



Task Force on Consolidated Government
Council Member Lori Boyer, Chair

**Neighborhoods, Infrastructure, Planning,
Services, & the St. John's River Committee**

COMMITTEE TOPIC & ISSUE LIST

1) Neighborhood Engagement and Participation

- a. There was widespread concern among neighborhoods that they were not well served by the consolidated government
 - i. CPAC's are marginally effective
 - ii. No participation in planning or CIP development
 - i. One size fits all standards
 - ii. CARE system closes issues before resolution; does not provide neighborhood feedback; not available nights, weekends
 - iii. Zoning decisions
 - iv. Technology for community outreach
 - v. Could CDBG funds be used to build water and sewer lines in some of the neighborhoods?

2) Housing and Neighborhoods Department

- a. Role as liaison with all neighborhoods
- b. Municipal Code Compliance
- c. Historic Districts/demolitions

2) Infrastructure

- a. Infrastructure in older neighborhoods not adequately maintained
- b. Water and sewer lines not installed and roads left unpaved in many areas contrary to promises of consolidation
- c. Who is responsible? City, JEA, Homeowner? What were the terms under which water and sewer were transferred to JEA? As to roads, should we maintain gravel roads? Alleys?
- d. How should priorities be established going forward? How should these improvements be funded?
- e. What is the status of unfinished Better Jax projects and are they on the CIP? Should they be?

1. Capital Improvement Program

- a. Review matrix, etc and process for establishment of priorities
- b. Review value of 5 year projections. Are they worthwhile? Not being done currently
- c. Neighborhood involvement in development (Bill of Rights)
- d. Maintenance projections required by code.
- e. All sources of funding (grants, trust funds, etc.) to be included
- f. Developed based on capacity for debt service not on need? Is that the correct perspective?

4) Long Range Planning

- a. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan is not used to guide future decisions on a widespread basis. Long-range planning, with application throughout City government to achieve unified goals, appears to be absent. Each entity is operating in their own silo. How can a unified mission, and plan for the future, be implemented across agency and authority boundaries? How can the capital improvement plan be used to implement that long range vision? What is the incentive for following a plan? Is our 2030 plan adequate to serve that function if used? How could we do this better? What is done in other Cities who are achieving long term success? What is JEA's development plan and where is investment being made? What is JAXPORT's strategic plan and how will it handle harbor deepening?

b. Communication between Authorities and the City and among City Departments is a challenge and no regularly scheduled meetings occur? What should be done to improve?

5) The St. John's River

Reply Reply All Forward

JTA Community Engagement Program

Alice Cannon [acannon@jtafla.com]

To: Cook, Damian

Cc: Ivan Rodriguez [irodriguez@jtafla.com]; Jacquie Gibbs [Jgibbs@jtafla.com]

Attachments: (4) Download all attachments

JTA CAG 2014 meeting calen~1.pdf (222 KB) [Open as Web Page]; PUBLIC ATTITUDINAL SURVEY ~1.pdf (981 KB) [Open as Web Page]; ATT00001.txt (396 B); ATT00002.htm (3 KB)

Wednesday, January 29, 2014 9:31 AM

Hi Damian,

How are you? It's been awhile since we've spoken.

I would be delighted to tell you how we are reaching out to communities within JTA's service area. Here is a bulleted overview of the process:

JTA Community Engagement: JTA Community Advisory Groups (CAGs)

In the Fall of last year, JTA utilized a zip code map of our entire service area and conducted an area-wide, statistically accurate telephone (land line and cellular) Public Attitudinal Survey on the topic of public transportation in general, JTA's services specifically and also asked questions about what people would like to see in terms of the future development of Transportation in the greater Jacksonville area.. I have attached the findings, which basically determined that people in general did not dislike JTA, felt we offered a needed service and felt we offered a safe way to travel.

However, most of them knew very little about us or specifically what services are available.

