

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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

**BLIGHT MEETING MINUTES**

**June 19, 2014**

**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**

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

**Don Davis Room**

**Attendance:** CM Denise Lee (Chair), CM John Crescimbeni, CM Jim Love

**Excused:** CM Jones, CM Bishop

**Also**: Kirk Sherman – Council Auditor’s Office;Sandra Stockwell– General Counsel Office; Leeann Krieg – ECA AL4; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Lee called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

CM Lee began the meeting with introductions from the committee and attendees.

**Minutes**

Motion/2nd to approve June 5th minutes – Crescimbeni/Love (Approved 3-0)

**Old Business**

1. **A short written report on Taylor Field Road – Connie Holt**

Ms. Holt, ECA District 11, provided an update on Taylor Field Road. The developer, Curtis Hart, is in the process of building an area for trash behind the development. Mr. Hart has to obtain a new permit because the area designated for the garbage pad is wetlands. Ms. Holt reported that the St. Johns River Management has consented to approving the permit. **CM Lee requested that Mr. Hart submit a letter that provides the status of Taylor Field and an expected length of time to complete the project. Mr. Jeff Foster agreed to contact Mr. Hart and inform him of the letter request. Ms. Holt agreed to coordinate the distribution of the letter to Taylor Field Road neighbors to keep them updated about the issue.**

Ms. Holt briefed the committee on an additional concern in the area where a resident was identified and warned by JSO that of his illegal dumping at the existing location. Mr. Foster explained that this particular situation had been corrected; and the process/approach for handling illegal dumping is to educate, warn and cite. **CM Lee has requested that all written documentation concerning this property is forwarded to Ms. Holt.**

**Mr. Mark Anmitto suggested that the letter from developer is recorded in the home owner’s association codes, covenant and restrictions so that new residents are properly informed.**

1. **Code Enforcement update of Operation Urban Blight Enforcement Activities – Robert Prado**

The statistics reported for Operation Urban Blight are from Oct 1, 2013 to June 15, 2014. The main highlights include hiring, training and deployment of two part-time (24 hours) Litter Sign Enforcement Officers through the Litter Sign Trust Fund; 874 paying citations issued; and $37,630 in fines collected. The officers work primarily on the weekends. The handout distributed list violations according to zones and neighborhoods. To date, Municipal Code has had 9537 cases; 7498 have been completed; and 1859 remain active. Mr. Prado explained that a large majority of the active cases are properties with unsafe structures (a longer for process to demolish) or their in Special Magistrate for additional compliance request or assessed a fine. **CM Lee would like a breakdown of active cases by case types along with number of properties with historic designation. In addition, she wants a copy of the budget and the pay rate of officers. Mr. Prado agreed to submit maps on future reports to show where cpac zones are located. CM Crescimbeni requested a comparison of last fiscal year numbers to this fiscal year.**

Mr. Jay Higbee explained that he was working on a subcommittee with Karen Bowling that was dealing with properties with liens**. Mr. Prado will make contact with Chief Dave McDaniel’s to assist with gathering the specifics (owner cleared vs. City cleared) of the completed cases. This information will be provided to Mr. Higbee.**

Ms. Evie McCoy voiced her concern that Municipal Code has not addressed any of her complaints of a business on Commerce Street in the Arlington area. She presented pictures and a copy of the business license associate to the property. The business owner’s name is Mark Anania. She explained that her interaction with Code Enforcement Officer(s) regarding complaints against her and reporting the business address has not been positive or productive.

Mr. Hosea Small voiced his concern about 1767 East 24th Street. He presented pictures of the property depicting overgrown grass with extended height. The report was called in on May 23rd. The Care System number is attached to the pictures. **CM Lee requested that Ms. Kimberly Scott and Mr. Prado research McCoy and Small’s complaints and correct the situations accordingly. Ms. Scott and Mr. Prado were requested to exchange information with the citizens and keep them updated regarding the properties**. **CM Crescimbeni** **inquired with Mr. Prado about the status of the property on Commerce Street and zoning associated with outside storage of junk cars. CM Love requested research in reference to the zoning as it pertains to fencing to determine if the chain fence is appropriate or an opaque wall is needed around the property**. Ms. Scott stated that a full report will be provided at the next meeting to include pictures along with what Code Enforcement has done and could do better. She provided an explanation of the systematic procedure regarding care issues. Complaints are inspected; notice left on property and a certified letter is sent to the owner. This portion of the process is allotted 18 days. On the 19th day, CE Officer(s) returns to re-inspect the property. If it has not been cleared, nuisance complaints are forwarded to Mowing & Landscape Division for nuisance abatement. Contractors have ten business days to complete the work. Additionally, unsafe structures are given thirty (30) days to correct. If non-compliance continues, the case is forwarded to the Special Magistrate.

