with regards to overlap
351. that may be in there. So that may be a way
352. we can streamline and make those processes a
353. bit more efficient.
354. Thank you for that.
355. Next we have public comment. Do we have
356. any speaker cards? Imagine my surprise,
357. Mr. Nooney.
358. MR. NOONEY: I'll tell you what, I'll
359. just read right from the speaker card. I'll
360. give it to you.
361. My name is John Nooney, address is on
362. file. And --
363. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Well, you know, I
364. think you're supposed to probably turn it in
365. first in order to be recognized, but --
366. MR. NOONEY: Well, okay. Just so you
367. see, I write a lot on the speaker cards
368. (indicating). And the reason is --
     1. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: John, we
     2. need your address.
     3. MR. NOONEY: Okay. 8356 Bascom Road,
     4. Jacksonville, Florida 32216, City Council
     5. District 4, School Board District 3, House
     6. District 12, Senate District 4,
     7. Congressional District 4, Southeast Planning
     8. District 3, Fourth Judicial Circuit, Soil
     9. and Water Conservation District Group 2, and
     10. continue to reside in Evacuation Zone C,
     11. love the C.
     12. You know, I'm only down to two minutes.
     13. But, you know, ethics, it's been gutted
     14. since the last Charter Revision Commission.
     15. You know, when you talk about, you know,
     16. Inspector Generals, I put down, like, Tom
     17. Cline, you know, he's gone.
     18. You know, legislation, you know, it's
     19. the dialogue of the community, you know,
     20. 2014-769, 2015-765. These are things that
     21. you can just look up. And thank goodness
     22. there is a court stenographer taking all
     23. this down. You know, 2014-560, that's a CRA
     24. DIA area.
     25. But here is the thing, I'm only down to
         1. a minute and 30, this is really what I want
         2. to address with the Charter. Mr. Denton
         3. alluded to, with the former Mayor Delaney,
         4. suggesting DIAs in other areas. Well, my
         5. concern has to do with public access to the
         6. waterways. You know, and that's my big
         7. concern. And that is within these CRAs and
         8. DIAs, and especially if a nonprofit, you
         9. know, is being given a piece of property
         10. with access to that waterway and then there
         11. is taxpayer money involved that Joe Q.
         12. Public then does not have access to that
         13. particular waterway. Downtown is a classic
         14. example.
         15. Now, 2014-560 created the DIA CRA zone.
         16. Now, 4.8 miles of that is a restricted zone
         17. from the Fuller Warren Bridge to the
         18. Matthews Bridge. You know, so I like the
         19. waterways. I want to be one of the biggest
         20. cheerleaders for the waterways.
         21. And the Chairman, Mr. Brock, being on
         22. Waterways, Scott Shine was previously on
         23. Waterways.
         24. You know, and I'm only down to 20
         25. seconds. But 2016-18 that is Tom Ingram,
369. and his recommendation was the nonmotorized
370. hand launch at the Duval County Public
371. School property. Now, that is right next to
372. the JEA property, 2015-777. And if you want
373. to just have a Charter Revision Commission
374. look at the waterways and access, you know,
375. within these DRAs and CRAs, and you can do
376. that with the Charter Commission --
377. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you, sir.
378. MR. NOONEY: -- that would go to --
379. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you,
380. Mr. Nooney.
381. MR. NOONEY: All right. Thank you for
382. listening.
383. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Next speaker, Perry
384. Waag.
385. MR. WAAG: Waag (pronouncing).
386. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I wasn't sure if
387. that was another A or a G -- or a U, rather.
388. MR. WAAG: Two As. Don't worry, it gets
389. butchered all the time.
390. I appreciate you guys doing what you're
391. doing. I'm here. I emailed you earlier in
392. the week about rank choice voting. I
393. appreciate you guys asking Mr. Holland about
394. it today. I actually do have a handout I
395. wanted to --
396. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Name and
397. address.
398. MR. WAAG: Oh, I'm sorry. My apologies,
399. first time doing this. My name is Perry
400. Waag, and I live at 355 West Tropical Trace.
401. I'm actually, full disclosure, not a
402. resident of Duval County. I'm a resident of
403. St. Johns County, down in Julington Creek,
404. but I'm a part of the petition committee
405. that is all residents of Duval County. So
406. I'm the only one that was able to make it
407. here today so that's why I'm the one
408. speaking.
409. What I just want to clear up is a couple
410. of things about rank choice voting in
411. response to your questions. So in
412. Jacksonville, we already do a majority vote.
413. So all using rank choice voting would simply
414. do is eliminate that second round runoff.
415. If -- and save the money and the time and
416. effort of all the people having to run, and
417. also voters having to listen to eight more
418. weeks of campaigns.
     1. So hopefully you're eliminating the
     2. voter fatigue issue, but you're still
     3. getting the same turnout from that first
     4. round when people voted.
     5. To the one question, I think, somebody
     6. had about what if someone chooses not to
     7. rank, basically that has the same effect if
     8. they just didn't turn out for that second
     9. round of voting. So if they choose to just
     10. list one person, they can absolutely do
     11. that.
     12. The second part of it also is that one
     13. of the main benefits we found around the
     14. country is that it results in more civil
     15. campaigns. And I think Mr. Holland alluded
     16. to, you know, I might want you to be my
     17. second choice -- or me to be your second
     18. choice, so I'm not necessarily going to get
     19. into personal negative attacks on the other
     20. candidates as much, and focus more on the
     21. issues.
     22. The other point too was it's kind of an
     23. inflection point for independent candidates
     24. and minor party candidates to be able to
     25. compete better. Because if you have, you
419. know, the lesser of two evils, for lack of a
420. better way of saying it, typically
421. independent candidates will get a lot of
422. people saying, I really like your message, I
423. really like what you're trying to do for it,
424. but I don't really think you have a chance
425. so I'm not going to vote with you.
426. Well, with rank choice voting, you can
427. say, hey, my first choice is that person who
428. I don't think has really a chance, my second
429. choice is the democrat or republican or
430. whoever, so that way independents have a
431. chance to compete better.
432. I have a handout I was going to hand out
433. to you guys if you wanted to look at it. It
434. just has some more information about rank
435. choice voting, and then our petition that
436. we're going to be working on to try to do as
437. a backup in the event the Charter Revision
438. Commission doesn't take it up, or the City
439. Council. You can take these too if you
440. want.
441. So you can read our "about" language and
442. what we're working on. We're actually just
443. going to be starting to collect petitions
444. this weekend. So that's all I have to say.
445. I appreciate your time.
446. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you, sir.
447. Next we have Commission discussion on
448. there. And I had written down some of the
449. main items, which Mr. Schellenberg mentioned
450. when we first got started is picking dates
451. for our next meetings.
452. Primarily I'm looking in October. We're
453. scheduled to, I believe, meet on the 26th of

