

March 19, 2014

Dear Chairwoman Coughlin and CM Boyer;

We, the CPAC Chairs, are concerned that the *Consolidation Review Task Force, Neighborhoods and Planning Subcommittee* has no current or past CPAC Chairs as members, and therefore no firsthand knowledge of how a CPAC operates. The subcommittee is making major decisions concerning CPACs with insufficient information.

Further, prior to our meeting with you we were not aware of any attempts by your Subcommittee to request testimony from current CPAC members, as you have requested testimony from other neighborhood spokespersons and organizations. We believe this was a grave oversight.

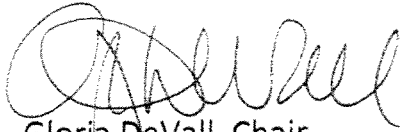
We understand that you are interested in solving the problem of the City ignoring its' neighborhoods. By not requesting input from CPAC membership before recommending drastic changes to its structure, you are mirroring the problem that your subcommittee wishes to solve.

We have read the minutes from your meetings, and the motions made therein. Please understand that we would like to work with you, and are dedicated to increasing neighborhood input to the City as well. To that end, we have attached "Comments and Recommendations" from the current CPAC Chairs regarding the motions made by your Subcommittee. We would appreciate your examination and consideration of these recommendations when preparing your report to the Consolidation Task Force. Thank you.

Respectfully,
The undersigned CPAC Chairmen

Chairwoman Coughlin & CM Boyer
RE: Consolidation Review Task Force,
Neighborhoods and Planning Subcommittee

March 19, 2014



Gloria DeVall, Chair
Urban Core CPAC, Dist. 1



Michael Anania, Chair
Greater Arlington/Beaches CPAC, Dist. 2



Jim Hill, Chair
Southeast CPAC, Dist. 3



Dewey Walker, Chair
Southwest CPAC, Dist. 4



John Pittman, Chair
Northwest CPAC, Dist. 5



Bobby Taylor, Chair
North CPAC, Dist. 6

Attached: "Comments and Recommendations"

Comments and Recommendations from CPAC Chairs in Response to Subcommittee Motions

On March 14, 2014, the Citizen Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) Chairs and/or Vice Chairs held a noticed meeting to discuss the recent Sub-Committee on Neighborhoods, Infrastructure, Planning, & the St. John's River's proposed motions to be presented to the complete Consolidation Task Force in the near future. The Chairs carefully reviewed each motion listed on the February 24, 2014 minutes, the following meeting minutes of March 6th, and the handout entitled "Suggested Recommendations" distributed during the March 13th meeting. Following are the Chairs' comments and recommendations:

CPACs have been in existence for over twenty years and are a predictable place for citizens, developers, and government officials to discuss relevant issues. Though CPACs have, in the past, had much more staff, they have never had budgets. This increased level of staffing allowed for a faster, and more dedicated flow of information between CPACs & City government. The current staff of two Coordinators and a Manager is insufficient to handle the needs of six CPACs. In addition, since the City does virtually no marketing of CPACs to neighborhoods, the CPACs are left to market themselves. This lack of budget results in insufficient recruitment and training of members on the intricacies of city government. Furthermore, not all CPACs have the same subcommittees, and not all similarly named subcommittees perform the same functions. A unified structure would ensure that all CPACs have essentially the same subcommittees, and breadth, and perform the same functions.

1. We therefore recommend a staff of one Coordinator and one Planner 2 within the Planning Department to be dedicated to each CPAC. We also recommend an appropriate budget, the availability of legal staff from the OGC, regular training, and a unified structure within each CPAC.

The current CPAC districts are aligned with the city's planning districts. This allows for staff reports from individuals in city departments who are assigned to those districts, and avoids the confusion of CPAC boundaries falling across the lines of planning districts. The current Chairs do not believe these areas are too large.

2. We therefore recommend that if the City Council decides to change the size and geographic boundaries of the 6 planning districts, then CPACs, by association, shall mirror those boundaries. This association will provide continuity within the Planning Department as CPAC's original intent was to be advisors to the Planning Department.

Because the acronym "CPAC" is also used by the Conservative Political Action Conference, it has been suggested by the Subcommittee that our CPAC's name be different to avoid confusion. The suggested names have varied from meeting to meeting. We have not experienced the confusion surmised by the Subcommittee.

3. We therefore recommend continuing the name of "Citizen Planning Advisory Committee", (CPAC) as we believe a name change would promote confusion among the citizens. The name has been in use for over twenty years without confusion with any other organization. A name change could lead to confusion and apathy from the citizens of Jacksonville.

