

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

**Neighborhoods Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**May 2, 2019**

**3:30 pm**

**Don Davis Room**

**First Floor, City Hall**

**117 W. Duval Street**

Chair: Ronnie King

E. Joyce Bolden-Absent

Amy Donofrio-Excused

Josh Cockrell-Excused

Ben Frazier-Absent

Larry Cook

Sam Harrison

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

**Attendance:** Colleen Hampsey- Council Research; Crystal Shemwell - Legislative Services

For all other attendees please see the sign in sheet

**Meeting Convened:** 3:32pm

Chairperson King convened the meeting and welcomed the members. This was the fourth meeting of the Neighborhoods Subcommittee. Mr. King asked for a research update: the public records request to JSO is still outstanding, the SAO conviction data is still being gathered and juvenile arrest data was submitted to the chair and will be distributed to the other members. The subcommittee also asked if they could receive the reports they got from the Neighborhoods department at a previous meeting in a spreadsheet format. The members then discussed six characteristics of safe and healthy neighborhoods.

1. Access to affordable grocery stores – Many parts of the city are labeled as food deserts, due to the lack of traditional grocery stores or markets which sell fresh meat and produce. There is currently a food study being conducted by consultants for the Office of Economic Development. The subcommittee recommends that the City keep working on this issue to address the needs of the residents of those areas. The members also mentioned incentives for small grocers to move to underserved areas.
2. Adequate street and sidewalk lighting – The subcommittee received a presentation from JEA at the last meeting, in which they were told about the street light transition to LED bulbs. The project is 87 percent completed, so the members will recommend finishing the conversion. The group also talked about the installation of additional lighting in some neighborhoods to deter crime, which JEA will do with an installation and service fees. The subcommittee may recommend City subsidies for residents who need more lighting but can’t afford the cost.
3. Access to parks, libraries and community centers- The subcommittee discussed park conditions and asked if they could get more information about usage, maintenance and repair schedules.
4. Limited abandoned properties, underutilized properties and blight- The group discussed how to get the local business community involved with the rehabilitation of abandoned homes, specifically minority contractors. It was said that any City owned abandoned or under-utilized properties could be donated to nonprofits or turned into community gardens. The members requested more information from the Neighborhoods department to clarify which under-utilized City owned properties are vacant and which have existing structures.
5. Access to transportation – The subcommittee asked about JTA routes, frequency of stops (especially on the Northside of the city), and the distance between bus stops. The JTA representative who attended the last meeting will be requested to answer those questions. One member suggested a City-owned Uber type of service, to make sure residents of all neighborhoods have access to transportation.
6. Vibrant local small businesses – The group talked about City incentives for businesses to locate on the North and Northwest sides of town and the possibility of incentives for contractors to work on abandoned properties in high crime areas. The subcommittee may recommend that another diversity study be conducted to make sure that minority contractors have equal access to the bidding process for City contracts.

Lt. Lamb, Community Engagement -Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, was in attendance to speak about neighborhood watch programs, and environmental design to decrease crime. JSO has several officers who are trained in CPTED, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. CPTED utilizes techniques such as improved lighting and trimmed hedges to reduce crime by creating an environment less attractive to criminals. This is a free service available to owners of newly constructed or renovated properties. JSO also performs site security for property owners to identify potential safety risks. If unlimited funding was available, Lt. Lamb said they could conduct site security for the whole city, but they currently only have the budget for 15-17 officers who work on crime prevention. It may be recommended by the subcommittee that site security evaluations be mandated in the building permitting process. LT. Lamb spoke about JSO’s apartment watch program, in which apartment managers are (voluntarily) trained in crime reduction methods and receive ratings for certification. The group spoke about code enforcement and neighborhood regulations, as ways to deter/reduce crime, and whether there need to be more code compliance officers to meet the needs of this large city.

With no further business, Chairperson King adjourned the meeting. The next Neighborhoods Subcommittee meeting has yet to be scheduled.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 5:10 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Tape: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Neighborhoods Subcommittee -Legislative Services Division 5.2.19