11 September is our last meeting there. And

12 the next available date is that Wednesday,

13 October 2nd. Anybody else? Any viewpoint

1. on meeting that quick? It's less than seven
2. days.
3. All right. Then we will -- I'm going to
4. write CRC on this so that when I give it
5. back to Ms. Owens, we'll have that.
6. Sorry, yes.
7. COMMISSIONER McCOY: The 2nd of October
8. I will not be able to make it.
9. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: You will not be able
10. to make that?
11. COMMISSIONER McCOY: I have --
12. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Chair,
    1. you're never going to get everybody to agree
    2. on this. It's a vast majority. I would say
    3. how many people cannot make it or can make
    4. it, and move forward. You're never going to
    5. get everybody on the same page. So you're
    6. going to stick with October 2nd?
    7. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I'm looking around
    8. to see if anybody --
    9. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Well --
    10. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: -- because what you
    11. don't have that I have is a calendar with
    12. everyone who has given me dates that they're
    13. not available. You do not have that. I
    14. just got it this morning, so.
    15. MS. OWENS: You don't have that.
    16. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yeah. He was not
    17. listed on here, and that's why I was wanting
    18. to make sure if there was anyone else. So
    19. if we only have one member who will not be
    20. available, we're going to go ahead and stick
    21. with that date. That then will give us

