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|  | **OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL** |  |
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April 17, 2018

(1:00 P.M.)

**TASK FORCE ON OPEN GOVERNMENT**

**MEETING MINUTES-AMENDED**

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

**MEMBERS:** Ywana Allen

Rachael Fortune-Excused

The Honorable Alberta Hipps

Ron Littlepage

Michael Lockamy-Excused

Audrey Moran

The Honorable Jim Overton-Excused

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:** 1:05 pm  **Meeting Adjourned:** 4:46 pm

**Introductions**

The Co-Chairs, Hank Coxe and Sherry Magill, called the meeting to order and introduced the first presenter.

**The Legislative Process:** Presentation by Peggy Sidman, Deputy Legislative Affairs and Managing Deputy General Counsel. Ms. Sidman presented a Power Point about the legislative process, which she gives to all incoming council members, and which explains how a (local) bill becomes a law. City Council meets on Tuesdays every two weeks and on the intervening weeks, committees meet. New bills are due for introduction during committee week on Wednesdays. Council meeting agendas are released during committee week on Fridays.

Ms. Sidman fielded several questions from the Task Force members:

How do issues for legislation get onto the agenda? Council members may hear about issues from constituents, or local problems they saw or read about.

Is the legislative database searchable by council member? Yes, but you would find all of the bills which include that council member’s name, not just the ones introduced by that member.

Bill drafting confidentiality, when does the legislation become public? Once published, it is a public record. Attorney-client privilege is maintained for oral communication. Co-introduced legislation, by more than one council member may not be discussed between council members outside of a noticed meeting.

Who assigns the bills to committees? Council Rules determine and the Council President applies those rules; assignment is subject matter based. The Legislative Services Division staff makes assessment and Council President confirms.

How does the public learn about or understand the process and learn about new bills? The public may learn about new bills in community town hall events or through direct council member outreach to constituents.

Why is there secrecy on corporation names for Economic Development projects? It is done pursuant to state law to protect businesses privacy and their competitive edge.

At what points in the process may the public speak? There are several opportunities for members of the public to speak at each council meeting but it sometimes occurs after the council has already taken action on a bill.

Is there a regular City Charter review? Every 10 years, there is a Charter Revision Commission but council members may propose Council Rules changes through legislation at any time.

**Best Practices- Transparency in City Government**: Presentation by Ethics Director Carla Miller.

Ms. Miller outlined some of the features of other city’s websites, such as New York City and Austin

Texas. Many cities are using participatory budgeting process as to obtain input from the public.

Transparency is essential to the democratic process, especially in regards to contracts, budgets, lobbyists

and procurement. Jacksonville is not ahead of the curve, but not behind in accessible government

documents.

Director of Public Affairs Marsha Oliver and Chief of Information Technologies Ken Lathrop

gave a broad overview of the City’s website. The website format was redesigned a few years ago, in an

effort to make the site more user friendly. The Task Force members inquired about other cities and the

navigability of Jacksonville’s website site in comparison.

**Land Use and Zoning:** Presentation byCouncil Member Lori Boyer

Ms. Boyer spoke about the intricacies of land use and zoning policies. Land use decisions are quasi-judicial decisions, so they must be based on substantial competent evidence. Councilwoman Boyer also explained how to use the City’s GIS system to research zoning online. She also spoke about the process by which CPACs weigh in on legislation. CPACs provide their opinions, but it not always based upon all of the evidence. Ms. Boyer emphasized the importance of the public providing input about issues of concern early in the legislative process. No neighborhood meetings are required for zoning changes, but there are public hearings. For land use changes, community association notifications are required.

Bill Killingsworth, Director of the Planning and Development Department, spoke about a new online app his department will soon be implementing. Land use public hearing posted signs have a scannable code which IPhone users may utilize to get updates on projects.

**Public Comment**

Mr. John Nooney spoke to the group about the relationship between government transparency and the public trust.

Mr. Conrad Markle, a First Amendment Foundation member, spoke about the importance of transparent public information. Both public comment cards are on file.

**Closing Comments**

The group discussed the upcoming survey, which will assess the public perception about access to government. The Task Force members made comments which will be incorporated into the final questionnaire. The survey will be posted online on the City’s website and also used at the Community and Neighborhood Summit on April 21st.

The group requested that ITD be invited back to the next meeting to demonstrate City website features. The Task Force indicated that they would like to have a discussion with the Council Auditor’s office at a future meeting. For this task force, the Office of General Counsel will assign an attorney to attend meetings and it will be either Jon Phillips or Rita Mairs. The assignment of the writing duty for the Task Force final report was delegated to Mr. Littlepage. Co-chair Magill also proposed inviting Greg Busby, an expert about websites and citizen engagement, to a future meeting.

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

The next Task Force on Open Government meeting will be held on April 24, 2018 at 1:00 pm in the Lynwood Roberts Room.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research Posted 4.19.18 5:00 pm