

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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

**NEIGHBORBOOD BLIGHT MEETING MINUTES**

**February 4, 2015**

**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**

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

**Lynwood Roberts Room**

**Attendance:** Council Members Denise Lee (Chair), Greg Anderson, Bill Gulliford, Warren Jones, and Jim Love

**Excused:** Council Member Bill Bishop and John Crescimbeni

**Also**: Cleveland Ferguson – Mayor’s Office; Paige Johnston – General Counsel Office; Dan Macdonald – ECA Dist. 8; Robert Campbell – Office of Council Auditor’s; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Gulliford called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

The meeting began with introductions from the committee and attendees.

**Minutes**

Motion/2nd Move to approve January 22nd –Gulliford/Love (5-0)

**Neighborhood Blight**

1. JSO Inmate Crews Status and Camera Update – Chief Pat Ivey

Chief Ivey reported that Department of Corrections made changes regarding utilization of inmate crews supervised by non-sworn officers in certain areas. The supervisors have reported an increase of contraband and gang activity. It should be noted that services were never stopped in the designated areas; however, the crews with civilian supervisors were discontinued. Chief Ivey stated an agreement has been reached for Public Works to continue utilizing inmate crews. There must be a .25 mile buffer on both sides of the designated area; and proper notifications must be made to JSO to provide law enforcement officers, if needed.

The first surveillance camera should be installed by February 15th. The cameras will be strategically placed throughout Jacksonville in high crime areas and illegal dumping sites. The top twenty dumping sites have been under observation the past thirty days by JSO. Each zone has been assigned officer(s) specifically tasked with detailing occurrences and forwarding information for immediate action. Mr. Robinson and Chief Ivey commented that communication has increased in regards to handling illegal dumping and cross agency collaboration.

1. Best Practices and Procedures for Neighborhood Organizations – Elaine Spencer & Darrell Griffin

Mrs. Spencer explained that an extensive research was conducted on various jurisdictions pertaining to their best practices and procedures in neighborhood organization development. It should be noted that Jacksonville was repeatedly listed as a City with best practices in this area; however, many of the programs no longer exist due to lack of funding. Mrs. Spencer highlighted key practices from DesMoines, Iowa; Madison, Wisconsin; and Orange County, Florida that could be additional initiatives for Jacksonville.

Mr. Griffin concluded the presentation providing detail information on developing; benefits and challenges; and maintaining interest of neighborhood organizations. There are a total of 236 registered neighborhood associations in Jacksonville. Currently, the Housing and Community Development Division (HCDD) has six (6) Planning Districts with three (3) neighborhood coordinators that assist residents with a variety of services and provide support to neighborhood associations, community organizations and CPACs. HCDD future activities include quarterly neighborhood association start-up workshops; reestablishing a CommUniverCity which provide training opportunities for new and existing neighborhood organizations and community leaders; establishing quarterly Community Development Corporation/CHDO roundtable meetings; and revamping HCDD website to include neighborhood information sharing, education and event posting.

The committee requested that HCDD partner with Park, Recreation and Community Services to coordinate planned activities in parks to engage more neighborhood involvement.

*Assignments*:

Darrell Griffin – revise p.8 provide list of “others”

Darrell Griffin – revise p.9 to show the Council Districts larger

1. CDC Coverage maps presentation- Caleena Shirley

Ms. Shirley reviewed the individual CDC coverage maps in relation to Council Districts. It was mentioned that Council District boundaries will change July 1st which will impact CDC coverage areas. There were a couple of revisions mentioned by HabiJax and Helpful Citizens. Ms. Angela Leatherbury commented that HabiJax’s coverage area excludes a portion of Jacksonville Beach. Helpful Citizens stated the coverage area was Council Districts 7-9.

CM Lee suggested CDCs obtain a copy of the top blighted and crime areas to compare with their coverage areas to gain additional information to assist in the neighborhoods.

*Assignment:*

Caleena Shirley – review coverage areas with each CDC prior to next meeting and resubmit maps

**Land Blight**

1. Rental Rehab Loan Program - CM Gulliford & Teresa Eichner

Ms. Eichner commented the subcommittee met to discuss how Rental Rehab functioned in the past and a future plan that focuses on single family residences and multi-family dwellings. Additional dialogue consisted of brainstorming ideas of potential partners or funding sources along with expanding usage of funds to assist the elderly population.

*Assignment:*

CM Gulliford & Jones – Co-chairs, Neighborhood & Housing Subcommittee

1. Vacant Property Registry – CM Gulliford

The registry is a database created to track all foreclosed properties in the City. Although the City has a $150 one-time fee to register a property, Jacksonville does not have an annual renewal fee. The current amount in the registry is $1.5 million. CM Gulliford explained that the registry could be used as a permanent and liable source to addressing foreclosures and improving neighborhoods.

1. Foreclosure and Zombie Properties Status Report – CM Jones

CM Jones reported the City is undergoing a review of its inventory to determine any properties that may be listed may have a zombie status. There have been several properties identified to proceed with getting them ready to be utilized by CHDOs to get occupied. The information provided from this point will be presented through the Neighborhood & Housing subcommittee.

*Assignment:*

CM Gulliford & Jones – present draft legislation within 30days

1. Update on new process for obtaining a business tax receipt – Folks Huxford

Mr. Huxford reported that the new procedure of obtaining a COU prior to receiving a business license has been 100% effective since implementation in August 2014. In the event, a customer demands to pay business tax without a COU, a flyer is provided detailing the requirements necessary prior to opening their business. **CM Lee requested a copy of the flyer be presented to the committee.**

*Assignments*:

Cleveland Ferguson – inquire about the distribution of the flyer at Tax Collector’s Office

Dan Macdonald – add presentation by Folks Huxford/Tax collector at next meeting

Folks Huxford – get representative from Tax Collector’s Office at next meeting

1. Form letters for departments regarding blight issues – Robert Prado and Jim Robinson

Mr. Prado presented the form letters that Municipal Code will begin to utilize with internal City divisions and outside governmental agencies regarding proper documentation of C.A.R.E. issues and other code violations. Similar form letters will be used for the Mowing and Landscape Division. A notice will be posted that political campaign signs will not be accepted at the Tire Buyback & Snipe Sign event.

*Assignment:*

Jim Robinson – change RE: to read “C.A.R.E. Number”

**New Business**

None

**Items for Next Meeting**

Presentation from Folks Huxford and Tax Collector office

Present Revised CDC maps

LED Lights – Renee Goode

**Public Comments**

Mr. Paul Tutwiler inquired about sunshine issues if Council members appointed citizens to an advisory board.

Mr. Paul Martinez announced that the winner of the Naming the Blight Mascot Contest will receive an Ipad.

Ms. Mildred Johnston is concerned about the quality of service or lack thereof from the contractors mowing reported properties. Additionally, she is against continuous reporting of same property when there should be a process to regular maintenance.

Ms. Janice Hightower expressed her concerns regarding the dim street lights in the neighborhood.

Mr. Mark Anino mentioned the collection of the COU tax and business tax is an on-going problem in a lot of Cities; many of them send out representatives door-to-door to assist with obtaining funds.

Due to the upcoming holiday, the next meeting will be Thursday, February 19, 2015at 10:00 a.m. in the Lynwood Roberts room.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

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

Posted 02.05.15 2:00 p.m.