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

(1:00 P.M.)

**TASK FORCE ON OPEN GOVERNMENT**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**APPROVED AS AMENDED**

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

**MEMBERS:** Ywana Allen

Rachael Fortune

The Honorable Alberta Hipps

Ron Littlepage

Michael Lockamy

Audrey Moran-**EXCUSED**

The Honorable Jim Overton

Sabeen Perwaiz

Cleve Warren

**Also:** Colleen Hampsey- Council Research; Thomas Carter-Council Auditor’s Office; Jon Phillips-Office

of General Counsel

For all other attendees, please see sign in sheet.

**Meeting convened:** 1:08 pm  **Meeting Adjourned:** 4:09 pm

**Introductions**

The Co-Chairs, Hank Coxe and Sherry Magill, called the meeting to order. The Task Force members agreed to a proposed edit in the April 24, 2018 meeting minutes, to reflect that the media guests were to discuss media access to government and not the media’s role in the legislative process. With that amendment, the minutes from the April 24, 2018 meeting were approved.

**Public Records Requests- follow up**

The Task Force members received a data table which showed the total amount of citizen public record

requests from the past year and a half. The members asked to also receive: an explanation of the phrase

“Public Records Request - Copy of CARE issue” as referenced in the table; data on one week of requests,

responses, and the amount of time required for fulfillment; an explanation about request disposition –

why they are closed or cancelled; and a total for record request from the media.

Craig Feiser, Office of General Counsel, and Marsha Oliver, Director of Public Affairs, were in

attendance to follow up on the previous meeting’s discussion about public records requests. Mr. Feiser

has been in charge of media public records requests before six months and is pleased with his

responsiveness in this task. In his role, Mr. Feiser reviews documents for release for any confidential or

exempt material

and advises the administration about record releases. During his tenure, there have been rare public

records exemptions and minimal charges levied to media outlets, sometimes for personnel files which

tend to be lengthy. The Office of General Counsel administrative charge for public records is waived if

the labor is for 30 minutes or less. For more time intensive requests, the OGC administrative charge is

$19/hr. To review and redact documents, Mr. Feiser averages 300 emails per hour and all email

records requests (media or citizen, but not JSO) are reviewed by him. When asked about a delayed

records request which was mentioned in the last Task Force meeting by Mary Kelli Palka, which

appeared to be politically reviewed, Mr. Feiser said that was the case because the requested document was

from JSO and as such he was not the custodian of the document. Additional examples of public record

obstacles encountered by the media and provided by Ms. Palka were shared with the Task Force (see

posted handouts).

Ms. Oliver spoke about the accessibility of the Mayor’s emails, which along with those of Mr. Mousa and Mr. Hughes, are uploaded and posted to the City website three times daily. When asked about the lack of internal emails displayed for the Mayor, Ms. Oliver said that the posted email account is the only one Mayor Curry has and that he does not make a regular practice of conducting business through emails. The Mayor’s text messages can be made available through public records requests. Ms. Oliver described her tracking protocol for media records requests, which consists of a paper media inquiry form with a description, dates and results. These hard copy forms are stored in her office and not stored electronically. Ms. Oliver was also asked about City Department Directors and how they are less accessible to the media now than they were years ago. Ms. Oliver indicated that it is important to have a unified message from the administration, so any public statements are provided through the Public Affairs office or the Mayor’s Office and not through individual departments.

**Community Access to Government**

Two CPAC chairs, Mr. Tyson and Ms. Tappouni, were in attendance to speak to the Task Force about

their organizations and how community groups access government. Citizens Planning Advisory

Committees (CPACs) were first established in October 1993, by executive order from Mayor Ed Austin,

as an ongoing, grassroots public participation program to advise the Mayor. Jacksonville's more than 200

neighborhoods are divided into six planning districts each with a CPAC: Urban Core, Greater

Arlington/Beaches, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest and North.

CPAC members are appointed by the Mayor. Members are nominated through a variety of community,

civic, or government organizations located in their district. Eligibility for appointment is determined by

the Director of the Neighborhoods Department and the Planning and Development Department. Voting

members consist of one representative per organization and one alternate, to participate in the absence of

the primary representative. Individual citizens may attend meetings, but not join the CPAC as a voting

member unless they are affiliated with an approved neighborhood group.

Members of staff from various City Departments regularly attend CPAC meetings. There are also

occasions in which City Council Members are present as well. Historically, CPACs have also met with

the Mayor, but as of yet Mayor Curry has not held any CPAC meetings. The CPACs work closely with

the Neighborhoods Department and the chairs will be meeting quarterly with the administration (CAO

Sam Mousa). The primary concern from Mr. Tyson and Ms. Tappouni was creating more public

awareness about CPACs to counter the aging membership and to reach out to new members. It was

mentioned that networking with local colleges and universities could create a larger pool of potential

members. The two CPAC chairs also suggested that more prominence on the City’s webpage, a well-

publicized calendar and larger social media presence may increase public awareness of CPACs.

**Closing Comments**

Before adjourning the meeting, the Task Force members discussed all of the topics that had been

covered and potential planning ideas for future meetings. Regarding public records, more information was

requested to identify the source of any disconnect between perspectives of the media and administration.

The Task Force requested copies of the media inquiry forms mentioned by Ms. Oliver for the past six

months. Regarding CPACs, the consensus was that the organizations play an important role in connecting

community groups to government, but the structure and approval process could use some updating to be

more inclusive.

Possible recommendation to be included in report: random quality control of data and records

compliance.

Next meeting- Greg Bugbee, Chief Technology Officer of Novus Insight, Inc. will make a presentation

about technology and municipal governments. Marsha Oliver will coordinate with IT staff to be in

attendance to hear the presentation and be available for questions about current systems and

compatibility. The Task Force would also like Mayor Curry, or his designee, and Brian Hughes attend an

upcoming meeting.

**Public Comment**

Stanley Scott spoke about the importance of community engagement, particularly for youth.

Conrad Markle spoke about the need for the public to have free access to public records.

Both comment cards are on file.

With no further business, the Co-Chairs adjourned the meeting at 4:09 pm.

**The next Task Force Meeting will be Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 1:00 pm in the Lynwood Roberts Room, 117 West Duval Street, First Floor.**

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Posted 5.18.18 5:00 pm