

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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

**NEIGHBORBOOD BLIGHT MEETING MINUTES**

**February 19, 2015**

**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**

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

**Lynwood Roberts Room**

**Attendance:** Council Members Denise Lee (Chair), Greg Anderson (arr. 10:18a), John Crescimbeni, Bill Gulliford, and Jim Love

**Excused:** Council Member Bill Bishop and Warren Jones

**Also**: Council Member Lori Boyer; Teresa Eichner – 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 10:04 a.m.

The meeting began with introductions from the committee and attendees.

**Minutes**

Motion/2nd Move to approve February 4th –Crescimbeni/Gulliford (4-0)

**Neighborhood Blight**

1. Snipe Sign Legislation (2014-553) – CM Love

There was extensive discussion. The bill has been deferred in TEU. There are concerns regarding the cost of the first offense. CM Love stated he would report back to TEU the importance of moving the legislation forward. CM Boyer reviewed the two amendments she offered in TEU for discussion.

* First amendment –first offense stay at $50
* Second amendment – divide the first offense based on number of signs collected

Ms. Sidman clarified for the record that CM Boyer’s second amendment is content neutral and focuses more on the number of signs collected not the message on signs.

There was additional discussion regarding the Rules amendment to 2014-553 that strikes out language regarding signs on utility poles and the citation fee. Several of the members were concerned about the pending deletion. The committee decided to have workshop with all pertinent parties involved with signs from the business aspect to code enforcement to thoroughly review the legislation. The workshop will also review the Rules amendment.

*Assignments:*

Dan Macdonald – send letter to Mr. Brenton requesting his attendance at next meeting; set up sign workshop for members next week

Cherry Shaw – research case law on the presumption of guilt regarding content on a sign being the responsibility of that person

Mr. Prado – provide type of mechanism as it relates to number of signs that is needed to input data to determine system threshold for smoother enforcement

1. Updated CDC coverage maps presentation- Caleena Shirley

Ms. Shirley distributed and reviewed the revised individual CDC coverage maps in relation to Council Districts. CM Lee requested that a CDC ensure that a representative is in attendance at all meetings.

*Assignment:*

Caleena Shirley – keep an updated list of the primary area of concentration of each CDC

1. Update on CDC funds owed to the City – Caleena Shirley & CDCs

Ms. Shirley explained that each CDC would provide the most updated information regarding the outstanding balance owed to the City. There were several errors within the spreadsheet and reported information presented by CDCs. The committee postponed item until the next meeting to allow administration to properly prepare the spreadsheet and verify amounts.

*Assignments:*

Caleena Shirley – revise the spreadsheet

* How was amount paid (cash or released)
* Date released or reduced
* List Code Enforcement as agency that released fine

Robert Campbell & Cherry Shaw – review document with Housing & Community Development prior to next meeting

Elaine Spencer – make sure Housing & Community Development review documents from CDC

Teresa Eichner – ensure that administration review documents from departments prior to distribution

Dan Macdonald – send agenda a week prior to meeting

NOTE: Any department or division with an assignment should contact CM Lee’s office to make sure the topic is on the agenda and materials are prepared (with a cover sheet).

**Land Blight**

1. Status report from Housing & Neighborhood - CM Gulliford

CM Gulliford provided a brief summary of the Vacant Property Registry. He presented a registry comparison document of various municipalities. The major difference is Jacksonville does not charge a renewal fee unlike the other counties. The sub-committee is working on the draft legislation to include increase in registration fee, adding renewal and non-compliance fees.

*Assignment:*

Caleena Shirley – inquire with vendor for the start date of foreclosure data

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

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. Mr. Love provided the information sheet given and explained the procedure that citizens must follow to obtain the local business tax license. He confirmed the new process was relatively easy implement and compliance has been meet. There was discussion regarding a website that provides all the information about starting a business and links to appropriate agencies.

*Assignment:*

CM Gulliford – will chair the website project sub-committee

Paul Martinez – work with ITD with development of the business website project and contact Stan Johnson to schedule meeting

1. Progress on installation of LED street lights – Jim Robinson

According to JEA, the LED (light-emitting diode) conversion process for the City is tentatively scheduled to start the first part of 2016. Mr. Robinson provided a brief summary of the steps involved in the conversion process. In the meantime, citizen safety concerns are being address through alternative solutions. The committee would like more information regarding new residential development changing lightening; locations of conversions (commercial vs. residential); and specifics number of lights in commercial vs. residential.

*Assignment:*

Jim Robinson – send a letter to JEA requesting answers from committee and report at next meeting

1. Public Awareness Press Conference – Paul Martinez & Aleizha Batson

The press conference was confirmed for March 4th at 10:00a.m. The regular meeting will convene immediately after the conference. Ms. Batson will inquire with Channel 4 (event sponsor) to inquire about taping a new infomercial. The press conference will introduce the new blight application, the wrapped JEA bus, and the mascot naming contest.

Important dates

March 13th – Entries due for mascot contest

March 28th – Tire & Sign Buyback Event

April 8th – Mascot Contest Winner announced @ Blight meeting

*Assignments:*

Paul Martinez – provide report on all entries submitted for the mascot contest

Aleizha Batson – inquire about a new infomercial

Dan Macdonald – schedule meeting to discuss press conference program (see CM Gulliford for name of representative) to include Paul Martinez and Aleizha Batson

**New Business**

None

**Public Comments**

Ms. Marian Shelton suggested that youth submitting names in the mascot contest should include an essay about blight.

Bishop E. M. Johnson commented on the meeting being very productive.

Mr. Mark Anino expressed his desire to see the Blight Committee in 6 months continuing in same tradition and keep CM Lee involved. He stated the process for converting LED lights is complicated. The suggestion was for the City to invest more time in discussion with JEA. Lastly, Mr. Anino suggested new website subcommittee review My Florida and State of Florida Licensing websites.

 Ms. Yvonne Walker requested consideration of monies from the Vacant Property Registry being put into revitalizing neighborhoods. She suggested the process revitalize one or two houses from each side of town. She expressed concern that septic tanks are preventing CDCs from working in her neighborhood. Lastly, she mentioned apartments on 45th Street that could be a good project to revitalize for a senior citizen center or other uses.

Ms. Joyce Morgan requested to know if the cost of the new business website would be the cost of doing business or additional cost to taxpayers. Additionally, she inquired about how property owners are located for the vacant registry process.

Ms. Gracie McCastler reported that Duval Delegation received her proposal regarding changing the legal dropout age and further discussions have occurred on the topic in Tallahassee. She provided statistics on Florida’s dropout rate and Duval County’s truancy rate.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

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

Posted 02.24.15 4:30 p.m.