Based upon that data, we took logical area clusters of zip codes and created 6 geographically-connected Community Advisory Groups (CAGs)

The Communities represented the following areas: Greater Downtown; Greater Arlington/Beaches; Southeast, Southwest, Northwest and North (This month, we added one near Clay County)

The CAGs are composed of a diverse group of people who are interested in being actively engaged in the review and approval of all projects and initiatives under consideration by the JTA

- There are no chairs, no committees. Everyone has an equal voice and is equally important in terms of the input



2014 Community Advisory Group Meetings

Greater Downtown

FSCJ Advanced Technology Center
401 State St W Room T140
Jacksonville, FL 32202

6pm – 7:30pm

January 16, 2014

April 10, 2014

July 17, 2014

October 16, 2014

Greater Arlington/Beaches

Regency Square Branch Library
Community Room A
9900 Regency Square Blvd
Jacksonville, FL 32225

6pm – 7:30pm

February 20, 2014

Pablo Creek Regional Library
Community Room B
13295 Beach Blvd
Jacksonville, FL, 32246

6pm - 7:30pm

May 15, 2014

August 14, 2014 (pending)

Arlington Senior Center
1078 Rogero Road
Jacksonville, FL 32211

6pm – 7:30pm

November 13, 2014 (pending)

Southeast

St. Vincent's Hospital
4201 Belfort Road, Main Hospital
Auditorium C
Jacksonville, FL 32216

6pm – 7:30pm

February 6, 2014

May 1, 2014

August 7, 2014

November 6, 2014

Southwest

FSCJ Kent Campus
3939 Roosevelt Blvd Room E-112
Jacksonville, FL 32205

6pm – 7:30pm

March 20, 2014

June 19, 2014

September 18, 2014

December 11, 2014

Northwest

Legends Center
5130 Soutel Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32208

6pm – 7:30pm

March 6, 2014

June 5, 2014

September 4, 2014

December 4, 2014

North

Oceanway Senior Center
Multi-purpose Room
12215 Sago Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32218

6pm – 7:30pm

January 30, 2014

April 24, 2014

July 31, 2014

October 30, 2014

Clay County

Orange Park Library
2054 Plainfield Avenue
Orange Park, FL 32073

January 23, 2014

May 29, 2014 *

July 22, 2014 *

November 20, 2014

Reply Reply All Forward

RE: Neighborhood Communication

Senterfitt, Dwain E. [Dwain.Senterfitt@jaxsheriff.or...]

To: Cook, Damian

Tuesday, January 28, 2014 5:11 PM

Damian,

There are several ways we communicate with neighborhoods such as participating in CPACs. We also have contact through over 1000 Neighborhood Watch programs throughout the city. One of the most effective ways we reach the community is through the Sheriff's Advisory Councils or ShAdCo. There are 20 ShAdCo groups throughout the city. We divide the city into 17 sectors and there is one ShAdCo in each sector, plus one for Edward Waters College, one for Jacksonville University and one for Baldwin. ShAdCo has over 3000 members citywide and each group meets regularly, usually every month, with one combined meeting for all members once each year. Also, every quarter, the Sheriff meets with the Chairs and Co-Chairs of each group. At the monthly meetings citizens talk to us about the issues they are facing in their geographic area. Members of JSO command staff are present and take down all concerns. The great part of the process is that at subsequent meetings, JSO personnel report out on what progress has been made on the issues presented to them at earlier meetings. It is a great accountability piece, and gives the members confidence that we are there to work with them.

Call me if this isn't clear enough, or if you have other questions.

Dwain

Dwain Senterfitt
Undersheriff
Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
501 East Bay Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32211
(904) 630-2229

From: Cook, Damian [mailto:DamianC@coj.net]

Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 12:07 PM

To: Senterfitt, Dwain E.

Subject: Neighborhood Communication

Dwain,

The Neighborhoods Committee would like some information on how the JSO communicates with citizens at the neighborhood level. Can you answer the following questions?



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About Neighborhood Councils

Many Los Angelenos are looking for ways to make a difference in their communities on the issues they care about most: crime, roads and streets, gangs and the economy. Neighborhood Council participants are empowered to advocate directly for real change in their communities. These Councils consist of residents, business owners, and property owners.

Local engagement is important because no one understands a neighborhood better than the people who live, work and play there. Neighborhood Councils are answering that need and strengthening democracy in Los Angeles by embracing and supporting the diversity of neighborhoods that comprise the City of Los Angeles.

Working together, Neighborhood Councils have generated success stories across the City – from community health clinics in Pico Union, to a greening strategy for Downtown, to addressing traffic and transportation issues in West LA.

Los Angelenos can get involved in EmpowerLA as much or as little as they like. From staying informed through our website, to attending local Neighborhood Council meetings, volunteering on Committees and/or running for a Board Member position, there's an engagement opportunity that meets everyone's needs and schedules.

