

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**STAND UP FOR YOUR NEIGHBORBOODS**

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**December 10, 2014**

**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**

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

**Lynwood Roberts Room**

**Attendance:** Council Members Denise Lee (Chair), John Crescimbeni (arr 11:36a) Warren Jones, Jim Love (arr 11:45a)

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

**Also**: Karen Bowling – Mayor’s Office; Chief Pat Ivey – Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office; Kimberly Scott –Regulatory Compliance; Robert Campbell – Council Auditor’s Office;Elaine Spencer – Housing & Community Development; Peggy Sidman and Cherry Shaw – Office of General Counsel; Calvin Burney – Planning & Development; John Pappas – Public Works; Jeff Foster – Solid Waste; Robert Prado – Municipal Code Compliance; Dan Macdonald – ECA; Yvonne P. Mitchell – Council Research Division

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Lee called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. The meeting began with introductions from the committee and attendees. CM acknowledged Mr. Antonio Lopez on his confirmation as the new Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department. Additionally, she explained there was one Ad Hoc Committee on Neighborhood Blight. The committee is addressing two main components: land and human blight (Stand Up for Your Neighborhood). The committee meets weekly and alternates between the two components.

**Minutes**

Motion/2nd move to approve December 3rd minutes – Crescimbeni/Jones (4-0)

**HabiJax Abandoned Properties in New Town – Mary Kay O’Rourke**

Ms. O’Rourke explained that HabiJax was a community development corporation with a primary focus on housing; and recently added economic development as a main focus. The past four years all of HabiJax efforts (approximately $12 million) have been specific to New Town and College Garden areas. Over 250 homes have been built and renovated in New Town. Currently, the agency is the only developer building homes in the area. HabiJax has demolished 36 blighted properties during this time in an attempt to help revitalize the community. Ms. O’Rourke commented HabiJax has had difficulty in acquiring several blighted properties due to various reasons (liens, excessive purchase price, inability to locate owner, etc.) It was stated HabiJax would be willing to demolish some unsafe structures on properties at no expense to the City. HabiJax is committed to the neighborhoods; and would like the first opportunity to acquire properties; however, it would not impact their offer to demolish. Ms. O’Rourke showed several pictures of structures that were restored, newly constructed, and currently in blighted conditions.

In response to the report, Ms. Allison Albert inquired whether any of the properties were bank owned. She explained that some banks decline to completely foreclose on properties because the value of the home has deteriorated significantly. In most of these type of cases, the homeowners are unaware the foreclosure was not completed by the bank and they still own the property. There are currently 2500 zombie properties in the county which are primarily in the minority communities.

*Assignments*

* John Pappas - report on the status of mowing maintenance in the 3rd Street West area
* Kimberly Scott - assist Ms. O’Rourke with logistics of fines and what can be done
* Peggy Sidman - research legal steps for the City with acquiring or foreclosing on properties with owners that are uncooperative, unreachable, etc.
* CM Jones – facilitate meeting regarding HabiJax list of abandoned properties at the Unsafe Structures Subcommittee and provide report in January
* Allison Albert – research HabiJax list and provide information regarding zombie foreclosures

**Historic Structures Update – CM Warren Jones & Cherry Shaw**

CM Jones acknowledged all the partners involved in the drafting legislation and substitute. The bill is 2014-427 and has been introduced to the Council. The substitute includes new sections to coincide with State language along with defining unsafe structures, non-historic structures, and blighted structures. CM Jones explained unsafe properties will be offered for purchase to: non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and adjoining property owners before it can be subject to demolition. It was suggested the process include criteria on out of state for-profit agencies (LLCs) purchasing property; allow Duval County citizens first priority of purchase; and maintain updated contact information on owners. The Planning & Development Department will decide what entities will acquire these properties.

Motion/2nd move to approve 2014-427 substitute - Crescimbeni/Jones (4-0)

*Assignments*

* Mr. Burney – present on the PD application process of screening and criteria for non-profit and for-profit agencies attempting to acquire properties

**CDC Reports in Fines**

1. Wealth Watchers (WW) – Ms. Carrie Davis reported WW had nuisance liens totaling approximately $6,000. She stated the liens were paid on 12/10/14. WW was established in 2001. Their primary focus is housing counseling; community and economic development; and real estate development. The main service area is Sherwood Forest. WW established Sherwood Forest Community Network as a neighborhood organization.