22 October 11 as the next clear date, okay, we

1. will mark October 11.
2. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: Mr. Chair, I won't
3. be available on the 11th.
   1. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: You won't be
   2. available on the 11th.
   3. VICE CHAIRPERSON KNIGHT: I won't be
   4. available.
   5. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: And you won't be
   6. available on the 11th, okay. So that's two.
   7. All right. We'll go ahead and move
   8. forward, because that keeps us on this
   9. schedule through there.
   10. COMMISSIONER MILLS: I just want to ask
   11. a question.
   12. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes.
   13. COMMISSIONER MILLS: Are we -- because I
   14. thought we initially said we would be
   15. meeting every two --
   16. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Microphone,
   17. microphone.
   18. COMMISSIONER MILLS: I thought I was
   19. loud.
   20. Okay. I thought we initially said that
   21. we would be meeting every two weeks. Are we
   22. meeting every week now?
   23. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, we originally
   24. talked about the two weeks. And then when I
   25. began looking at the schedule and looking at
4. the speakers that we were wanting to get
5. scheduled, I made the decision of looking at
6. really trying to speed up our process,
7. because what we also have to do and once we
8. get through this and we set for meetings for
9. October, is we can always cancel them if we
10. need to.
11. But the follow-up after we get these
12. dates is I really want us to look at this
13. issue list and begin our own homework on if
14. there are issues that we see on the list
15. that we're passionate about and believe
16. should be advanced forward is that we begin
17. to look at what some of the Charter
18. provisions are in relation to that. But I
19. don't want to get into that now.
20. Let's finish up on dates. We have
21. two -- so the next one with the least amount
22. of people unavailable would be October 15.
23. Okay?
24. COMMISSIONER HOWLAND: I cannot.
25. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Howland, you're
26. unavailable that week.
27. COMMISSIONER HOWLAND: Yes.
28. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: You have the
    1. 11th and the 15th?
    2. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: The 11th and 15th,
    3. the Friday and then the next Tuesday,
    4. because any other date we have two to three
    5. people who are out. That's the least out.
    6. Then the next one would be October 25th.
    7. That gives us four meetings through the
    8. month of October. And my hope is that on --
    9. MS. OWENS: October 15 is not going to
    10. work; that's a committee day.
    11. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: October 15th is not
    12. going to work.
    13. COMMISSIONER BAKER: Can we go to the
    14. Lynwood Roberts room?
    15. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Can we go in one of
    16. the other rooms or is that going to tie
    17. up --
    18. MS. OWENS: I have to check and make
    19. sure Lynwood is available.
    20. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Okay. If you can
    21. find that out; if not, then we'll move it to
    22. the 18th. It looks like we'll only miss two
    23. people on the 18th.
    24. So for now we've got October 2nd,

25 October 11, October 15, and October 25, with

* + 1. an asterisk by October 15.
    2. Next, as I said, I want us to look
    3. through the suggested topics. Some of these
    4. include suggestions of speakers. So let me
    5. first talk about the speakers.
    6. And, Ms. Mills, I know that you had
    7. reached out and had asked about having
    8. Ms. Johnson come. And, unfortunately, our
    9. thoughts and prayers are with her family
    10. with the loss in her family. We're very
    11. sorry that she could not be here. So if
    12. there are dates when she is, put those
    13. through with Ms. Owens, and we will do that.
    14. And anyone else who has contacted
    15. someone that they think would be helpful for
    16. us to hear from while we are considering our
    17. priorities and in areas of the Charter that
    18. we want to look into, please get those to
    19. Ms. Owens, and then she's forwarding them on
    20. to me.
    21. And then we're looking at our master
    22. schedule as far as getting people filled in
    23. to different slots. I believe we have three
    24. or four set for September 13th. So that's
    25. going to be a busy one there.
        1. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Mr. Chairman.
        2. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Yes, sir.
        3. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: I won't be
        4. available on the 13th of September.
        5. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: You won't be
        6. available on the 13th, okay.
        7. But what I would like for us to do is
        8. our homework for our next meeting is for
        9. everyone to go through this list. If there
        10. is something that you think is missing,
        11. please get that to Ms. Owens, and we will
        12. get this list updated.
        13. One of the things that I am going to try
        14. and do as Chair is begin to look at what are
        15. the broader topics and then subtopics
        16. underneath. Obviously, Office of General
        17. Counsel would be a broader topic. We've
        18. heard issues of selection process, we've
        19. heard issues of staggered terms. So those
        20. are items that I will be putting beneath
        21. that broader topic of OGC.
        22. I want to get discussion and a consensus
        23. on how we're going to develop our
        24. priorities, because my thoughts are that
        25. when we have these broader topics, that