As part of the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's responsibility is to provide operational support to and facilitate the sharing of resources among Certified Neighborhood Councils, including but not limited to, meeting and office space, office equipment and mail and communications in order to communicate among constituents, Certified Neighborhood Councils, City Departments and governing officials.

Since the inception of the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils, the operational needs of Neighborhood Council's continues to evolve and thus the Department has provided a list of additional resources which include acquiring translation, hiring temporary help, funding guidelines and conducting outreach. Below we are providing Neighborhood Councils with valuable tools in their daily operations.

What are Neighborhood Councils?

Neighborhood Councils are city-certified local groups made up of people who live, work, own property or have some other connection to a neighborhood. Neighborhood Council Board Members are elected or selected to their positions by the neighborhoods themselves.

Neighborhood Council Board size varies across the City from 7 to over 30 individuals depending on what the neighborhood believes will meet its needs. They hold regular meetings – at least one every three months. Many Councils hold meetings more often and have working committees as well.

Neighborhood Councils receive public funds of \$37,000 each year to support their activities. This may include creating events and programs that respond to the unique needs of their community or advocating on behalf of the issues they care about such as crime, roads and streets, the creation of safe spaces for children, gangs, and economic development. To learn more about Neighborhood Council success stories, [click here](#).

Representatives from Neighborhood Councils:

Meet with the Mayor to discuss priorities in the annual development of the City budget, prior to its submittal and approval by City Council.

Receive advance notice of issues and projects that are important to them and their neighborhoods so they can understand, discuss them, and voice the opinions of the neighborhood to the City before final decisions are made.

Neighborhood Councils represent neighborhoods with a minimum population of 20,000 people. The average population represented by a Neighborhood Council is 38,000 people.

There are currently 95 Neighborhood Councils across Los Angeles with more in development. Councils must establish bylaws and go through the certification process with

How to Form a Neighborhood Council?



Are you interested in forming a Neighborhood Council in your community? If so, we welcome your participation and look forward to working with you. The first step is to check if there is

the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment before they can operate.

already a Neighborhood Council servicing your community by clicking Where Is My Neighborhood Council? in the right hand column. If there isn't, you and your interested community stakeholders will need to prepare an application to go before the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners for certification. A community stakeholder is defined as those who live, work or own property in the neighborhood and also those who declare a stake in the neighborhood and affirm the factual basis for it. Some examples of factual basis stakeholders are people who frequent a restaurant, coffee shop, gas station or other businesses in a neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Council certification process takes between 6 months and a year depending on how much time you and other community stakeholders can dedicate.

Generally, the requirements for forming a Neighborhood Council include:

- Having no less than 20,000 residents within the desired Neighborhood Council boundary though exceptions do apply.
- Outreaching to the community to collect between 200 to 500 signatures from community stakeholders within the proposed Neighborhood Council boundaries.
- Preparing the proposed Neighborhood Council bylaws.
- Submitting the proposed Neighborhood Council financial accounting system.

Our staff will be happy to assist in the formation of your Neighborhood Council so please don't hesitate to contact us at (213) 978-1551 or email us at NCSupport@lacity.org.

Governing Documents

Because Neighborhood Councils are created by the Los Angeles City Charter, they are subject to many of the federal, state and local laws that govern other City departments. Every Neighborhood Council also has bylaws and other standing or procedural rules they follow, too. In addition, Neighborhood Councils must abide by laws preventing workplace violence, sexual harassment and discrimination.

The laws that apply to all Neighborhood Councils include the following:

- Americans with Disabilities Act – A federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to the operations of state and local governments.
- Brown Act – The Ralph M. Brown Act is a state law requiring open meetings from government agencies and applies to Neighborhood Council meetings.
- Conflict of Interest Laws - Various state and city laws to ensure that government officials are free from bias caused by their own financial interest so they may act in an impartial manner.
- Los Angeles City Charter – In 1999, the City Charter established the Neighborhood Council System and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment which supports the Neighborhood Councils "to promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs..." Charter Section 900.
- The Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils – This Plan details the workings of the Neighborhood Council system.
- Public Records Act - A state law providing the public access to government records. Neighborhood Councils must abide by a strict time line to respond to Public Records Act (PRA) requests.

Various local ordinances have also been enacted to establish the Neighborhood Council system.

