

City of Jacksonville

*1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street*



Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 15, 2019

9:00 AM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall

Safety and Crime Reduction Commission

*Mark Griffin, Chair
Sam Newby, Vice Chair
Matt Carlucci - Excused
Camille Burban
Josh Cockrell
Larry Cook
Richard Danford - Excused
Frank Denton
Sabrina Edwards
Tom Geismar
Brandon Griggs - Excused
William (W.C.) Gentry
Ellen Glasser
Shelley Grant
Constance Hall
Linda Joseph
Ronnie King
Timothy Sloan
Vicki Waytowich - Excused
Shamika Baker Wright - Excused*

*Crystal Shemwell, Legislative Services Supervisor
Carol Owens, City Council Staff*

Meeting Convened: 9:01 am

Meeting Adjourned: 10:45 am

Attendance:

Colleen Hampsey, Council Research; Melanie Wilkes and Ladayija Nichols, Legislative Services

I. Call to Order – Chairman

II. Opening Remarks & Greetings

Chairman Griffin convened the meeting at 9:01 am and welcomed the group. Before beginning with the agenda items, the Chair requested that at the next meeting there be a presentation from the State Attorney's Office on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee report which was released in June of this year. Commissioner Grant will make the arrangements for the presentation. Also, CM Newby said that the new commission vice-chair has not yet been appointed so for the time being he will still be the vice-chair and will not vote on any actions.

III. Review of Minutes – 10.29.19 Commission Meeting

The members approved the meeting agenda and, after reviewing the October 29th meeting minutes, approved those as well.

IV. Review of Task Force Recommendations and Accomplishments

The Chair reviewed the Safety and Crime Reduction Task Force final report as submitted to council in May, noting that the previous work should be built upon by the commission. Chair Griffin said that the priorities listed in the report - asset mapping and risk factors, the quality and quantity of programming, unemployment in certain parts of the city, and mentoring - will form the foundation of the commission's approach.

Commissioner Denton said that the Task Force juvenile justice subcommittee found that the root causes of crime need to be examined; and that the commission should advocate for change at the state level to include more vocational training in prisons.

Commissioner Glasser said that the family engagement subcommittee recommended a public awareness campaign to notify residents about available services and resources. Ms. Glasser also commented that it would be beneficial to connect with those who commit crimes to see what services they did or did not get in order to identify methods to reduce crime through prevention.

Commissioner Gentry said that vocational training is needed in the local jail as well, and that more diversion programs are needed, noting that the previous State Attorney did not utilize the option enough. Mr. Gentry also mentioned the need for program assessment and oversight to gauge efficacy, as the Jacksonville Journey did.

Commissioner Sloan said that while there is merit to offering robust vocational training to those incarcerated, the problem with re-entry is that those released have to return to the same community when they get out. Those communities are often experiencing poverty and high unemployment, diminishing the value of the training one may have received.

V. Discussion of Factors that Lead to Crime

Chairman Griffin described a potential database in which certain risk factors are identified and correlated with those who commit violent crimes, which would be created through collaboration with JSO. By outlining a portrait of risk factors, it may be more clear how to deploy resources to prevent such crimes.

Included among the list of risk factors are: age, gender, race, sexual identity, zip code of residence and incident, mentoring, after school program participation, finances, education, arrest history, drug/alcohol abuse, employment, housing, family incarceration, exposure to violence/domestic violence, gang activity, and access to guns.

Other factors suggested for inclusion: answers to the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire, family composition, religious involvement, parental educational attainment, neighborhood culture/norms, physical/sexual abuse.

Commissioner Joseph said that the database should include two columns, risk factors and services received.

Commissioner King said that the commission needs prescribed goals, both short and long term, to determine success. Mr. King also reminded the group that violent crimes are committed by a small percentage of the population and that many people live with the same risk factors and do not commit crimes. Commissioner Geismar agreed, noting that there should be an examination of protective factors also.

Commissioner Hall spoke about neighborhood culture, building community trust, and sustainability of programs and policies throughout changes in administrations. Commissioner Gentry spoke about partnering with the Charter Review Commission to share data related to poverty. Mr. Gentry also asked about the availability of a full time staff person/administrator, as specified in the ordinance which created the commission. At this time there is no funding for such a position and the commission will be supported by existing council staff.

There was a discussion about what emergency measures might be undertaken immediately to reduce crime, such as the mini grants which were distributed by the administration last year following a shooting at a high school football game. The mini grant application process was expedited and some of the commissioners questioned the level of oversight and reporting. Commissioner Glasser suggested that there be more efforts to help organizations apply for grants. Ms. Glasser also cautioned the group to not use the word 'profile' as a synonym for risk factors or portrait, as there is a derogatory connotation with that term.

The Chair proposed future presentations from Cure Violence and KHA and a follow up on the mini grant process from the Mayor's Office.

Commissioner Edwards talked about using best practices when examining the quality of mentor programming. Rob Mason, Public Defender's Office, spoke about the need to

include youth voices in the commission's work to find out what is really happening in the community.

There will be a subcommittee formed to work on creating the risk factor/portrait of the community database, and to map community assets. Commissioners King, Grant, Denton, Burban, Sloan and Joseph volunteered to be on the subcommittee and they will deliver a preliminary report by the December 6th meeting.

VI. Public Comments – 3 Minutes Each

Public comment- Preston Harris advocated for more action and less talking; Stanley Scott spoke about the need for effective leadership in the city.

VII. Wrap-Up and Adjournment

The next meeting of the full commission will be on December 6th, 2019.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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