1. that's what we're ranking. And then when we
2. have our subcommittees that are going in
3. there, again, just for example, the OGC
4. subcommittee would then have, okay, here are
5. the things that you're going to look at.
6. It doesn't limit what you can do, but
7. saying, if we choose Office of General
8. Counsel as a priority for us to look at
9. things, then we've got a subtext of issues
10. in there of areas where we think we can make
11. some improvement.
12. You know, another one that's come up
13. that would probably be a broader subject, as
14. Mr. Schellenberg had mentioned, the balance
15. of power within our government in regards to
16. the Mayor and the City Council. That, I
17. would say, would be one of those broader
18. issues where we could see what are some
19. specific Charter revisions that we can look
20. at.
21. So what I'm asking everyone here to do
22. is let's begin to focus in our work. We've
23. talked about broad topics. Let's begin to
24. go into the document itself, and let's begin
25. to identify, you know -- you don't have to
26. say, well, we need to put a comma here or
27. change the third letter on the fifth
28. sentence. We're not looking at that detail.
29. But saying, okay, this section of the
30. Charter, I think if we go in here, we can
31. add something.
32. One of the ones that I will be looking
33. at is precisely to see about how we can make
34. the Charter Revision Commission, what are
35. some suggestions on it so that we can make
36. our recommendations have to be acted upon,
37. and whether that is putting it into the
38. Charter or leaving it as an ordinance, but
39. having provisions in there that require some
40. sort of action so that there is closure on
41. the process. I'm going to be looking at
42. that. So I'll let you know I'm taking that
43. one on to go in there.
44. But I would encourage everyone to let's
45. begin to narrow our focus on real provisions
46. that we can say, hey, I think here is where
47. we can take action. Because as we develop
48. that list, then I was hoping that we could
49. do it in September, but I just don't think
50. we're going to hear from everybody that we
51. want to hear from by then. So it's probably
52. looking more in one of the October meetings.
53. And I'll make sure that we all get --
54. number one, I'll make sure we agree on what
55. the list is that we're voting on. And then
56. we will have ranked voting for the topics
57. that we will be going into.
58. So any other -- any thoughts on that?
59. Anyone -- oh, wait, a few speakers. There
60. we go.
61. Mr. Gentry.
62. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: Yes, sir,
63. Mr. Chairman, would you like for us, as we
64. go along, would you like for us to just, as
65. we think of something, try to articulate one
66. of these main areas, to send that to staff
67. or to you, not for discussion, just to get
68. it in the queue?
69. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Getting it in the
70. queue, yes, absolutely. Send it to
71. Ms. Owens. You know, if you send it to me,
72. it may or may not get acted upon. If you
73. send it to Ms. Owens, it will get acted
74. upon. So, yeah, that's exactly the process.
75. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: And in the course
    1. of these speakers -- and I wanted to say
    2. that I really think September 13th, with all
    3. due respect, is a little bit aggressive to
    4. think you're going to get Jason Fischer and
    5. Kimberly Daniels all in 30 minutes and then
    6. also bring in the School Board Chair. You

7 may want to spread them around a little bit

1. if you can.
2. But one of the areas I would like to
3. hear further expertise expressed here is to
4. try to think of some people to bring in. I
5. think the point that you raised about
6. Mr. Schellenberg's point, which is basically
7. going to the very issue of this strong Mayor
8. system of government, particularly in light
9. of the fact that at least there's perception
10. that the General Counsel operates at his
11. will, if you will, and then General Counsel
12. then has authority to bind everybody. So it
13. becomes almost an autocratic system.
14. I think we need to have some comments
15. about this whole notion of the way we're
16. structured. Is it really working well? Is
17. this, quote, strong mayor system really
18. working well, or should we be thinking about
19. more like Mr. Schellenberg suggested, a more
20. balance between the legislature and the
21. Mayor, and to have some real checks and
22. balances, which we simply don't have.
23. That's a big -- that's a big deal. I mean,
24. that's a Charter structure entirely.
25. And if there are some people that can
26. speak to us about that, I think we ought to
27. try to locate them. I don't know who it
28. would be that would be really the experts on
29. that. That's really kind of governmental
30. organizational expertise. But I think
31. that's the elephant in the room. So what we
32. can do to get more information, I
33. think would be very helpful.
34. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: So we've had Mayor
35. Delaney come and speak and he really gave
36. his view on this strong mayor form. And
37. we've heard from Rick Mullaney as well.
38. So if there are some that you think we
39. should reach out to, feel free to reach out
40. to them. You've got the schedule as far as
41. when they are. And, like I said, get that
42. to Ms. Owens, we'll make sure that we get
43. them scheduled. Because, yeah, it seems
44. to -- it's a topic that keeps coming up.
45. The one thing that I would -- and it's
46. the hardest thing to do is -- I think
47. Mr. Hagan really kind of touched on it, is
48. it is easy to get caught up in the moment of
49. conflict and within a current administration
50. and look at it with that narrow lens.
51. I would encourage us to think broader
52. and longer term, because what you're talking
53. about is a fundamental concept of the
54. consolidated government. And I think I was
55. speaking with someone, and I sort of
56. paraphrased Churchill's quote that he said
57. democracy is the worst form of government
58. except in comparison to all others. I said,
59. perhaps consolidation is the worst form of
60. municipal government except in comparison to
61. all others.
62. So that is my only concern is that we --
63. when we're looking at solutions, we should
64. be looking at fundamental broad solutions
65. and not solutions for what may be -- not to
66. be pejorative, but the conflict of the day,
67. the conflict of the moment. Because what