- Ordinance 172728 -Created the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment following the passage of the City Charter.
- Ordinance 176704 - Established regulations to implement the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils.
- Ordinance 173184 – Created the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Fund.
- Ordinance 175937 – Transferred the responsibility for leasing and renting office and meeting space for Neighborhood Councils from the Department of General Services to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, thereby streamlining the acquisition of space for Neighborhood Councils.
- Ordinance 176477 – Exempts Neighborhood Councils from adopting a conflict of interest code and filing the Form 700 financial disclosure statements.

Best Practices

These Best Practices highlight the great work Neighborhood Councils do around the City and provide tips on how to replicate them in your neighborhood. Share your successful events with the rest of the Neighborhood Councils by contacting us at (213) 978-1551 or emailing NCSupport@lacity.org.

- [Addressing Traffic Concerns](#)
- [Community Festival](#)
- [Community Garden](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Getting a Dash Line](#)
- [Graffiti Reduction](#)
- [Health Fair](#)
- [Holiday Toy Giveaway](#)

Neighborhood Council Tools

EmpowerLA Leadership Academy: The EmpowerLA Leadership Institute is designed to help Neighborhood Council Board members and stakeholders within the community be more effective in making their voices heard and making a difference in their neighborhoods. Inspired by Carol Baker Tharp, past General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, the institute provides opportunities to learn the information, hone the skills, and nurture the relationships that lead to success for Neighborhood Councils. Ms. Tharp maintained the belief that civic engagement is the cornerstone of democracy and that empowering individuals can empower neighborhoods and improve quality of life for all residents of the City of Los Angeles. [Click here](#) for more details.

Filing a Community Impact Statement - In mid-2003, the City began a new system through which Neighborhood Councils can adopt Community Impact Statements that summarize its official position on City issues and have them printed directly on the meeting agendas. It's a unique and unprecedented way for each Neighborhood Council's voice to be known to the City Hall decision-makers and the world before a vote is taken. There are several ways to send Community Impact Statements to the City Clerk for inclusion on the agendas of the City Council, its committees, and City commissions. A paper version may be sent via postal mail, hand-delivery, fax or online at cityclerk.lacity.org/cis.

[Increasing Parking](#)

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Early Notification System (ENS) is an on-line system where stakeholders can subscribe and receive meeting agendas and special events announcement sent to their e-mailbox. To start your subscription, [click here](#).

EmpowerLA posts Neighborhood Council meeting agendas or a Neighborhood Council sponsored special event announcement on the City's website, please e-mail a copy of the document in Adobe Acrobat PDF format to: done.ncagendas@lacity.org. Please allow 7 business days to be posted. The Neighborhood Council is responsible for the document's content and accuracy. The NC agendas and NC sponsored special event announcements are available at <http://lacity.org/index.htm> under "City Meetings & Agendas" and "City Events Calendar".

LA City Clerk Connect - LACityClerk Connect is a web service offered by the Office of the City Clerk where the Council File Management System (CFMS) is readily accessible. CFMS (formerly known as Council File Index) is a your online access to a comprehensive file index and management system with a summary and details of all legislation considered and/or acted upon by the Los Angeles City Council. It is also a subscription service where you can receive automatic e-mail notifications and RSS feeds when a Council File is updated. To start searching and viewing City Council legislative records, [click here](#).

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Michael Hoffmann opposes at-large City Council set-up



Submitted by Mike Clark on January 28, 2014 - 8:49am

3+1 0

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Note to readers: The following was submitted by Michael Hoffmann. Due to space constraints, a shorter version of this piece was used in the Jan. 29 opinion pages.

It's a mistake for the average citizen to allow the wonks and wonkettes to dominate the current discussions under way at City Hall about consolidation.

True, most average citizens are unavailable for their meetings, which are held when most of us are at work. True, average citizens can go to the neighborhood meetings that are held at night, and contribute via email and phone calls. And, true that the wonks and wonkettes are more familiar with the ways and mores of Jacksonville city hall than average citizens.

Nevertheless, if you pose the question to average citizens, "Do you want a level electoral playing field and fair elections?" I believe that none would say "No." Yet the wonks and wonkettes continue to ignore the vote dilution that occurs in City Council elections as a consequence of having five at-large seats. This is the equivalent of ignoring the 800-pound animal in the room. "One man, one vote" is the measure of electoral equality in the United States. Regardless of how you parse it, vote dilution occurs when there is at-large representation, such as we have in Jacksonville.

Elimination of the at-large seats brings the city to a "level playing field" in electoral terms. A Task Force on Consolidated Government, charged with examining the Charter and suggesting improvements, is about to wrap up its public activities without taking serious note of the obvious and long-standing existence of vote dilution that occurs as a consequence of at-large representation. If nothing is done at this time, it will likely be another decade before the subject is addressed again.

