**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HEMMING PLAZA SUBCOMITTE MEETING MINUTES**

February 27, 2012

**Location:** Don Davis Room, Ground Floor City Hall

**Date:** 10 a.m. February 15, 2012

In Attendance: Chair E. Denise Lee, CM Bill Gulliford, CM Don Redman, Megan Newton, Ava Barrett, Janice Billy, Jamie Hill, Stephen Dare, Ron Chamblin, Dick Jackson, Karen Nasrallah, Officer R.B. Bonifacio, Amy Harrell, Terry Lorince, Kathren Hardwick, Carl Falconer, Marilyn Allen, Annette Hasting, Barbara Gubbin, Greg Radlinski, Vikki Wilkins, Jason Teal and Dan Macdonald

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

The Chair asked for the Subcommittee report that included recommendations to make the park more attractive to office workers and downtown visitors. The recommendations included conducting both an online and in person use surveys, the removal of distressed trees and replace low growing plants, remove some benches to discourage large groups from congregating in a single area, identified the Northeast portion of the park near Duval and Laura Streets as a problem area and suggested removing tables from that area first, asked for increased police presence, suggested that Downtown Vision handle the assignment of setting up temporary chairs and tables if the permanent ones are removed. Other suggestions included a greater presence by the Hope Team to address homeless issues, increase park programming, and consider hiring a private security company to augment the JSO officers who from time to time have to be called away from Hemming Plaza.

CM Gulliford appreciated the recommendations but suggested actions be more pro-active rather than reactive when considering the park. He suggested the formation of a “Friends of Hemming Plaza” to help invigorate the park and bring about positive programming to draw new potential users.

A discussion about park rules and their enforcement was led by Sgt. R. B. Bonifacio. He explained how offenders are trespassed for the day and it’s only when they become a continual nuisance that persons are banned for a year. Thus far in 2012, 200 people have been trespassed from the park. He admitted that gambling does go on in the park, but it is done on the sly and is difficult to enforce.

At 10:48 a.m. CM Don Redman joined the meeting.

Vikki Wilkins asked if dominoes and card playing could be made against the park rules. City Attorney Jason Teal explained that if such a law is put in place, the city would have to defend why it is needed and show what public good it would provide.

Eva Barrett of the library said that the library has an area where people are invited to quietly play board games like checkers and chess.

The use of electricity in the park was brought up after Jerry Moran provided a photo of someone sleeping in the park with an electric blanket plugged into a park socket. The electricity in the park is only supposed to be on for planned programming. Kelley Boree is looking into who has the keys to the electric box and will come up with a plan to make sure the electricity is off when not needed for planned purposes.

It was suggested that the Hemming Park Subcommittee look into several items including: the feasibility of using surveillance cameras in the park to increase the public’s perception of safety; the possibility of hiring a private security firm; finding garden clubs to maintain portions of landscaping; and finding funding sources.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Included:

Agenda

Minutes

Attendance Sheet

Subcommittee recommendations

Photo of person sleeping in Hemming Plaza