



Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission

Niki Brunson – Chair

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2019

1:00 p.m.

City Council Conference Room B

Suite 425, City Hall

Attendance: Commissioners John Roberts (Chair), Mark Merritt

Excused:

Also: Jeff Clements – Council Research Division

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Jeff Clements distributed the draft report and asked several questions about formatting and page numbering. Several pages were accidentally omitted from the draft, so they will be added and the document repaginated.

Commissioner Merritt asked about a figure cited in the report that Jacksonville ranks fairly low in park expenditures compared to other large cities and wondered how the percentage of active versus passive acres affects that spending figure for Jacksonville (which has a large number of park acreage in undeveloped conservation uses versus other cities that are much more focused on active parks rather than conservation). Mr. Merritt also wondered whether the person doing the park inspections affects the outcome and reporting of those inspections – would you get different results from inspections by maintenance foremen assigned to maintain those parks versus a departmental inspector reviewing all parks citywide? He felt that a Jacksonville-specific methodology would probably produce better results than the benchmarking methodology with other jurisdictions, given the difficulty of getting information from other cities and the greater familiarity of Jacksonville's Parks, Recreation and Community Services personnel with their park needs.

In response to a question from Chairman Roberts, Mr. Merritt, a retired City employee, explained the difference between capital expenditures that are and are not in the 5-year Capital Improvement Program. All items value at \$1,000 or more and with an expected lifespan of 10 years or more are considered capital items and must be inventoried, tracked and depreciated until they are eventually disposed of. CIP capital projects are projects that cost over \$100,000, some of which may well also involve on-going operational expenses in addition to the original construction or purchase cost. Mr. Merritt described the changes in the City's CIP programs over the years, from a wish list of thousands of projects, some of which were never likely to be built, to a much more simplified, concrete plan of projects realistically expected to be funded and completed within 5 years.

Labor costs are likely a large percentage of the operating costs of the department (along with day-to-day supplies). The committee did not know to what extent the City budgets for preventive maintenance on any

basis other than historical expenditure patterns or currently available resources. With more effort applied to maintenance expenditure record-keeping, cost estimation and estimation of the lifespans of capital items, more accurate estimates of annual funding needs could be generated. The group discussed the merits of developing reserve funds to handle foreseeable future expenditures, which is not the City's current practice.

The commissioners discussed whether to send the draft report to the full commission before or after sending it to the Parks Department for their review. After some discussion it was decided to send it to the department for its review and comment prior to distributing it to the full commission for their consideration.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

Jeff Clements, City Council Research Division

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Posted 4.10.19 5:30 p.m.

Tape –4.10.19 TRUE Parks and Recreation Committee – Legislative Services Division