

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON JACKSONVILLE’S NEIGHBORBOOD BLIGHT**

**June 5, 2014**

**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**

**117 W. Duval St., 1st Floor**

**Don Davis Room**

**Attendance:** CM Denise Lee (Chair), CM Bill Bishop, CM John Crescimbeni, CM Johnny Gaffney, CM Jim Love, Karen Bowling

**Excused:**

**Also**: Robert Campbell – Council Auditor’s Office;Peggy Sidman – General Counsel Office; Dan MacDonald – ECA District 8; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Lee called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

CM Lee began the meeting with introductions from the committee and attendees. CM Lee gave accolades Ms. Williams, Ms. Robinson and the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., for their overall support and commitment to participating in resolving in the City’s blight issues.

**Minutes**

Motion/2nd to approve May 7th and May 22nd minutes (Approve d 7-0)

**Bus Tour Follow-up**

The bus tour on May 22nd was successful although faced with a challenge from Legal and Ethics. A legal opinion was submitted opposing the attendance of the Council Members being on the bus due to a past situation. CM Lee commented that another bus trip would be scheduled because it allows for various departments, citizens and other interested people to see where the needs are in the community. In the interim, **Ms. Sidman was requested to research the process for obtaining an opinion from Tallahassee.** The committee’s overall consensus regarding the bus tour is that going into the field is necessary and helpful in addressing the blight issues in the City.CM Love was recognized for following the bus tour in his own vehicle with his ECA, Kevin Kuzel.

**JTA Update –** Lisa Darnall provided a brief summary of the tour from JTA’s perspective. She provided a spreadsheet with the issues/concerns and resolutions. The twelve items listed have all been corrected or resolved with the exception of three. JTA has met with Pilgrim Corp, the agency that handles the JCCI benches. They will be conducting an inventory assessment and review of all bus stops. This process will assist in the improvement program with the leased benches. Ms. Darnall expects to provide a report in 30 days. The assessment will notate areas where benches may be impeding the sidewalks and checking ADA compliance. **CM Lee requested an update in two weeks on assessment.** Ms. Darnall commented that assessment had not started, however, she would keep CM Lee updated.

NOTE: Reports should have a cover page with department name and topic. Each page should be numbered.

**Old Business**

1. **Update on Public Works plan for long and short term goals**

Mr. Jeff Foster reported that the illegal dumping plan originally had short, medium and long term goals. The medium to long term goals have to be determined through the budgeting process for approval of policy and/or direction change because of the detailed involvement of other entities such as JSO Task Force that would require recommendations. Mr. Foster provided a summary of actions taken towards the short term goals. There was extensive conversation regarding the high- resolution cameras as it relates to retrieval of data, placement, cost, etc… **CM Lee requested that Flash Point Company be added to the next meeting’s agenda for a presentation.** Mr. Foster reported that JSO officers are being trained regarding illegal dumping and reporting. **CM requested that Mr. Foster submit the schedule of collections routes to include the five high dumping areas.** Out of thefive high dumping areas, Spring Grove Avenue from 26th Street W to 33rd Street W is the most excessive. There have been two arrests made. Committee members inquired about restitution and notification of media once arrests have been made. **Mr. Foster confirmed that he would submit restitution for the City; follow the cases to gather information about the violators’ penalties; and develop a process to ensure that the media is informed of arrests.** CM Lee commented that Ms. Bowling is working on the ongoing PR campaign to inform citizens. **Mr. Foster agreed to meet with Mr. Jim Robinson and Ms. Bowling in developing a protocol to notify media after arrest.** It was suggested that committee receive a presentation from a vendor that offers live streaming in order to compare pricing, resolutions, etc. as it pertains to surveillance. Mr. Foster explained that the camera recommendations were based on the most cost effective option which utilizes current staff to handle and minimizing the need for additional infrastructure. **CM Lee requested a spreadsheet of all the possible options including details and associated cost. Additionally as a priority, she suggested that PW Department contact JSO and other interested agencies to schedule a meeting to discuss assistance with funding the cameras. Council Auditor’s Office was asked to research possible funding sources.**

