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|  | **OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL** |  |
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April 10, 2018

(1:00 P.M.)

**TASK FORCE ON OPEN GOVERNMENT**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**CHAIRS:** Hank Coxe and Dr. Sherry Magill

**MEMBERS:** Ywana Allen-Excused

Rachael Fortune

The Honorable Alberta Hipps

Ron Littlepage

Michael Lockamy

Audrey Moran

The Honorable Jim Overton

Sabeen Perwaiz

Cleve Warren

**Also:** Council President Brosche; Colleen Hampsey- Council Research; Kim Taylor, Council Auditor’s

Office

For all other attendees, please see sign in sheet.

**Meeting convened:** 1:02 pm  **Meeting Adjourned:** 3:36 pm

**Introductions**

The Co-Chairs, Hank Coxe and Dr. Sherry Magill, called the meeting to order and asked all of the members to introduce themselves and explain why they had agreed to be on the task force. The consensus among the members was that they said yes when asked by CP Brosche out of civic duty and a desire to help make local government more accessible to the community. Mr. Coxe talked briefly about the importance of transparent processes in government, whereas the end product (be it policy or legislation) is devalued or corrupted if the process to create that product is questionable or dubious.

**Sunshine Law Presentation**

Ethics Director Carla Miller offered a brief presentation about ethics for task force members, explaining how Sunshine Laws affect communication among members and public records. Ms. Miller explained that outside of a public noticed meeting, Task Force members may not speak (in person, on the phone, or email) with one another about any current or foreseeable Task Force matters. All Task Force communications are to be routed through the assigned staff person (Colleen Hampsey).

Carla Miller talked about how any and all emails or documents generated by the Task Force members are public records and as such must be made accessible upon request and be preserved. It was decided by the group that one member should be the point of contact for the media, to prevent confusion or conflict, and Mr. Coxe was assigned that duty. Ms. Miller then fielded numerous questions from the members.

**Mission and Planning**

As this was the first meeting for the Task Force, there was a discussion about the Resolution charge as written by Council President Brosche. The charge states that the Task Force will: “Study the legislative process and the methods by which the public accesses government. Make recommendations for how the City of Jacksonville can be more open and accessible to the public, while maintaining a healthy perspective of the costs and benefits of such recommendations. Include in your recommendations suggestions for how the City of Jacksonville can institutionalize transparency.”

Based upon the charge, the scope for group will be to focus on the legislative process, the methods by which the public access government, and recommendations for institutionalizing transparency. The group spoke briefly about the task force structure. It was decided by all that there should not be any subcommittees and the task force shall operate as a whole.

Looking ahead at the future scheduled meetings, the Task Force decided that the final two meetings should be dedicated to the writing of the final report. For the other scheduled meetings, the members plan to address each component of the charge with presenters from government and the community who will have a chance to weigh in on specific topics.

**Task Force Objectives**

Proposed presenters for the next meeting are: Ethics Director Carla Miller- to discuss what other cities are doing in regards to transparency, including technological methods; Peggy Sidman from the Office of General Counsel- to explain committees and the intricacies of the legislative process; Councilwoman Boyer- to describe the Land Use and Zoning processes.

Task Force member Alberta Hipps recalled about a pamphlet, published by City Council, which used to be available to the public that explained how a bill becomes a law. The pamphlet has since been located in the Council archives and will be distributed to the group at the next meeting.

For future meetings, presenters will be invited to address other aspects of legislation and public accessibility to government. These presenters may include: someone from the State of Florida regarding Florida’s public contract database; Bill Hodges (formerly of the Children’s Commission); CPAC chairs, possibly Sheriff Williams to talk about his efforts towards transparency at JSO; the City’s Webmaster to talk about the city website; someone from the Mayor’s Office (Chief of Staff Brian Hughes was suggested); media representatives; Bill Killingsworth from the Planning Department; the person in charge of the CARE System, or 630-city; LISC CDC executive directors; representatives from Administration and Council to talk about the boards and commissions appointment process; and as many members of the public as possible.

There was a discussion about possible methods to reach out to city residents for feedback on their experiences with the legislative process. The group decided to implement a short survey, with 3 or 4 questions, to ask if someone has tried to access the legislative process (attend a council meeting or speak at a council meeting), whether it was a positive or negative experience, and what the biggest obstacles were. With a tight timeline for the Task Force final report, the group decided to conduct the survey two ways, online through the City’s website and in person at the Neighborhood & Community Summit 2018, to be held on Saturday, April 21, 2018, 8:00 am – 2:00 p.m. at the Prime Osborn Convention Center 1000 Water Street Jacksonville, Florida 32204. Carla Miller volunteered to supply several college students to conduct the surveys at the event.

**Closing Comments**

Motion 1: One of the Task Force members appointed by Ms. Brosche contacted the chair this week to remove himself, due to schedule complications. There was a motion and unanimous agreement to respect his wishes to step aside. The motion also deferred to Council President Brosche to decide whether he should be replaced with a new appointee. Ms. Brosche said that with a June reporting deadline and because the body and the members had to be legislatively created, she would not be replacing Mr. Harding.

**Public Comment**

Mr. John Nooney spoke to the group about the importance of the public interacting with local government.

With no further business, the Co-Chairs adjourned the meeting.

**The next Task Force on Open Government meeting will be held on April 17, 2018 at 1:00 pm.**

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Posted 4.12.18 2:00 pm