25 may be a fix for the conflict at the moment,

1 may not be the best thing for the City

1. moving forward. And that's my only comment.
2. Mr. Schellenberg.
3. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: There's
4. three or four topics. I apologize. First
5. of all, again, you're opining about what
6. your belief is. But think of it this way, I
7. don't know if consolidation has worked,
8. okay. I fundamentally believe that
9. everybody says, as a Mayor, I went to that
10. mayoral forum at J.U., and not one Mayor
11. said, I'm glad I had the power. Of course,
12. they want the power. They can overwhelm you
13. like a bulldozer and just knock whatever
14. they want done. Of course, they want power.
15. But to say that consolidation works, all
16. you have to do is look at the Beaches and
17. what Jerry Holland said about the property
18. values. The property values at the Beaches
19. are going up, partly because it's near the
20. beach, I get it. But you can look at other
21. areas of town and other areas of Florida to
22. see cities are doing substantially better
23. than what we are doing. And clearly certain
24. areas of town have been disengaged because
25. of the power, too much power in the mayoral
26. area.
27. Going along, Mr. Gentry, you mentioned
28. the 13th with all those legislators. I'm
29. looking at September 6th, along your lines.
30. Michael Weinstein has a wealth of
31. information, not only as an administrator,
32. chief financial officer, also in
33. Tallahassee. Chris Hand is finishing up a
34. book talking about consolidation and how
35. it's working. And he's going to talk about,
36. I think, five subjects. I've already talked
37. to him about those. And then Mike Hogan and
38. then Sheriff. I don't think we have enough
39. time for them to speak and for us to ask
40. questions.
41. So I would look at maybe having -- maybe
42. 45 minutes for each one of them and going
43. from them and maybe move them around a
44. little bit.
45. But I clearly -- I'm sure all of us have
46. questions, surely, of the Sheriff because of
47. what's going on with the homicide rate that
48. is astronomical over the last couple -- we
49. need to know what we as the Commission can
50. do and help the Sheriff do something about
51. the killings that are occurring in
52. Jacksonville.
53. And Mike Hogan, he can talk about rank
54. voting. But Chris Hand and Mike Weinstein,
55. I think they are a wealth of information and
56. we need to give them more than a half an
57. hour.
58. MS. OWENS: They're not just given a
59. half an hour. That's just --
60. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Well, you
61. have it down here and --
62. MS. OWENS: I understand that. But
63. that's just when they said, what time can we
64. come. They were told they can speak more
65. than half an hour.
66. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Disregard,
67. Ms. Owens. I agree with you.
68. But I'm also incredibly respectful of
69. time. So if we're going to give Michael
70. Weinstein 45 minutes, you can say, Chris, I
71. think we're going to go for 45 minutes and
72. we're going to cut it off, but don't be any
73. later than 9:45. That would be helpful to
74. them for their time management. And I think
75. that's just respectful of the process.
76. MS. OWENS: I agree.
77. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: If you don't
78. mind, I want to send Ms. Owens an article in
79. the Wall Street Journal, it was yesterday.
80. It talks about power. And part of it is, if
81. you don't mind me reading it, Mr. Chair,
82. I'll just read part of it: The man who
83. drafted the constitution feared tyranny
84. above all else. They knew as James Madison
85. observed that enlightened statesmen would
86. not always be at the helm. And that laws
87. must always be crafted with due awareness of
88. the worst case scenario. The current
89. structure of the U.S. emergency legislation
90. ignores cautions.
91. And this, basically, I read this -- I
92. said, oh, my gosh, I can bring that back to
93. City Council because the strong mayoral
94. position. And he's arguing that the
95. legislation at congress isn't doing their
96. job. And I would argue the legislators here
97. in Jacksonville -- and I'm part of the
98. problem, I was here eight years. And I wish
99. I had been a little bit more forceful in
100. getting balance between the executive,
101. legislative and also the OGC.
102. So I'll send a complete article to
103. Ms. Owens. If she would like to send it
104. out, that's great. Thank you.
105. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you.
106. Anyone else?
107. Mr. Gentry.
108. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: I don't want to be
109. a heretic, but I guess I am. When I'm asked
110. to review something, I put on my blinders
111. and say, okay, I'm reviewing it as though
112. it's not great, there are flaws, and I need
113. to look at the flaws.
114. And I think it's become kind of a right
115. of passage, everyone in city government says
116. consolidated government is great, it's
117. great, look how great we are.
118. One, I don't think consolidation and the
119. strong mayor system of political operation
120. are necessarily the same thing.
121. Consolidation, from my perspective, having
122. grown up here growing up over on Talleyrand
123. Avenue and seeing the City for 70 years,
124. consolidation was driven by the corruptness
125. of this City from the Mayor all the way
