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|  | **OFFICE OF THE**  **CITY COUNCIL** |  |
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**SPECIAL AD HOC COMMITTEE ON JACKSONVILLE’S**

**NEIGHBORBOOD IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT**

**AMENDED MEETING MINUTES**

**March 14, 2016**

**4:00 p.m.**

**City Hall**

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

**Lynwood Roberts Room**

**Attendance:** Council Members Bill Gulliford (Co-chair), John Crescimbeni, Al Ferraro

**Excused:** Garrett Dennis, Tommy Hazouri, Joyce Morgan

**Also**: Paige Johnston – General Counsel’s Office; Philip Peterson – Council Auditor’s Office; Alli Korman Shelton, and E. Denise Lee– Mayor’s Office; Crystal Shemwell - Legislative Services Division; Yvonne P. Mitchell – Council Research Division

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Gulliford called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. The meeting began with introductions of committee and attendees.

**HOPE NOW – Erik Selk**

HOPE NOW is an alliance among non-profits counselors, mortgage servicers, investors and other mortgage market participants who focus on foreclosure prevention. They provide support and guidance to homeowners. Mr. Selk shared that HOPE NOW will be hosting a free outreach event for Jacksonville homeowners to receive one-on-one assistance from various mortgage servicers and housing counselors. Homeowners will be able to begin the application process and find out what resources/services are available depending on their specific circumstances.

Mr. Selk states that fliers will be sent to 14,000 plus homeowners that are 90 days or more delinquent with their mortgage. The State of Florida has the Hardest Hit Funds which is a federal funded program that can provide financial mortgage relief (about $24,000) to get caught up on mortgage payments or cover payments if the homeowner is currently unemployed. This particular program is a forgivable loan.

Mr. Selk commented the federal government will be funneling billions of dollars back into the State Housing Finance Agency (SHFA). As one of the top hardest hit states, Florida is expected to receive a large portion of the funds within next six months. Mr. Selk suggested that the committee begin to reach out to David Westcott, Executive Director of SHFA to redirect funds to Jacksonville for supplemental programs. In response to comments from the committee, Mr. Selk agreed to receiving assistance from the City with redesigning and approval of the flyer prior to distribution; and finding a more neutral location for the event. The budget for the event is $3000. Family Foundations is partnering with HOPE NOW for the event. Suggestions included: FSCJ Downtown Campus as a central location; and a two day event (one weekday and a Saturday) to accommodate the majority of the potential attendees. Mr. Selk shared that the most successful event was due to the marketing efforts of the partners. His largest event had 2500 people. The event was marketed with a commercial of the mayor urging citizens to attend.

Assignment:

* Administration will assist Mr. Selk with posting approved flyer to City’s website.
* CM Gulliford and Alli Korman Shelton will partner in regards to communicating with State of Florida about the receiving additional Hardest Hit Funds; and inquiring about multiple uses of funds.
* Mr. Selk will follow up with contacts received and committee members to assist with finalizing location for meeting.

**Administration Update**

Ms. E. Denise Lee distributed an updated report on the Fight Blight Initiative. The packet of information included the Neighborhood Blight Systematic Property Inspections which includes collaboration efforts between Municipal Code Compliance, Parks & Recreation, Solid Waste, and Mowing and Landscape Maintenance. Ms. Lee shared that the Fire Department Community Outreach Events will begin March 19th in Council District 8. All Council Members are invited to attend all the community events. On March 12th, the Impact Church Adopt-a-Block at Warrington Park in Council District 1 was very successful.

**Public Comment**

Mary McPherson expressed her concern for the vacant and abandoned homes within the communities to bring families back into the neighborhoods.

Martha Cox provided an update on the Downtown Payment Assistance Program sponsored by Family Foundations. The event was held January 30th with approximately 250 people in attendance. In February, over 150 people completed the 8 hour Home Buyer Education course to make them eligible to receive funds. Due to the success, the agency is interested in hosting another event. The SHIP funds offer $15,000 in down payment assistance; and Florida’s Hardest Hit fund established another program to provide an additional $15,000 to families with incomes to $88,620. The Florida’s Hardest Hit funds are forgiven for five years.

Mary O’Rourke requested the committee use caution in fully supporting HOPE NOW due to difficulties many homeowners previously experienced during the process.

Next meeting will be April 4, 2016 in the Lynwood Roberts room. There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division

Posted 03.16.16 8:30 a.m.