We do not believe that Neighborhood Councils (NCs), as described in previous meetings of the Subcommittee, are viable. Based on our collective experience with citizen participation and CPACs, they will not engender any survivable level of participation, because existing neighborhood organizations will see them as simply another layer of government between them and the City. Remember that CPAC members represent neighborhood organizations now, so installing another neighborhood organization between them and the existing CPAC is pointless. Furthermore, the smaller the forum, the more apt that forum is to be dominated by one or two people, to the exclusion of all others.

4. We therefore recommend that the current organization of CPACs, made up of representatives from registered neighborhoods, businesses, and others, be continued, and that there be no additional layer of bureaucracy added between the existing neighborhoods and the City.

Holding CPAC meetings on a quarterly basis will result in the demise of CPACs. There are very few items that a CPAC currently addresses which can be dealt with on a quarterly basis. Land use changes, rezoning, and ordinances that are handled by the City Council in bi-weekly meetings cannot be deliberated within CPAC in a timely fashion on a quarterly schedule.

5. We therefore recommend that CPAC meetings be continued on a monthly basis. Quarterly meetings will not be timely enough to address Land Use issues, nor any issue relating to an ordinance. Additionally, monthly meetings allow regular predictability by the working public.

The Subcommittee has recommended that Neighborhoods Councils (NC) be included in the CIP process. They have also recommended the inclusion of two representatives from these NCs to the CIP Steering/Scoring Board. This board would be comprised of the Executive Director of the Library, the Chief Administrative Officer, two Mayoral appointees, designees by the Planning Department, the Public Works Department, the Environmental Quality Division, the Health Department, and the Sheriff. Thus the neighborhoods would be represented in their quest for CIP dollars by 2 of the 11 members of this board. Additionally the Subcommittee suggests that each NC present their specific needs to the Board. If as has been deliberated by the Subcommittee the size of the NC will be relatively small, representing 20,000 people then a great number (40 or more) of NCs will present their specific needs to this board, This will dilute the effective voice of the neighborhoods, rather than giving them any type of real involvement.

6. We recommend that the newly formed CIP Steering/Scoring Board shall have a representative from each CPAC. This will promote a real entry level flow of information between CPACs and the Executive Branch. This real involvement will create interest within the communities affected and help to drive participation from the citizens & government.

The Subcommittee's recommendations for the automatic "move up" of CIP projects and the need for two thirds of the City Council vote to remove an item is not in the best interests of the neighborhoods affected; a simple majority is sufficient. This added procedure to remove an item from the CIP will create a burdensome process to remove a "bad" project, or one no longer needed. The automatic aspect will be equally onerous on the average citizen, who does not understand or isn't involved in the daily functions of city government. These two recommendations also diminish the requirements and responsibilities of the Executive Branch and unduly tie the fiscal hands of the legislature, as once an item makes it on to the CIP it's on for good.

7. We therefore recommend that a simple majority of the City Council be sufficient to remove a CIP project at any time.

The subcommittee recommends that electronic communication of ideas from the City to the citizenry should expand (see Mind Mixer presentation). We are in agreement with the subcommittee.

8. We therefore recommend that that the City should provide more relevant channels of communication for greater citizen participation.

The Subcommittee's desire is that the neighborhoods, through CPACs, have more input into the administration of the city. Currently, CPACs are relegated to sending advisory letters regarding pending ordinances. These letters have varying degrees of importance within the Planning Department, and individual Council members. Further, the depth and degree to which CPACs are given timely information by the Planning Department and the City to render opinions varies greatly from CPAC to CPAC.

9. We therefore recommend that CPACs shall be provided timely, consistent reports of all legislation and land use issues that affect their respective districts. The decisions/recommendations rendered from CPAC's internal process shall be given at least the same "weight" as currently given the Planning Dept recommendations. Deliberations by the City Council (and subcommittees) shall include these recommendations as a matter of report and record. After a vote is taken by the City Council and sub committees, a return report shall be provided to each CPAC that will include the vote count by representative, a detailed summary of the deliberations at that committee or full council, and the reasons why those CPAC recommendations were supported or denied.

The Planning Commission has a letter of recommendation from each CPAC whose "weight", as with the City Council, depends on the attitude of the individual Commissioners. There are items that come before this forum where the Commissioners are not familiar with the area in question, or the circumstances surrounding any opposition. A timed, three minute speech by a CPAC member is generally insufficient to render an equitable decision.

10. We therefore recommend that the Planning Commission (PC) shall have a CPAC representative as a full voting member of the Commission. This representative will serve a one year term. The pool from which this member is selected will rotate through CPACs, and be the LUZ Chair or its designee. As the PC is comprised of professionals within the land use and zoning field, so as to not unduly burden the PC, an appropriate level of training shall be provided to each CPAC's representative. This representative shall communicate freely and often with the other LUZ Chairs to be familiar with items appearing on the PC agenda or trends that may affect other districts.