

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425

4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

904-630-1377

**CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

**URBAN SERVICES DISTRCT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - amended**

**Don Davis Room, 1st floor, City Hall**

 **December 6, 2019**

**2:30 p.m.**

**In attendance:** Commissioners Ann-Marie Knight (Chair), Frank Denton, Charles Griggs, Celestine Mills

**Also**: Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Jeff Clements and Anthony Baltiero – Council Research Division; Crystal Shemwell and Jessica Smith – Legislative Services Division

**Meeting Convened**: 2:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 15th meeting were **approved unanimously as distributed**.

Update from Full Commission Meeting

For the benefit of Commissioner Knight who was not present at the last full commission meeting, Commissioner Griggs reviewed the lengthy debate about how or if the subject of General Counsel issues should be discussed, given the vote of the full commission to rank the topics and to not assign General Counsel issues to a specific committee. Commissioner Denton elaborated on the General Counsel discussion and the varying opinions about whether a particular committee could or could not take up that issue and noted that a vote was taken to allow a committee to discuss it if it was determined to be relevant to their work. Chairwoman Knight reacted to a comment on the amount of data the committee is studying as part of its work. She wondered if the Urban Services Committee should share its work with the Strategic Planning Committee as potentially being relevant to its work. Commissioner Mills said that her reading of the Blueprint for Improvement II report found that there are already existing dedicated funding sources for needs in the urban core area and perhaps the new recommendation should be to emphasize and encourage adoption of those previous recommendations. She wondered what direction the committee should be taking. Chairwoman Knight said that the month of December is the month for data analysis, which will turn into analysis of conditions and development of recommendations in January and February. Ms. Knight said she is scheduling meetings with individual City Council members to ask them about their interests.

Commissioner Denton said that it’s too early to worry about funding sources and he wants the committee to focus on 1) how to address perceived failure to live up to the promises of consolidation, and 2) to create an agency like the DIA that can focus on the intense poverty areas of the city to evaluate service provision, catalog all of the service providing agencies, public and private, and coordinate a strategic response to remedy the conditions. Funding discussion can come later after the problem is identified and quantified. Commissioner Griggs said there have been and are many programs and initiatives to tackle community problems, but they have been perpetually underfunded. The solution will be to increase funding and focus attention and effort on really dealing with the fundamental underlying issues. Commissioner Mills asked that Eunice Barnum and Gary Thomas be invited to a future meeting to talk about their experiences of the failures to address the needs of the urban core. Ms. Knight said that previously suggested speakers include Alton Yates, Denise Lee, Aundra Wallace and Warren Jones. Ms. Mills asked if research could be done on City expenditures in the urban core in the last 5 years. She had previously asked Jessica Matthews who suggested that Council Auditor Kyle Billy might be able to answer the question.

Data Review

Chairwoman Knight distributed and discussed a document she had compiled based on information provided by the Council Research Division that compared infrastructure conditions in the city and county in 1966 versus 2019. She noted that a Water and Sewer Expansion Authority was created in 2003 to try and address the expansion of water and sewer systems but was subsequently disbanded in 2011 after failing to develop a sufficient funding stream to accomplish its purposes. The committee felt that comparisons of the past and present are difficult given the differences in data sources; a map could help make things clearer. Ms. Knight distributed and discussed the ranking methodology used by the Health Department and the Public Works Department to prioritize the phase-out of septic tanks; she noted a discrepancy between the Public Works Department’s 15 criteria (one of which is “development prior to 1968”) and the Health Department’s septic tank priority rankings based only on criteria 1A and 2-8. Why did the Health Department ranking not include the other factors, including the pre-consolidation factor? The committee asked for more information from someone with expertise on the septic tank ranking issue.

Guest Speaker - Lori Boyer

Ms. Boyer, former City Council member, Chair of the Task Force on Consolidated Government, and currently CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority, discussed the findings and recommendations of the Task Force with regard to promises of consolidation. When JEA took over water and sewer in 1997 they made it clear that they did not extend water and sewer lines to new areas, they considered that a City responsibility. The City did not prioritize that function because water and sewer were now a JEA function. The Task Force recommended that the City and the independent authorities look at all urban services (water, sewer, curb and gutter, streetlights, etc.) and determine how long-standing service deficiencies could be remedied. On the City side, research found that a large proportion of capital expenditures were already going into old core city urban areas because the infrastructure there was so old and needed rebuilding, so mandating percentages of the CIP to different areas was not the answer because the needs varied so widely and might actually be counterproductive in some instances. Ms. Boyer discussed the City’s septic tank phase-out ranking criteria, which she liked because it considered so many factors and took community conditions into consideration. The Health Department’s ranking only takes into account actual or potential environmental impacts on ground and surface waters. She thought the City’s septic tank ranking methodology could be used to analyze and rank other service inadequacies.