126. down. And we had justice of the peace, and
127. county courts, and all sorts of manners of
128. courts, and virtually everybody was on the
129. take. And we had a terrible system of
130. corruption.
131. And so finally the City fathers came
132. together and they created this form of
133. government, which consolidated so many of
134. those entities that were part of a very
135. corrupt system, and that was a driving
136. factor.
137. There were also driving factors
138. regarding the urban core and what was going
139. to happen with the shift in the voting if
140. the urban core grew much bigger and we
141. didn't have a consolidated government.
142. Because there were some negative reasons why
143. it happened, as well as a lot of positive
144. reasons why it happened.
145. But I look around this state I look at
146. Duval County, always one of the highest
147. infant mortality rates in the state and the
148. nation. We lead the state in homicides and
149. violent crime. Our same areas of the
150. community that have been disenfranchised and
151. impoverished since I was a boy are still
152. that way. Our public schools in those areas
153. are not doing well.
154. I look at what's going on with the
155. quality of life in Orlando and Tampa and
156. Miami. And I ask myself, is consolidated
157. government really working so great in
158. Jacksonville. Maybe for some people, but
159. not for the whole city.
160. So I think to say that -- and if you ask
161. the past Mayor, what do you think about the
162. way things are, he'll say, I like this. You
163. ask past OGCs, oh, yes, we need to have that
164. power. I think those are the wrong people
165. to be asking. I think we've got to figure
166. out -- and maybe Chris Hand may be able to
167. give us some different insight as an
168. academician, a historian, a lawyer and also
169. who has also been in the system.
170. But I think we need to -- I recognize
171. consolidated government turned this city
172. around. And I recognize this city, in my
173. opinion, is really moving forward. And it
174. is a great city, certainly compared to where
175. it was when I was a boy. I have really
176. positive feelings towards the City of
177. Jacksonville, that's why I'm on this
178. Commission.
179. But by the same token, I also recognize
180. that there are some real flaws that we've
181. never addressed. And maybe one of those is
182. that we need to be looking at how this
183. system operates fundamentally. And if it
184. means questioning consolidation, I think we
185. need to do that.
186. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: That's what this
187. whole discussion, I think, is for. And from
188. what I have heard and from the people that
189. we've spoken to and heard from, is that a
190. lot of folks from around the state come and
191. look at us and from around the country come
192. and look at our form of government as
193. something to emulate. Is it perfect? No.
194. COMMISSIONER GENTRY: And they never --
195. (inaudible).
196. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: No, not entirely,
197. that's a different viewpoint in there.
198. But folks come and look at it because
199. there are a lot of good things out of
200. consolidation. Are there a lot of things
201. that we can improve? Yes. Can we go back
202. and right the wrongs of history throughout
203. all of it? No, but we can hopefully make
204. some tweaks and changes.
205. You know, because, again, whatever we do
206. here, this is the reality, we have to
207. convince ten people on the City Council to
208. grab that flag and run up the hill with it.
209. And I get that there are great desires
210. to make fundamental changes. I would
211. encourage us to not quench those desires,
212. but I would encourage us to also look for
213. incremental changes that have a fundamental
214. effect so that we can move things forward
215. where we can and where we think we can get
216. ten votes from the City Council to move
217. those forward.
218. Mr. Griggs.
219. COMMISSIONER GRIGGS: Thank you,
220. Mr. Chairman.
221. I'm not going to belabor the point, but
222. I would like to, again, support Mr. Gentry's
223. thoughts on maybe looking at the entire
224. system. Consolidation is something that has
225. been built really in this community on
226. marketplace development. This is -- our
227. area is rich in amenities, and it provides a
228. wonderful marketplace for those people who
229. are willing to invest in it.
230. However, it has not provided a
231. foundation for equity. And we have not
232. been -- we have not seen areas of town
233. prioritized based on equity.
234. In other words, I'm not saying that just
235. because one person gets one thing, everybody
236. should have it. Everyone should have the
237. same opportunity at that. And, in order to
238. address that, you have to look at the way
239. the whole system is structured.
240. Even if the representation of the urban
241. core representatives, Council Members to be
242. exact, were to come together and say, these
243. are our priorities, they would still need to
244. engage administration, convince another
245. eight Council Members to accept that as
246. well.
247. And when everyone is fighting for
248. consideration for what they're -- the needs
249. of their district is, as we have seen over
250. the last 50 years, that has been not -- you
251. know, not -- it has not been the case for
252. followthrough.
