

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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

**NEIGHBORBOOD BLIGHT MEETING MINUTES**

**August 6, 2014**

**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**

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

**Don Davis Room**

**Attendance:** Council Members Denise Lee (Chair), John Crescimbeni, Bill Gulliford, Warren Jones (arr. 10:28a), Jim Love

**Excused:** Council Members Greg Anderson, Bill Bishop

**Also**: Karen Bowling – Mayor’s Office; Peggy Sidman– General Counsel Office; Dan Macdonald – ECA Dist. 8; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Lee called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

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

**Minutes**

Motion/2nd to approve June 19th minutes – Crescimbeni/Gulliford (Approved 4-0)

CM Lee provided an overview of her meeting with Sheriff Rutherford. They discussed various items including the human blight, Operation Cease Fire press conference and surveillance cameras. She reported Sheriff Rutherford wants to involve more patrols to monitor illegal dumping. He is willing to take over surveillance of illegal dumping from under Public Works. **CM Lee requested the subcommittee to continue discussions with Sheriff’s Office to solidify Sheriff Rutherford’s offer**.

**Old Business**

1. JSO to purchase cameras – Jim Robinson

Mr. Robinson reported meeting with Chief Ivey. They discussed purchasing cameras in bulk to receive discount. He stated economically it would be best for purchasing power to be on same system with JSO. However, QStar does not meet all of JSO needs and requirements. Therefore, JSO should take lead in making this decision. Mr. Robinson believes his meeting and CM Lee’s meeting are in conjunction with JSO assuming responsibility for illegal dumping.

1. Top 10 Illegal Dumping Locations – Jeff Foster

Mr. Foster reported the list was compiled from historical statistics, litter crews and illegal dumping supervisor(s). Citizens needing to dispose of construction and demolition debris can take materials to the Old Kings Road Landfill; garbage can be taken to Trail Ridge Landfill; or call 630-CITY (2489) to have picked up. Mr. Foster stated a brochure will be distributed next year to educate citizens on options for disposing of waste. **CM Gulliford suggested other viable options to satellite locations be considered for citizens.**

There was extensive discussion regarding transfer station, household hazardous waste locations and dumping sites. Mr. Foster commented citizens can dispose of materials at Trail Ridge on Saturdays for $1. CM Gulliford commented information should be publicized better. It should be noted 2675 Commonwealth Avenue is a permanent household hazardous waste site. **CM Lee requested Mr. Robinson provide: 1) a detailed report on the process, locations for dumping waste, and what items can be disposed; 2) a report on satellite locations and options; and 3) list of top 20 illegal prone sites with districts listed and map(s) attached.**

1. Cost Savings regarding QStar system – Jeff Foster

This topic was discussed in Mr. Robinson’s report. The suggestion is that JSO be allowed to take over the responsibility of monitoring illegal dumping. Mr. Foster reported according to data collected from internet sources and reports for cities in the USA with similar populations, the utilization of a security camera for illegal dumping and prosecution indicated a 35% average drop in repeat dumping instances. Therefore, the City’s cost savings would equate to $131,250 by adopting a surveillance system.

1. Liens and Fines – Karen Bowling & Kimberly Scott

#1 Ms. Bowling gave an overview of the committee’s tasks to review snipe signs and property fines. Ms. Scott provided the justification for a fee increase on snipe signs. Current fee does not cover related enforcement costs nor is it consistent with other Florida municipalities. She provided a chart with three options for fee increase. **CM Jones requested a legal opinion on due process for rescinding Certificate of Use (COU) of violators of non-payment of fines**. **CM Crescimbeni suggested that the word “fines” is used instead of “fees”.** Ms. Bowling commented the subcommittee is working on a snipe sign brochure as a marketing plan to sign companies to be updated about City rules.

Motion/2nd to proceed immediately with development of legislation to implement new fine structure: 1st Offense - $150; 2nd offense - $300; 3rd offense - $500; 4th offense - $500; 5th and each thereafter - $500; plus court cost. – Crescimbeni/Gulliford (5-0)

#2 Ms. Scott stated the review of property fines was an effort to encourage owners to correct outstanding violations and responsibly maintain their properties; and to collect outstanding fines. She provided an explanation of nuisance abatement liens; demolition liens; administrative fine/liens; and paying citations. The subcommittee recommendations include obtaining a collection agency or designate a division within City to be responsible for collecting outstanding liens and paying citations; covert administrative liens to Final Judgments; and develop and implement collection procedures for paying citations.