Commissioner Griggs asked who was envisioned to manage the process of remedying the service deficiencies. Ms. Boyer said it would depend on what agency normally did that kind of work. Septic tanks were a different matter because of several factors (JEA bond covenants and rate structure) preventing the JEA from handling it, so the City and JEA agreed to partner on a process using City funds and a portion of the JEA’s annual contribution to the City in lieu of the authority expending funds directly on the projects. Mr. Griggs said that coordination and oversight is vital to achieve the end goal, and it should probably be done at a level above the individual department level, perhaps by a new agency. Ms. Boyer said that her group talked about that model but ultimately determined it to be anti-consolidation and wanted to minimize independent authorities and keep functions consolidated as much as possible to ensure accountability. They attempted to craft recommendations that would allow/mandate existing agencies to deal with urban core issues rather than create new entities. She believes allowing creation of sub-county districts that get to keep their own revenue would not be in the best interest of the urban core since it has fewer resources than other parts of the city. Mr. Griggs used the example of a bicycle wheel with a broken spoke or a chain with a broken link – that single link must be addressed if the whole entity is to move forward. A dedicated effort is needed both at the local level and the citywide level to address the problems of the neighborhoods. Ms. Boyer clarified her earlier comments about the septic tank prioritization methodology and offered to send a copy to the committee.

Commissioner Denton talked about the mission of the DIA to focus intently and solely on the needs of the downtown area and conveyed that the committee has been considering the same type of methodology for the urban core area. Ms. Boyer said that she sees value in having a few people in the government solely dedicated to addressing urban core issues. DIA’s boundaries coincide with those of the downtown Community Redevelopment Areas (which generate tax increment revenue) and the Downtown Development of Regional Impact (which provides zoning power and development control). An Urban Core Investment Authority wouldn’t have either of those two things, so wouldn’t have the basic assets that DIA uses to do its work. DRIs have gone away and the state legislature is very anti-TIF. Commissioner Denton suggested at least the need for an urban core strategic plan that quantifies and prioritizes the needs. He cited an example from Madison, WI where coordinated teams of people from different agencies came together to deal with youth who got involved in the criminal justice system. Ms. Boyer said that mayoral administrations have several times tried programs that attacked problems in target neighborhoods, but those initiatives have come and gone as administrations changed. She said that continuity is a perpetual problem in Jacksonville – programs and pilot projects come and go every few years. Commissioner Griggs said the committee has seen data showing that the urban core lags the rest of the city in every kind of indicator and felt that something different or unique has to be tried. The old programs have not worked over the decades, so new tactics need to be employed. Ms. Boyer offered a final thought and a caution - don’t isolate yourself from the rest of the city or you will become an island about which no one else cares and be left to your own devices. It’s better to have your problems be relevant to the whole city so that everyone cares what happens to your area.

Guests Speaker – Dawn Lockhart

Dawn Lockhart, the Mayor’s Director of Strategic Partnerships, said Mayor Curry convened a committee (Mayor’s Non-Profit Interface Subcommittee) early in his administration to look at ways to substantively engage with the non-profit/philanthropic and business sectors to meet substantial problems in the community. There are unlimited needs but only limited resources to deal with them. It’s not necessarily more money that’s needed, but better coordination of what’s being done. There are at least 1,000 organizations doing something in Jacksonville and the task of the Steering Committee is to identify and coordinate the many things they’re doing to maximize the overall effect. Philanthropic giving in Jacksonville is somewhat less than in other cities, so focusing and leveraging limited resources is very important. Her office aspires to be a trusted advocate, a data source, a resource identifier, and a facilitator. Recent accomplishments: 1) disaster preparedness, response and recovery (Long-term Recovery Organization, First Coast Relief Fund); 2) Mayor’s Downtown Homeless Task Force (Urban Rest Stop, mobile medical and social service buses); 3) Mayor’s Youth at Work Partnership (career pathways for youth, KHA Essential Services Plan); and 4) non-profit capacity building (non-profit gateway, COJ town halls, Philanthropic Roundtable). The Strategic Partnerships Steering Committee ~~has~~ is working to develop~~ed~~ a 1-3-5 Year Strategic Plan. They are attempting to identify which partnerships are most poised for success and need to be supported and coordinate intake and case management for people who seek help from numerous organizations. There is a need to align public, private and philanthropic strategies, metrics and outcomes. Government can’t possibly take care of all the needs in a community and needs to leverage the non-profit and philanthropic communities to get the job done. Ms. Lockhart said that she organizes quarterly meetings at the Jessie Ball duPont offices to have non-profit leaders meet with City department heads to discuss common issues, concerns and initiatives.

