**Jacksonville Waterways Commission**

**Downtown River and Water Activation Task Force Minutes**

**December 19, 2017**

**Topic:** Downtown River and Water Activation

**Location:** City Hall, Conference Room A

**Attendance:** Jed Davis, Jake Gordon, Lori Boyer, Brian Shell, Ryan Tiedeberg, Jim Suber, Brian Burket, Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel, Philip Zamarron- Legislative Services.

For all other attendees, see sign in sheet.

**Meeting Convened:** 4:02 pm

Downtown River and Water Activation Task Force Chairman Jed Davis called for introductions and reviewed the agenda. The main focus of this initial meeting is to identify the priorities for the task force. Council Member Boyer consulted with Paige Johnston, Office of General Counsel, regarding the protocol for approving member’s appointments. The Task Force appointees, Jed Davis, Jake Gordon, Christian Harden, and John Ream were identified and affirmed by Ms. Boyer and Chairman Davis.

Following the agenda, Councilwoman Boyer outlined her overall vision for the activation of the downtown river area (between Exchange Island and Memorial Park). Ms. Boyer explained the intent of the task force, which is to organize and coordinate numerous planned and ongoing waterfront projects that are beyond the capacity of the normal Waterways Commission operations. Downtown riverfront activites should be reflective of Jacksonville and realistic within the natural river conditions, for example strong currents prohibut some activiites in certain areas of the river.

Ms. Boyer noted that while other cities have more river crossings that are pedestrian and bicycle friendly, in Jacksonville the river has historically separated the south and north riverbanks. The activation plan will strive to create connections, lacing together activities and locations. River taxis will play a role in tying it all together, as will pedestrian and bike crossings.

There was some discussion about the current state of existing dock and ramp facilities, particularly the dock at the Landing which is minimally functional at this time until FEMA funds come through to make repairs. Additionally, new docks/ramps are being planned for Brooklyn, 5 Points, Strand/Riverplace Tower and The District development. Ms. Boyer described the vision for wayfaring signage along the Riverwalk, the thematic nodes which will tell a story in several locations along the Riverwalk, the CIP funds for Friendship Fountain, which will improve functionality, add lighting and landscaping. The Friendship Fountain improvements may also include an entertainment feature, with a light show and music, as found in other cities.

Topics for more in depth task force examination: which docks can be used, when and by whom; how to utilize water taxis as transit, not just for touring; balancing water taxi docking with recreational boat docking; dock enforcement; City codes specific to dock and ramp regulations; Riverfront entertainment, possibly a new convention center, boating facility for lessons and rentals.

The task force may also look into grant opportunities for dredging and marina improvements (could there be a regular maintenance dredge program with a dedicated funding source so legislation would not be required each time). The task force may also choose to examine the dock permitting process required for design and construction, which have to be approved by one or all of FLDEP, the Army Corp of Engineers, and the water management district.

Jake Gordon, Downtown Vision, expressed his support for the Riverwalk nodes and the plans to connect the south and north riverbanks. Mr. Gordon also mentioned the public-private partnership between the City/DIA and the water taxi, suggesting that the agreement could possibly be adjusted to be more amenable to expanded taxi usage downtown (regular departure times, planned railway bridge closings, individualized transit routes).

For the next task force meeting, which will be held after the January 10th 2018 Waterways Commission meeting, several issues were identified for further discussion:

1. Update on all funding for activation nodes, docks, marina, ramps
2. McCoy’s creek restoration for non-motorized waterway, greenway trail, and stormwater management plan
3. Map of docks and ramps (both existing and planned) facilities and usage, with sizes and funding amounts and estimated dates for completion
4. Code restrictions for docks and ramps
5. Water taxi recommendations and priorities
6. Project timelines
7. The Red Cross building as a possible floating dock location
8. Costs of relocating floating docks
9. Riverfront entertainment ideas, like Movies by the river in Toronto

In the public comment portion of the meeting, Mr. John Nooney spoke about the importance of having public restrooms near kayak launch sites and other river attractions, including the low cost option of portable toilets.

Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 5:18 pm and announced that the next task force meeting will be scheduled to be held within 30 days.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 5:18 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

December 21, 2017