**CM Gulliford requested topic be extended to next meeting and will share an email with committee relative to possible negative impacts.** Mr. Jay Higbee commented that final judgments affect real and personal property. It prevents the owner from selling or borrowing money on any property without dealing with Final Judgments. **The subcommittee will provided a more detailed report at the next meeting.**

1. Property Updates – Robert Prado

1609 Morgana Road – Mr. Prado reported the property is currently owned by Department of Veteran Affairs. The case has been closed. No action is taken against federal and state government owned properties. He commented that he was awaiting communication from a new contact with the department. The property violations date back to 2010 with the previous owner. There are several nuisance liens that have not been collected. **CM Lee requested an update at next meeting regarding communication with the contact person.**

1536 W 10th Street – Mr. Prado reported there were no violations at the first site inspection. The second inspection is still under investigation for other possible violations.

**Requested Topics for Next Meeting**

Illegal Dumping (Jim Robinson)

13th & Moncrief (Robert Prado)

Comprehensive Plan & Thoroughfares (Jim Robinson)

Liens and Fines (Karen Bowling & Kimberly Scott)

1609 Morgana Road (Robert Prado)

**Committee Comments**

CM Gulliford reported the Abandoned Properties met last week and minutes will be provided. Additionally, he expressed his concern about the lack of coordination from administration. He referenced the Mayor’s Neighborhood Cleanup scheduled in CM Lee’s District.

CM Lee expressed her disappointment in administration for the lack of respect of the District Council Member not to be included in the extensive planning or even invited to attend of a neighborhood cleanup. Mr. Paul Tutwiler shared his experience on a recent ride-a-long in the committee. He reported various citizens shared their concerns about the neighborhoods they live in. CM Lee commented there is a need for clean ups but some areas need the assistance more than others.

CM Crescimbeni reported receiving an email from a constituent about a home of Merrill Road. He provided a photograph of the yard to Municipal Code and Solid Waste. The property was reported to 630-CITY prior to CM Crescimbeni getting involved. The debris has been removed. Some of the concerns include 630-CITY process and response time in reporting. CM Crescimbeni stated he took an after picture of residence which showed the brown patches in the grass. Unfortunately, it attests to the fact that the debris had been there a while.

Ms. Paige Johnston reminded the committee members that all subcommittee meetings needed to be noticed to ensure that Sunshine Laws are met. It should be noted that Council Member’s ECAs generally notice their meetings. Ms. Johnston requested ECAs coordinate with Mr. Dan Macdonald about notices and making sure that subcommittee agendas/minutes are being posted.

**New Business**

None

**Public Comment**

Mr. Mark Annitto thanked CM Lee for inspiring him to do more in his neighborhood. He encouraged her to continue her work beyond the current situation. He thought the collection process was a good idea for liens and fines. Mr. Annitto was in support of the Solid Waste brochure.

Ms. Mike Anania provided information regarding blighted properties on Arlington Road and Cesery Terrace. He submitted three separate packets of documents for the record today because one of the properties has a human blight component. Mr. Anania commended for her hard work. CM Lee requested Ms. Yvonne Mitchell to make copies for committee members and Ms. Evie McCoy.

Ms. Connie Holt shared concerns about citizens that post garage sale signs and unaware of any wrong doing vs. habitual violators. She has spoken with various citizens that have been fined for a first offense that questioned why a warning wasn’t issued. Ms. Holt stated many of the citizens could not afford the steep fees. She informed the committee there are companies that charge for designing and posting signs for the customer.

Ms. Doretha Tompkins reported blight at 9176 4th Avenue & Belvedere and 9111 4th Avenue. She stated that it has been out there for a while and no one has picked it up although she has made calls to 630-CITY.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 6th due to fifth week Council schedule. A notice will be sent regarding time and location.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

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

Posted 08.11.14 9:00 a.m.