All at-large systems of representation violate the "one man, one vote" standard for equal representation. The most obvious example of how this works in Jacksonville is At-large District 5 where a white Republican was elected countywide to "represent" an at-large district that is less than 20 percent white and 10 percent Republican. This occurred because votes from outside the district diluted the expressed wishes of district voters.

2011 At-Large District 5 Vote:

Precincts within bounds of at-large 5: Foy (23,254).....Lumb (6,348)

Precincts outside bounds of at-large 5: Foy (49,514).....Lumb (94,076)

Countywide vote for at-large 5: Foy (72,768).....Lumb (100,424)

Source: Supervisor of Elections

At-large elections don't always result in such egregious consequences as the Foy-Lumb race; but, in tandem with off-year elections that typically feature smaller voter turnouts, at-large elections consistently favor blocs of older, white, better-off, and better-educated voters.

The Consolidation charter that was agreed to by community consensus in 1967 called for 21 district representatives. The overwhelmingly white Legislative delegation altered that to the present 14 district and 5 at-large seats when it presented a Consolidation bill in Tallahassee.

Regardless of the intentions of the white delegation majority, the effect was to dilute the vote of African-Americans and voters of modest means. Moreover, 21 single-member districts would have resulted in smaller districts, which presumably would make access to elected officials easier for citizens.

Subsequently, only one African-American, the late Earl Johnson, a powerful black voice and a Democrat in favor of Consolidation, was elected to an at-large seat (twice) until the voters insisted that a residency requirement be added because of a concern that at-large seats were being monopolized by white elites.

This electoral alteration did not change the at-large voting system, which continues to dilute the vote of African-Americans and all voters of modest means. Since then, three African-Americans have been elected to at-large seats. Two ran as Republicans, Gwen Chandler-Thompson and Glorious Johnson, and one as a Democrat, Kimberly Daniels. In other words, 11 percent of at-large seats since Consolidation have been held by African-Americans, two Republicans and two Democrats, although they constitute some 30 percent of Duval County's population and are overwhelmingly registered as Democrats. This is the consequence of vote dilution via at-large elections (as well as off-year elections that reduce voter turnout.)

Robert Cassanello's 2013 book - "To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville" - covers race relations from Reconstruction until 1920, including voting. In this period African-Americans exercised the franchise and held public positions, but gradually were eliminated from meaningful participation by white elites.

Three episodes encapsulate this process: the loss of home rule (1888-1892) that occurred in response to a black majority controlling the ballot box in 1888; the 1906 gerrymandering of Jacksonville voting precincts that eliminated the last majority-black precinct and any hope of African-Americans holding a seat on the City Council until the 1960s, and the passage of the Florida Legislature of a white-primary law that banned African-Americans from voting in the Democratic Party primaries until the 1940s. (See my 2013 Times-Union book review of Cassanello online at Jacksonville.com.)

What occurred in Tallahassee in 1967 was a continuation of efforts by native white elites to minimize the vote of African-Americans and those of modest means, such as myself. Elimination of the at-large seats produces a level playing field in local elections by ending vote dilution. Having 19 representatives from 19 single-member districts lowers the ratio of voters per representative, which makes local government more accountable to their district electorates. Jacksonville needs a robust economy and racial comity; and the two are connected at many points.

The existing at-large seats are vestiges of a century and more of white suppression of votes by African-Americans and people of modest means. Let's have a level playing field in politics, and then we will be freer to work on the economy. I don't know why the wonks and wonkettes have turned a blind eye to the 800-pound animal in the room. What is clear to me is that white legislators in 1967 created the at-large system and, without having been in the room where the deal was done, I believe it is fair to assume that the white majority was seeking an advantage. Thus, contemporary whites bear the burden of eliminating the vote dilution that takes place -- not the African- Americans and people of modest means who suffer from it.

A committee of Governance and Mission has been formed to discuss the information, research and public input that have been presented to the full Task Force, and present its findings in February to the whole body. This is the point for the average citizen to weigh in and let the Task Force and local elected officials that we want our fair city to be more than just a pretty face but also a place where fairness and transparency reign.

(To express a view on this subject, contact the Task Force membership at DamianC@coj.net.)

Michael Hoffmann is a historian who grew up in Jacksonville and now lives in Atlantic Beach.

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