253. So maybe it does take us as a Commission
254. to examine where real opportunity lies for
255. us providing equity to sort of maybe slowly
256. undo or quickly undo, speed up some of the
257. things that have been overlooked over the
258. last 50 years.
259. It is very easy to come to Jacksonville
260. if you're an outside developer or entity,
261. somebody who wants to relocate here, and
262. find real opportunity if you want to
263. relocate or locate in other areas of town.
264. And like we heard Mr. Holland say,
265. marketplace drives all of this. Well, what
266. keeps us from wanting to address as a
267. priority one of our most underserved areas
268. of town? Why wouldn't we want better for
269. that area of town? Why wouldn't that be a
270. priority, and not just let one area of town
271. fall where the chips may?
272. We should be, as a community, concerned
273. about that. And it should be a priority.
274. We can figure anything else out. We can
275. take any area of town and develop it from
276. nothing and put people there and everybody
277. is happy about it. We consider that all the
278. time, but we do not, as a community, look at
279. where the most need is and invest as a
280. priority in those needs; and that is,
281. providing equity to those areas that have
282. been driven into a situation based upon how
283. consolidation has impacted them.
284. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: I appreciate that,
285. and that's your idea of some sort of an
286. investment authority. And, with that, let's
287. look at the Charter and figure out ways that
288. we can promote that kind of investment and
289. development and equality of opportunity that
290. you're talking about. I think that's
291. honestly something we need to look at.
292. Ms. Baker.
293. COMMISSIONER BAKER: I'd actually like
294. to add a specific issue to our list of
295. topics here. And this may fall under the
296. broader balance of power, but the issue --
297. or maybe a solution, potentially, for just
298. something small that might help the balance
299. of power, to Councilman Schellenberg's point
300. of giving City Council more authority, would
301. be for any independent authority that
302. proposes any real estate purchase or sales
303. agreement or transaction of any asset or
304. function over a certain numerical threshold,
305. it would have to be subject to City Council
306. approval.
307. And I think that threshold is very high.
308. I think it could look at, like, $10 million
309. potentially, but I think that might be a
310. check and balance that we're looking for. I
311. think it could help with streamlining our
312. government so that the City Council is
313. looking at issues that our independent
314. authorities are looking into.
315. I think that there was a big -- there
316. was an issue that occurred in 2008, I think
317. we've all heard of Plant Vogtle, that has
318. allowed for this uncapped and unending
319. contract. And I think if this had been in
320. place back in 2008 where City Council would
321. have had to approve that contract, I don't
322. think it would have happened.
323. It's already in the Charter currently,
324. actually, for JEA, if they want to sell over
325. 10 percent of their assets, they have to go
326. to City Council for approval. So I think
327. this might be a small solution that maybe
328. helps with those checks and balances.
329. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Funny you mention
330. that about disposition of city property.
331. When we first got started on this, I looked
332. at the Charter -- or the municipal Charter
333. for the City of St. Petersburg. And they
334. have in there a whole section on disposition
335. of property, waterfront, and how to go about
336. having oversight and review for disposition
337. of city assets.
338. So one of the things I'm going to do, I
339. believe I've got it in a PDF form, and I'll
340. send it to Ms. Owens and circulate it
341. around. And I would encourage everyone else
342. to just Google "Municipal Charter," "County
343. Charter," those sorts of things.
344. I did it for St. Petersburg because they
345. had a lot of revitalization in their city.
346. So I was like, I wonder if there is
347. something in their Charter that helped
348. promote that, helped make that possible.
349. Again, to Mr. Griggs' point of what are
     1. some other municipal charters, what are some
     2. things that other folks have done that have
     3. shown growth, and let's look at it. And so
     4. I would encourage everyone to do that, you
     5. know, on all these issues. But thank you.
     6. Mr. Schellenberg, again.
     7. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I don't
     8. know. I'm sorry. I appreciate Ms. Baker
     9. opining about Plant Vogtle, but I doubt it,
     10. that we would not have approved it. Because
     11. at the time it was a business decision that
     12. probably would have been done.
     13. But I'm not so much interested -- I am
     14. interested in the oversight of independent
     15. authorities. But you don't need 10 votes,
     16. you need 13. So if you're taking power or
     17. empowering another entity like the
     18. legislator to do certain things, you're
     19. going to have to have veto proof to the
     20. Mayor. Because I'm not sure if somebody --
     21. unfortunately, as I read that article in the
     22. Wall Street Journal, people give up power so