Projects funded through COJ

0 1st Street East Jacksonville (Funding source - NSP3; $2.7 million; 24 unit multi-family dwelling)

1224 Pippin Street (Funding source - NSP3; $50,000; rehab single family dwelling)

1811 Hubbard Street (Funding source - NSP3; $50,000; rehab single family dwelling)

2045 Burgoyne Drive (Funding source - Rental rehab; $30,000; single family dwelling)

8061 Marion Circle (Funding source - Rental rehab; $30,000; single family dwelling)

The listed projects have not been completed. Ms. Davis commented delays in completion of projects involve the inability of City Council and Housing Department to establish appropriate policies.

1. Community Development Coalition Corporation (CDCC) – Mr. Colin Bingham stated the organization was founded in 2009. CDCC does not receive nor has ever applied for any funding from the City. Properties are acquired through banks to rehab. The service area is Duval County. In response to request, Mr. Bingham commented the list of properties/projects is a CHDO requirement and is submitted to Housing Department every year. Additionally, after property is completed and does not sell within a 120 days, it is placed in the rental program. In the past 8 months, five properties have been sold and three are currently in the rental program.
2. Operation New Hope (ONH) – Mr. Kevin Gay stated the organization was founded in 1999. The agency owes $806.82 in nuisance liens which will be paid soon. The neighborhood organizations established under ONH include Eastside Neighborhood Housing Alliance; Eastside Neighborhood Watch; Springfield North Community Association; and Building EPIC Communities. All of the organizations have met between October and November. Mr. Gay reported ONH has completed 86 projects and approximately 100 emergency roofing projects through funding from the City. The core areas of concentration for housing are Springfield and lower Eastside neighborhoods.
3. Northwest Jacksonville CDC (NJCDC) – Mr. Paul Tutwiler stated the organization was founded in 2001. The agency has one administrative lien in excess of $300,000 on a property located on Dixon Street. The lien is from the previous owner. Mr. Tutwiler is awaiting a determination regarding a wavier or reduction of lien. Mr. Prado reported all appropriate forms have been completed and submitted to the General Counsel’s Office. The community organizations established are: Golfair Estates HOA; Hendersonville Association; Myrtle/Moncrief Business Association; Planet Watch Association; NW Jacksonville Ministers Coalition; Royal Terrace Community Network; and Durkeeville Historical Society. There are several neighborhoods in the service area including Grand Park, Durkeeville, Hendersonville, Joe James, Royal Terrace and 29th & Chase.
4. Grace and Truth CDC (GTCDC) - Bishop E. M. Johnson stated the organization was founded in 2001. The agency has one nuisance lien in the amount of $564.29. Additionally, Bishop Johnson stated several of his acquired properties have previous nuisance liens ($13,568.11) that have not been paid but were supposed to be forgiven by Housing & Community Development. He commented the forgiveness process needed to be reinstated to assist CDCs. He requested the bill that CM Redman was supposedly introduced be researched.
5. Helpful Citizens, Inc. (HCI) - Bernard Wilson stated the organization was founded in August 2006. This agency has zero debt with the COJ. He listed a few projects completed that are in the New Town area. The organizations established included Helpful Citizens for Veterans which is throughout Jacksonville and Helpful Citizens Community Services. The last meeting held was December 9, 2014.
6. Metro North CDC (MNCDC) - Reggie Fullwood stated the organization was founded in 2001. He became the executive director in 2010. The primary neighborhoods within the agency’s boundaries are Brentwood and Northshore. Mr. Fullwood commented there may be a balance on a current rehab project at 228 7th Street W. He needs to get clarification because the lien was paid; however, he received notice of $2.70. MNCDC has established five neighborhood organizations since its inception. Metro North Community Garden was established under Mr. Fullwood. This organization has numerous projects and more detailed information will be submitted.