Chairwoman Knight said the committee has been grappling with the question of how to focus and align existing resources to deal with the needs of the urban core and asked Ms. Lockhart how she would approach the committee’s task. Ms. Lockhart said she would offer the six CPACs (Citizen Planning Advisory Committees) as a fundamental part of the answer that, with guidance and direction, could help identify problems and deficiencies in the community and bring them to the attention of the City via an existing infrastructure. In response to a question from Commissioner Griggs about the most pressing need in the community that needs to be tackled, Ms. Lockhart said it’s collaboration and alignment of existing resources to get the most out of them to address the community’s needs. Mr. Griggs asked about the mobile medical and social services buses. Ms. Lockhart said they will be a “mobile urban rest stop” to reach out to the community with a variety of services. In response to a question from Mr. Griggs about who runs the youth career pathways program, Ms. Lockhart said it started out in Mayor’s Office and now is in the Kids Hope Alliance as part of its essential services plan. Mr. Griggs asked about what types of outcomes are expected from the philanthropic roundtables. Ms. Lockhart said the intention is to develop awareness of partnership opportunities to go after grants in a coordinated way and not have organizations competing against each other. Jacksonville loses out if we have multiple less-qualified applications going after funding than one really strong application. US HUD and the National Council on Foundations will be giving Jacksonville an award for this collaborative approach, which will be a feather in Jacksonville’s cap in the philanthropic world.

Commissioner Denton asked about Ms. Lockhart’s previous job with the Family Foundations and specifically their 1,000 in 1,000 program to lift 1,000 families out of poverty every 1,000 days. She said the Women’s Giving Alliance started funding initiatives and that ultimately spawned LiftJax which will be making some public announcements shortly about the success of its work. Mr. Denton asked about the success of anti-poverty programs in general. Ms. Lockhart reiterated that over 1,000 non-profits are working in the community along with the City and many philanthropic givers. She likes to look at the situation from an asset perspective – Jacksonville has lots of assets, some of which are not being used to their fullest capacity. The biggest need is to be sure that the many available resources get into the hands of the people who need them most. Commissioner Denton said the committee has been thinking about a mechanism such as a DIA for the urban core to focus attention and plan and program to deal with the issues. Ms. Lockhart said she sees great value in increasing coordination but echoed Ms. Boyer’s earlier caution about becoming isolated and single-focused to the exclusion of the interest of the rest of the community. Commissioner Mills asked about the non-profit town hall meetings; Ms. Lockhart will ensure that the meeting dates are on the City’s web site.

Mr. Griggs felt that the urban core’s needs exist in part because other parts of the city have benefitted at its expense for years and there should be no stigma involved in focusing intensive effort on neighborhoods in true need. Ms. Lockhart said that she believes that research would show that a majority of the available non-profit services and funding are going to residents in the most needy neighborhoods. Mr. Griggs said that there needs to be intentionality about addressing years of neglect. Mr. Denton recalled the mayoral election between Alvin Brown and Mike Hogan in which Mr. Hogan said that downtown was “just another neighborhood” and said that the public disagreed with that stance in electing Mayor Brown and his platform of downtown redevelopment. He believes the creation of the DIA reflected the community’s expression of the belief in the need for a strong downtown. Similarly, the community as a whole might be persuaded of the importance of revitalizing the urban core as a way to tackle issues of poverty and crime that affect the whole community. Dawn Lockhart repeated her support for using the existing infrastructure of the CPACs to tackle the identified problems.

Chairwoman Knight noted that staff had distributed documents regarding the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund and urged the members to read the documents for discussion at a future meeting.

Commissioner Mills said that she has contacted several council members about her assigned task and will be ready to discuss at a future meeting.

The group decided that a topic for the next meeting is to learn more about CPACs and what they do. Ms. Mills said she would invite the Chair of her CPAC. Jeff Clements explains that the CPACs originated under Mayor Ed Austin in the 1990s were created by Executive Order, therefore are not in Ordinance Code or Charter. They can be disbanded whenever a mayor decides to revoke the Executive Order. He understands that the CPACs all operate somewhat differently from each other, although they share some common characteristics. Three neighborhood coordinators in the Neighborhoods Department support the work of the 6 CPACs.

The group discussed holding meetings January 10, 17 and 24th from 9 to 11. The 17th didn’t work for several committee members and will be canceled. Mr. Denton also can’t attend on the 10th as he will be out of town.

Public Comment

Stanley Scott of the African American Economic Recovery Think Tank complained about public comment being at the end of the meeting. He believes it should be after the guest speakers but before the committee does its committee work such as meeting scheduling and discussion of future meeting topics. America used to be first in the world in education and it’s not that way any more. Jacksonville has very poor leadership and is run by a clique of self-interested people. Lots of people are willing to put their heart and soul into Jacksonville but they never get invited to the table. He has a friend who has tried for 3 years to get his septic tank removed and would be a great resource for the committee to hear from. Social and civic engagement is what’s needed.

**Meeting adjourned:** 4:34 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

jeffc@coj.net (904) 255-5137

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