1. **Blight Report on Schools – Paul Soares**

Mr. Paul Soares prepared a power point presentation of a review done on school campuses as it relates to blight. This presentation is a supplement to his report provided on June 5th. The schools presented are in Districts 1, 3,4,5,6,10,11,12, and 13. The categories reviewed for blight concerns involve 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 explained that Duval County has 159 unique schools. There may be a facility that has two specific schools on separate levels; however, for the purpose of this report the campus is counted once and determined a unique school. He further commented that PTA involvement and principal leadership contributes significantly to how a school’s landscaping is maintained. Mr. Soares confirmed that the schools were listed according to the new Council District boundaries. **CM Lee requested that Mr. Dave McDaniel look into what the City can do to assist with right-of-way issues at schools such as the one at Seabreeze Elementary.**

CM Lee stated that a citizen shared her comments at the last meeting concerning the playground at Long Branch Elementary School. CM Lee commented that she does have pictures that need to be forwarded to DCPS. Mr. Soares provided an update regarding Long Branch Elementary. $35,000 has been designated and allocated to replace the playground this year. Mr. Soares stated pictures should be routed through the superintendent‘s email.

1. **Discussion of Flash Point Surveillance Camera – Jeff Foster**

Mr. Foster reported that the City currently uses Trail Cams for surveillance. The department is recommending purchasing five (5) cameras from Q-Star Technology. **CM Crescimbeni requested a more definitive price range for the particular camera and features. He wants information regarding smartphone activation and research on other companies. CM Lee requested that Officer Dave Matsick begin to attend meetings.** There was extensive discussion regarding safety of equipment and researching other manufacturers for options. Mr. Foster stated that he is awaiting feedback from the City of Dayton regarding their recent purchase of cameras. **CM Love suggested that department consider a variety of cameras. CM Lee appointed CM Love to chair the subcommittee for surveillance cameras to include determining funding options.**

**CM Lee reported that the committee is shifting into a task force format next fiscal year and three citizens will be appointed to serve. As a task force, the committee will be allowed to participate in activities such as the bus tours. CM Lee requested Mr. Foster provide a report on the process of how trash, limbs, etc..., are picked up in the community. Mr. Foster stated he will submit an action plan to address pickups with the report at the next meeting.**

1. **Funding Cameras – Kirk Sherman**

Mr. Sherman stated that the funding is largely dependent on the completion of which cameras will be purchased. Depending on the amount of frontend cost, the funds may be able to come out of the current department budget or phased in over time. Mr. Sherman will work with CM Love on the subcommittee.

1. **Barbeque for Public Works Employees – CM Crescimbeni**

CM Crescimbeni reported that he and Karen Bowling have had conflicting schedules and have not met yet. Mr. Foster confirmed that the employees wanted a family event on a weekend. **CM Crescimbeni requested Mr. Foster to provide him with a head count of attendees.**

1. **Schedule of Collection Routes of Five Most Frequently Dump Sites – Jeff Foster**

Mr. Foster reported there is one truck designated for blight pickup. The truck goes to the schedule location prior to servicing targeted zip codes. The schedule covers illegal dumping in prone areas.