There was discussion about an established set plan to address blight. Mr. Foster is expected to produce final recommendations as to the actions needed to handle illegal dumping including legislation, if necessary. The objective is to ensure that a permanent plan is implemented to deal with this issue**. CM Crescimbeni suggested the committee consider speaking with the judicial branch of government to update them on the City’s priority to hold violators accountable in an effort to keep Jacksonville clean.**

CM Crescimbeni shared his appreciation to Solid Waste employees for their efforts at the Tire & Sign Buy Back Event along with their daily hard work and commitment to the City. The committee agreed to host a barbeque appreciation for the Solid Waste employees. **CM Crescimbeni and Ms. Bowling will co-chair the barbeque sub-committee. CM Lee commented that additional pictures from the Buy Back event needed to be placed on the City’s website.**

1. **JEA Report on Taylor Field Road**

Ms. Renee Goode reported that JEA inspected five properties on Taylor Field Road. Four of the five are current and have active service. The fifth home has not had any utility service since November 2013. This may be the result of customer moving out and the residence remains vacant.

1. **Legislation relating to Section 656.407 (access for emergency vehicles)**

Ms. Peggy Sidman reported that the legislation was a response of Taylor Field Road blight issue. It requires developers to address ingress and egress for public safety vehicles and municipal services vehicles. TEU and PHS approved the bill during this cycle. The bill is scheduled for Planning Commission on 6/5; public hearing at Council meeting on 6/10; and public hearing at LUZ committee meeting on 6/17.

1. **Update on hand car washes**

Mr. Calvin Burney provided a draft of legislation for review. The draft includes definitions and permissible zoning districts for car washes. There were four specific districts suggested. Automated car wash facilities would be allowed by right in CCG-1, CCG-2, IL and IH Districts. Manual car washes by definition would be permissible in the same zoning districts by exception only. The exception for manual car washes will require application to the Planning and Development Department. This will permit the City to apply conditions, if necessary. There was discussion regarding specific controls to maintain a temporary or one-day permit for civic organizations. There needs to be clarification of manual car washes as it pertains to facilities. **Mr. Burney will contact CM Crescimbeni once the meeting has been scheduled with Ms. Kim Scott and Ms. Sidman to work on this legislation.**

These items were not covered and table for next meeting.

* Discuss shortening time it takes for departments to report violations to Regulatory Compliance (continuance from May 7th meeting)
* Curtis Hart will present a written report of his report about Taylor Field Road
* Report from Solid Waste about the additional collection sites for hazardous waste sites around the county and ways to publicize those sites and collection dates

**New Business**

Mr. Paul Soares reported that schools within Districts 2, 7, 8, 9 and 14 were reviewed for concerns. It was determined that blight on a school campus involved fence lines, landscaping, retention ponds and exterior structure. In observing the four categories, the grading system was good, adequate, marginal, and action required. Mr. Soares showed the committee a power point presentation with pictures and the grading scale of all the schools in above listed districts. **CM Lee requested Mr. Soares to submit the same report for the remaining schools in the other districts so every Council Member has the information. Mr. Dan Macdonald will forward the power point presentation to the committee members and all guests on sign in sheet with email address.**

**Public Comment**

Ms. Ola Williams expressed her concerns about the lack of support of Long Branch Elementary School. She stated that is need for improved quality of care and service for Long Branch students. The school has not had adequate playground equipment in 30 years. The current playground has been shut down by the principal due to pending danger of the children; the equipment is wooden. Ms. Williams mentioned sending pictures to Dr. Vitti which resulted in the District visiting the school. However, there has been no action in providing the Long Branch students a safe recreational environment. Ms. Williams states that she has been requesting assistance for Long Branch since 2003. **CM Lee requested that Mr. Macdonald contact Mr. Soares and schedule him to discuss Long Branch at the next meeting. CM Gaffney requested to be copied on emails.** CM Gaffney commented he would be contacting the School Board Member for Long Branch.

CM Lee reminded the audience that the committee had two main goals/objectives:

* Develop a permanent solution that addresses blight
* Establish a PR campaign for the public

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division (904) 630-1679

Posted 06.11.14 5:00 p.m.