     23. easily. So you're going to have to get not
     24. 10 votes, but 13.
     25. However, doing the right thing is we are
         1. entrusted by citizens, a million people, to
         2. tell them what we think to make government
         3. more responsive to them. And it's not
         4. what -- if consolidation is good -- because
         5. Ms. Lisska has lived in Mandarin for a few
         6. years. And 50 years ago, 3,000 people lived
         7. there, 70,000 people live there now because
         8. it was a farming community, orange groves,
         9. things like that. That dynamic has changed,
         10. as a lot of other areas have changed.
         11. I tend to agree with Mr. Gentry, because
         12. that's what I hope I'm saying. Of course,
         13. he's a lawyer, he says it much better. But
         14. we aren't asked by a million people to give
         15. them what we see, and if they want to be
         16. part of it, and believe that we're right,
         17. they'll elect people that buy into our
         18. argument.
         19. Ms. Emily knows that in my monthly
         20. column in the Mandarin News Line, I've
         21. had -- I've indicated that Mandarin should
         22. be a city unto itself. It's closer to the
         23. people. We can get sidewalks quicker. We
         24. can repave roads better. We can do a lot
         25. more, because the people that would be
350. involved there are closer to the citizens.
351. How many people actually from Mandarin
352. or the north side ever come downtown?
353. Government closest to the people is best.
354. And consolidation is not working for a vast
355. majority of the citizens of Jacksonville.
356. And just because it's hard doesn't mean we
357. shouldn't say this is what should be done,
358. even though we might not get 10 votes or 13
359. votes going forward.
360. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Mr. Denton.
361. COMMISSIONER DENTON: I want to add a
362. little different perspective to what
363. Mr. Gentry and Mr. Griggs said about
364. Northwest Jacksonville and about poverty.
365. Jacksonville has gone from being a majority
366. black city from Civil War until Jim Crow, to
367. the situation we have now.
368. I've done a lot of work on this, and
369. I've written a lot about it, referred to it
370. as the urban pathology. It's driven mostly
371. by poverty, but that's poverty built on
372. enduring structural racism, not overt and
373. not immediate, but structural racism, which
374. is something we need to understand.
     1. And what has come out of that are a lot
     2. of failed lives, our crime rate, the schools
     3. that we're not happy with. These are all --
     4. as I said, I try to look at things
     5. systematically. And all of these things
     6. feed together into what I consider to be the
     7. biggest issue facing Jacksonville; and that
     8. is, crime and human failure. And you can
     9. read it in the news reports every day.
     10. So I'm not sure of the connection from
     11. all of that to the Charter. But one of the
     12. things that I'll say in my note to
     13. Ms. Owens is that I think that we need to
     14. see if there isn't a way that we look at
     15. review of the Charter to deal with the issue
     16. that has held Jacksonville back, continues
     17. to and will continue to until we face it
     18. upfront and figure out how to make
     19. systematic changes in the way people here
     20. live.
     21. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: Thank you.
     22. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: I don't want
     23. to ask a question.
     24. Mr. Denton, excuse me, could you send
     25. those articles that you have talked about to
375. Ms. Owens so we can read them? I don't know
376. how many there are, but that would be
377. helpful.
378. COMMISSIONER DENTON: Well, I actually
379. did that on the crime task force. I don't
380. know if anybody read them again. These go
381. back a few years. Of course, they're
382. eloquent.
383. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Of course,
384. they are; you've written them.
385. COMMISSIONER DENTON: But I would be
386. happy to put them on the record. In fact, I
387. think they're probably already on that other
388. record. But we can carry them over in hopes
389. that people will read them again, as I'm
390. sure you did the first time they came out.
391. COMMISSIONER SCHELLENBERG: Thank you.
392. CHAIRPERSON BROCK: All right. Seeing
393. no one else on the queue, anything else for
394. the good of the order? We stand adjourned.
395. (Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.)

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* 1. CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
  2. STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF DUVAL

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1. I, Amanda E. Robinson, Registered
2. Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that I
3. was authorized to and did report the foregoing
4. proceedings; and that the transcript, pages 1
5. through 154, is a true record of my stenographic
6. notes.

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11 DATED this 5th day of September, 2019.

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15 Amanda E. Robinson,

Registered Professional Reporter

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