**Mondays** – Langley St from Henrietta to Automobile Drive; 23rd St W and Almeda Street

**Tuesdays** – Old Kings Road at St. Clair Street (Grand Crossing); Dunmire Avenue from Moncrief Road W to Federal Street

**Wednesdays** – Spring Grove Avenue from 26th Street W to 33rd Street W; 45th and Doeboy Street

**Thursdays** – Lem Turner Road and Riverview Street; Federal Street and Patterson Avenue

**Fridays** – 110th Street and Jammes Road

1. **Additional Collection Sites for Hazardous Material & Publicizing Sites – Jeff Foster**

Mr. Foster submitted a list of proposed sites adequate enough to host a household hazardous waste event. The department plans to host two additional events per year in the NW section of City for the total of 11 events per year starting with FY 14-15. Mr. Foster recommended that Lonnie Miller Regional Park as the additional site. Each event cost between $5,000-$10,000 for labor, disposal and recycling. Mr. Foster reported that the Public Affairs Office sends out over 800 media notices over three days prior to each event. Additional advertisement consist of posting on [www.coj.net](http://www.coj.net) and Solid Waste websites; promotional segments through local TV stations; distribution of information to CPACS and neighborhood database email blasts; informational handouts detailing dates/location of upcoming HHHW remote events; in-house PSAs through Access 99 TV; social media posts on COJ Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts; yearly mailers by residential haulers and COJ residential; and dedicated TV/radio advertisements.

The committee agreed to accept Lonnie Miller Regional Park as the additional site for collection of hazardous material. **CM Lee requested Mr. Foster submits a chart for this event with options, similar to the report previously submitted for the Tire Buy Back event. The report should include proposed PSAs and event costs.** The committee was opposed to direct mailing. **CM Crescimbeni suggested that information about events be tagged on back of haulers yearly mailer.**

These items were not covered and table for next meeting.

* Discuss shortening time it takes for departments to report violations to Regulatory Compliance – Paul Martinez
* Restitution report for blight violators and develop a method to report results to Media – Jeff Foster

**New Business**

CM Lee commented that committee will discuss main thoroughfares in the City. There needs to be a permanent schedule established by Mowing & Landscaping Division to maintain regular maintenance. **Mr. McDaniel is requested to submit a status report on the schedule for thoroughfares at the next meeting. Mr. Foster will present a status update of the schedule for a permanent trash pickup plan.**

**Public Comment**

Jeneen Sanders shared that she reported a nuisance complaint (CN#2014 -107609) and to date no action has been taken. Ms. Sanders has made several calls; however, the call center has not notated each interaction with the public. She inquired about the process after calls are made and whether citizens have to continuously call in blighted lots. Ms. Sanders reported that on a previous occasion the lot was cleared the contractors damaged her mother’s gate. To date, there has not been any resolution involving of the gate. **CM Lee requested that Ms. Sanders’ complaint be added to research by Ms. Scott, Mr. Prado and Mr. McDaniel.**

Mr. Small reported additional concerns about the lack of care of citizens’ property. He also commented about incidents were contractors have not provided quality service.

Alison Good discussed the auction process of boarded up houses. She was encouraging the committee to engage in revitalization of neighborhoods; and exploring other options rather demolishing older houses in resolving blight issues. Her concern is the neighborhoods will be lost to numerous vacant lots and scattered houses.

Mr. Michael Price commented that everyone should get involved in cleaning up and doing something with the neighborhoods to prevent violators from returning. He suggested that homes aren’t just boarded up but renovated into a facility that would be beneficial to the environment and community such as homeless shelters. Mr. Price is 16 years old11th grader at William M. Raines Senior High School majoring in science. He is working in the Mayor’s Summer Job Program and assigned to Public Affairs Office. The committee commended Mr. Price for his comments and interests; and encouraged him to continue in pursuing his education; and become more involved in the community.

Mr. Paul Martinez suggested that the City consider an award for citizens that report illegal dumping that may lead to an arrest. This campaign could be called Dump Stoppers. **CM Lee appointed Mr. Martinez to develop the initiative and provide a report.**

Mr. Higbee stated that community involvement is very essential to the improvement of neighborhoods. He was contacted about an organization assisting with clean up as a form of community service. Ms. Scott explained that it was a great idea; however, it was a huge liability risk. She suggested that Risk Management involved in the discussions. **CM Lee requested Ms. Scott to work with Mr. Higbee to obtain information regarding this matter.** CM Lee reported that the Council would be under the leadership of a new president by the next meeting and the committee may have new members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

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

Posted 06.25.14 12:00 p.m.