

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

**Community Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**April 10, 2019**

**6:00 pm**

**Highlands Regional Library**

**1826 Dunn Ave, Jacksonville, FL**

Chair: Richard Danford

E. Joyce Bolden-Absent

Francois Brown

Constance Hall

Donna Webb

Lakesha Burton, Subject Matter Expert-EXCUSED

Stephen Siegal, Subject Matter Expert

**Topic:** Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction –Community Engagement Subcommittee

**Attendance:** Council Member Newby; Colleen Hampsey- Council Research; Crystal Shemwell and Jessica Smith - Legislative Services

For all other attendees please see the sign in sheet

**Meeting Convened:** 6:14 pm

Chairperson Danford convened the meeting and welcomed the members. This was the fourth meeting for the Community Engagement Subcommittee. Dr. Danford gave a brief explanation about the subcommittee’s mission, which is to focus on community action groups, develop ways to empower communities and neighborhood groups, provide avenues foe education and advocacy, help neighborhood groups realize they are the first line of defense to reducing crime and increasing neighborhood safety, inventory of existing programs.

Stephanie Burch, Director of the Neighborhoods Department, was in attendance to speak about the various functions of her department. Ms. Burch mentioned that it is difficult to find contractors to complete the rehab work on lien properties that are valued at $50,000 or less. There was a discussion about how contracts are bid and whether minority contractors are fairly included in the selection process. It was suggested that there could be more training available for prospective JSEB contractors to familiarize them with the process and more publicity associated with RFP announcements.

The Neighborhoods Department consists of the following divisions:

630-CITY Customer Service Center- for reporting issues and requests to the City

Animal Care & Protective Services- enforcement, community education, pet adoptions

Environmental Quality- administers and monitors the City of Jacksonville's air and water resource management activities, with particular emphasis on pollution control issues; testing water samples from the St. Johns River; responsibilities include air, odors, noise, surface water, groundwater, underground storage tanks, hazardous wastes, wetlands and wildlife. It also enforces laws related to environmental quality issues.

Housing and Community Development- The division consists of Housing Services, Community Development, Foreclosure Property Registry, and the Surplus Property Donation Program. An eleven-member Commission provides policy guidance to the division. The division also provides staff support to the Jacksonville Housing Finance Authority.

Landlord Training Program- is designed to help owners and managers keep illegal drug activity and other criminal activity off their property.

Mosquito Control- The division performs spraying as needed and educates the public about its role in reducing the mosquito population throughout the city.

Municipal Code Compliance- enforces property maintenance, safety, and zoning codes, which affect the quality of life in Jacksonville. These laws address property nuisance, unsafe structures, residential/commercial minimum building standards, zoning, and (private property) junk vehicle violations. There are currently 28 code compliance officers who are assigned to roughly 13,000 housing units each.

Neighborhood Blight- the Fight Blight initiative is working hard to combat and clean-up local neighborhoods with the help of engaged citizens.

Neighborhoods Property Administration- Foreclosure Property Registry, Foreclosure Intervention Program, Neighborhood Matching Grants Program, Real Estate Development GAP Assistance Program

Neighborhood Services Office- focuses on citizen participation and neighborhood improvements. This office coordinates the activities of the Neighborhood Coordinators, who work with neighborhood organizations, and six Citizen Planning Advisory Committees (CPACs).

Office of Consumer Affairs- investigates and mediates consumer complaints that cover a myriad of areas as they pertain to consumer fraud and/or protection.

Dr. Danford spoke about procedures for the public to communicate with the Mayor’s Office and City Council, outside of the public comment portion of council meetings. One attendee proposed more frequent/regularly scheduled town hall events to encourage open communication. However, it was also was said that some people are too busy or disenfranchised to participate in town hall events. Several attendees said that there needs to be more public messaging to inform the public about upcoming meetings. Ms. Hall proposed mobile community engagement trucks, like book mobiles used in years past.

CPACs were also mentioned as a vehicle for accessing government officials during meetings, though it was noted that CPACs are not necessarily representative of the city due to the generational gap in membership. It was also said that the city needs a reoccurring event to celebrate city-wide unity. One attendee spoke about the geographic accessibility of City Council members, as they are located downtown and not in the actual districts they represent.

With no further business, Chairperson Danford adjourned the meeting. The next subcommittee meeting will be a joint meeting with Subcommittee Chairs - Workforce Training, Community Engagement, & Business Partnerships April 19 at 10:00 am.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:45 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted 4.15.19 5:00 pm

Tape: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Community Engagement Subcommittee -Legislative Services Division 4.10.19