

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Special Committee on Historical Remembrance**

**Meeting Minutes**

**March 12, 2019**

**1:30 p.m.**

**Location:** Lynwood Roberts Room, City Hall – St. James Building, 117 West Duval Street

**In attendance:** Council Members Scott Wilson (Chair), Greg Anderson; Anna Brosche, Terrance Freeman, Sam Newby, Randy White; Christian Popoli – Planning Department; Peggy Sidman, Jason Teal, and Steven Durden – Office of General Counsel; Chiquita Moore – Mayor’s Office; Crystal Shemwell and Ladayija Nichols – Legislative Division; Jeff Clements – Research Division

See sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

**Meeting Convened**: 1:35 p.m.

Chairman Scott Wilson called the meeting to order, and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Mr. Jason Teal was requested to provide information about a structure for the city to evaluate requests or acquisitions for monuments or other honorariums. He explained the two-step process utilized by the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB). The process includes an evaluation from a conceptual perspective and a final review. This process allows the developers to present a project idea for evaluation before investing significant resources. The project idea would be evaluated by a list of criteria to determine the City’s need or interest. If the idea receives the initial approval, the developer may proceed with obtaining design plans and resources to provide a more comprehensive presentation for the final review phase. Mr. Teal stated the DDRB has been utilizing this process for downtown projects since 2002.

Mr. Christian Popoli, Planning Department, suggested utilizing the Historic Landmark Request application process for monuments. NOTE: Background information, research documentation, and proposed language would be required with the application. The application would circulate among the appropriate city departments for staff review. The process also includes a review and a final decision provided by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). A denial in either phase may be appealed. How often HPC conducts reviews, details of maintenance agreements, and logistics of an appeal process are some questions that need to be discussed.

Ms. Peggy Sidman provided a review of the proposed Monument Policy. Part I provides an introduction to the city guidelines. Part II defines markers, statues, and other similar permanent structures. Part III lists the criteria for acceptance or installation of structures. Part IV establishes the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission as the reviewer and administrator of the policy. Part V discusses the donation and private funding of monuments. Part VI details the review process as mentioned by Mr. Popoli. Ms. Sidman commented the policy would cover new and existing structures.

In response to Council Member Anna Brosche’s inquiry, Mr. Popoli commented that the 30-year justification criteria was taken for the state’s historical marker policy. Also, the draft largely mirrors the state guidelines as it pertains to determining the merit of a statute. Council Member Brosche expressed concern that the criteria reference “balanced and impassionate” seems inevitably subjective, as does “highest importance.” She suggested language clarification regarding the City accepting or rejecting a monument request versus the HPC approval or denial. Ms. Sidman confirmed that the entire process, as drafted, does not involve the City Council. The decision making, as written, is the responsibility of JHPC.

In response to Council Member Hazouri, Ms. Sidman stated it’s a policy decision for the Council to have a role in the process. Also, she explained, as drafted, the bill is entirely externally funded by private parties who want to donate a monument. There is no need to create a fund at this point to accept private donations. The gift is expected to be presented all at once whether it’s an actual structure or the funds to cover the expenses (i.e., design, installation, maintenance). NOTE: Upon the City’s acceptance, it retains sole discretion of the future of the monument.

Council Member Greg Anderson inquired about the last monument gifted to the City and how the executive branch of government is involved in the process. Ms. Sidman commented that the various departments (Planning Department, JHPC, Public Works, Risk Management) were extensions of the executive branch. Mr. Popoli shared that the Planning Department would likely solicit the input of established citizen groups (i.e., Friends of Hemming Park, Friends of Memorial Park, RAP, etc.) regarding structures of interest. These groups would have the opportunity to speak at public hearings.

Council Member Brosche believes the draft provides a good direction for the committee to review and amend accordingly. A primary concern involves the 30-year minimum requirement versus other subjective criteria considering an event or structure’s significance in one part of the city may not be of importance in another area.

Chairman Wilson expressed wish to have a Council appeal process and a reasonable application fee for the cost of reviews. He thinks the HPC should decide the frequency to conduct application reviews; non-profit organizations should get the same 350-foot notification as property owners, and the 30-year requirement could be waived for extraordinary circumstances. Also, Chairman Wilson believes a detailed maintenance plan should be included with a cost estimate and that the private entity should pay for that maintenance.

Council Member Sam Newby agreed that the Council should be the entity to address appeals. He voiced his agreement to waiving the 30-year requirement for extraordinary circumstances.

Council Member Brosche requested information on the last five monuments accepted by the City in comparison to the draft policy. Ms. Sidman commented the data might be subjective since comparisons are based on the proposed guidelines.

Council Member Terrance Freeman thanked the staff for their work on the draft. He agreed with the other members and the direction of the policy. He acknowledged the former Eagle Scout that constructed the statue near the Veteran’s Memorial Arena. Council Member Freeman was the district chairman of the Shawnee District Boy Scout at that time.

The committee will meet in two weeks.

**Public Comment**

None

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:22 p.m.

The written minutes of this meeting are an overview of the discussion. The audio version of the meeting is filed in the Office of Legislative Services.

Minutes: Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research

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03.14.19 Posted 1:00 p.m.

Materials: Attendance Sheet and Handouts