CM Lee recommended that CDCs increase their engagement within the neighborhood associations to improve the involvement of citizens in the community. It was requested that CDCs consider adding areas currently not covered to their service boundaries. This would extend rehabilitation and growth throughout Jacksonville; and minimize there being several CDCs covering the same service area. There should be more communication between CDCs and the City to ensure that RFPs for projects are equally distributed. CDCs should not have to extend outside of their boundaries for other projects when service is still needed in their listed neighborhoods. In addition, CDCs were requested to meet to discuss boundaries for maximal coverage.

*Assignments*

* Planning & Development Department – provide a map displaying the areas of service for all the CDCs.
* Elaine Spencer – revise the CDC Organizational Profile to include:
1. Every project since inception
2. Year approved
3. Amount received
4. Funding source
5. Type of project (single family, multi-family, commercial)
6. Status of project (complete, incomplete)
7. Target area
8. Community organizations established
9. Last meeting held with each organization
10. Number of meetings held in last year
* CDCs – provide additional requested information
* Bishop Johnson – meet with Ms. Johnston or Ms. Shaw regarding legislation in question
* Reggie Fullwood – meet with Mr. Prado to determine if Metro North has any liens

**Crime statistics Maps Zone 2 & 4 - Pat Ivey**

Chief Ivey presented a map of all aggravated battery incidents reported within the last 60 days. Zone 2 (Arlington to the Beaches) had a total of fifty-five (55) incidents in 60 days. Zone 4 (Westside) had a total of ninety-nine (99) incidents in 60 days. It should be noted that Zone 4 ranks number one for all crimes in Duval County.

Chief Ivey reported the collection of data regarding illegal dumping is comprised of three sources: CARE System, Solid Waste Division, and other entities. Based on the combined information determines the priority of the surveillance camera location. JSO has enhanced the process for addressing illegal dumping. There is an officer in each zone that will be responsible for illegal dumping surveillance and investigation. Chief Ivey reported the new process has had its first successful case. The zone officer located the violator, obtained a confession, and issued a notice to appear. The violation is a misdemeanor.

**Items for Next Agenda**

Best practices and procedures in building Neighborhood Organizations (Elaine Spencer)

Status report of 45th Street & Avenue B (Folks Huxford)

Car Washes (CM Crescimbeni)

**Public Comment**

Ms. Davis expressed her passion for the work in the community. She suggested that the CDCs, the City, and Council members continue in this learning process and dialogue to discuss the restrictions on CDCs that minimize their efforts due to legislative issues.

Mr. Bingham requested that the threshold for donated properties be reconsidered because banks have increased their prices.

Mr. Tutwiler commented on behalf of Northwest Jacksonville CDC was in support of bill 2014-427.

Bishop Johnson requested the status of the legislation regarding the lien forgiveness. He explained that the lien forgiveness program is vital to CDCs trying to do work in the communities. In response to Ms. Davis comment, Bishop Johnson agreed that the City needs to meet with the CDCs to discuss more resources and capacity to get the work done.

Mr. Wilson believes citizens are unaware of where to take their garbage/trash. He inquired about the locations for dumping.

Ms. Fullwood suggested the CDCs schedule a meeting with CM Lee to gain a better perspective of the issues.

Mr. Gay expressed his support for 2014-427. He confirmed the passion mentioned by others that it takes to do this work. Additionally, he supports the lien forgiveness program because it allows the CDCs to obtain the blighted properties and improve the quality of the neighborhood.

Ms. Albert mentioned she had the report regarding the funds JALA received from the Vacant Registry.

Ms. Brooks expressed her appreciation to Ms. Mary Beth from the Planning & Development Department for her assistance with gathering information about the neighborhood retention pond.

Ms. Hightower stated she supported the CDCs being present and being held accountable for continuous improvement within the neighborhoods. She desires to see and hear more from the CDCs, especially where there may be more than one servicing the same area.

*Assignments*

* Housing & Community Development – schedule a permanent meeting day and time with CDCs

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

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

Posted 12.12.14 11:00a.m.