

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425

4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SAFE AND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS**

**MEETING MINUTES - AMENDED**

**City Council Chamber, 1st floor, City Hall**

**November 9, 2017**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber, City Hall – St. James Building, 117 West Duval Street

**In attendance:** Council Members Reggie Brown (Chair), Lori Boyer, Katrina Brown, Bill Gulliford

**Also**: Council Member Scott Wilson; Paige Johnston and Peggy Sidman – Office of General Counsel; Tommy Carter – Council Auditor’s Office; Jordan Elsbury – Mayor’s Office; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division

**Meeting Convened**: 9:04 a.m.

Chairman R. Brown called the meeting to order and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. Ms. Stephanie Burch, Director of Neighborhoods Department, provided an update on the Brookview neighborhood in District 4. There are several active Code Enforcement cases within the designated radius. All of them are scheduled for re-inspection later this month. Some of the planned improvements for the area include abatement of junk vehicles and nuisance cases immediately; cleaning ditches; mowing and removing dead/dying trees from the right of way; coordinating with JEA to ensure streetlights are converted to LED and operable; and coordinating with Duval County School Board regarding specific improvements around Brookview Elementary. In response to Council Member Wilson’s inquiry, Ms. Burch confirmed that improvement plans included repair and adding new sidewalks where necessary. He suggested securing the area behind the baseball field to eliminate criminal mischief. In regards to the pond, Ms. Burch stated it designated wetlands which prevent any improvement activity. Council Member Boyer suggested implementing outreach services to coordinate a community meeting, establish a neighborhood watch or neighborhood associations to participate in the improvement efforts long term.

Ms. Burch provided an update on 29th Street and Chase Avenue neighborhood in District 8. The active Code Enforcement cases include, but not limited to seven junk vehicle cases, 63 nuisance cases, 15 residential cases, and 19 unsafe cases. Three of the nineteen unsafe cases are pending release for demolition and one is awaiting a change order for asbestos. Some of the planned improvements for the area consist of the completion of 15 demolitions and 7 board ups; abatement of junk vehicle and nuisance cases; prioritizing homes within the area on the limited repair program list; and coordinating with Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department regarding specific improvements for Simonds Johnson Park. Council Member K. Brown distributed a list that identified each residence as a rental or homeownership. This area is the location for the neighborhood grocery store being built by Paul Tutwiler, Northwest Community Development Corp. Also, Mr. Tutwiler intends to construct a retention pond larger than the requirement to provide some drainage relief to the community. Council Member K. Brown shared concerns about pedestrian safety and traffic issues near MLK Boulevard entering the neighborhood. Her short-term goals include meeting with JTA to discuss funding to assist with adding a roundabout or other pedestrian safety measures. Simonds Johnson Park improvements consist of reopening the community center; coordinating with JEA to convert lighting to LED; and adding outdoor fitness equipment.

Council Member Gulliford commented that improving neighborhoods requires building relatively inexpensive houses that will appeal to eligible families and instituting non-interest bearing mortgages on houses renovated by the city.

For upcoming meetings, Council Member Boyer requested that presenters disseminate copies of powerpoint presentations to committee members. She commented that JTA utilizes the local option gas tax dollars to assist with context-sensitive street projects such as roundabouts.

Mr. Jason Teal referenced the list, dated September 6, 2017, of outstanding liens. All the liens within the 73-page document could be impacted by the pending amnesty legislation. Mr. Teal provided a summary of the two types of liens: Code Enforcement (civil penalty) and contractor. The civil penalty is issued after a property owner fails to correct a violation. A special magistrate assesses a daily rolling fine to the property until the violation is cleared. The amnesty legislation would allow fine forgiveness after the violation has been cleared. The contractor liens are used when the city has to employ someone to correct a violation of private property. Statutory interest is accrued on contractor liens; thus, the owner has to pay the principal amount due and apply for amnesty on the interest. Although the City has previously waived rolling fines, it has never waived the interest on contractor liens. The primary purpose of the amnesty legislation is to relieve property owners from liens after correcting the violation. Council Member Gulliford requested an additional column indicating assessed value. Council Member Boyer requested Mr. Teal includes in the legislation a restriction clause on properties with ongoing violations along with language addressing the transfer of property to other limited partnerships without violation correction. Council Member Boyer suggested looking into the option of the City foreclosing on properties to grant the amnesty or obtain ownership; then recoup cost and seek a third-party buyer. In response to Council Member Gulliford’s inquiry, Ms. Burch stated the department does not currently solicit owners to donate properties with outstanding liens. This initiative could drive revenue to renovate and build houses in the neighborhood. Council Member K. Brown will forward the construction lien list to the committee. Affordable housing is a key element in establishing a safe and healthy neighborhood. Council Member K. Brown requested the committee consider vetting bill 2015-519 which the chairman agreed. Ali Korman Shelton, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, stated she has been working with Council President Brosche and would update Chairman R. Brown on the topic after the meeting.

The next meeting is Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 9:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers.

**Upcoming Topics:**

1. Presentation on Tipping Point Communities – Ms. Burch & CM R. Brown (12/13/17)
2. Timelines and follow-up from departments - (12/13/17)
3. Presentation on Cameras – JSO & Park, Recreation, and Community Services (January 2018)
4. 2015-519 (pending)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Minutes: Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research

11.20.17 Posted 6:00 p.m.

Tapes: Special Committee on Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods meeting – LSD - 11.09.17

Handouts: Special Committee on Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods meeting - 11.09.17