

City of Jacksonville

1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street



Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 6, 2019

9:00 AM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall

Safety and Crime Reduction Commission

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

Crystal Shemwell, Legislative Services Supervisor
Carol Owens, City Council Staff
Colleen Hampsey, Research Assistant

Meeting convened: 9:02 am

Meeting adjourned: 12:02 pm

Excused: Commissioners Edwards and Baker Wright, CM Carlucci; Charles Moreland, Mayor's Office; Donald Horner, Kids Hope Alliance

Attendance: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research; Carol Owens and Melanie Wilkes, Council Staff

I. Call to Order – Chairman

Chairman Griffin convened the meeting at 9:02 am and welcomed all of the commission members.

II. Opening Remarks & Greetings

Chairman Griffin said that the SAO presentation would take place after the subcommittee report, as Ms. Lambert had not yet arrived.

III. Review of Minutes – 11.15.19 Safety and Crime Reduction Commission Meeting

The members reviewed the minutes from the November 15th meeting. The motion to approve those minutes was passed unanimously.

**IV. Presentation – Laura Lotham Lambert – JJAC Recommendations & Implementation
Damian Cook – Current City of Jacksonville Crime Prevention Efforts**

Laura Lothman Lambert, Director of the State Attorney's Office Juvenile Division, presented the findings from the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC). JJAC was established by State Attorney Melissa Nelson in 2017 and included 23 community members with expertise in the field. The JJAC report with recommendations was released in June 2019. The group's primary focus was on juvenile diversion programs and best practices. Ms. Lambert said that since 2015, juvenile arrests in Duval County have declined by 41 percent, mostly attributed to the use of pre-arrest diversion/civil citations. There was a 128 percent increase in the number of civil citations issued in Duval County from 2016 to 2018. Of the population in Jacksonville who are under the age of 18, roughly 1 percent were arrested last year.

Civil citations may be given to qualified juveniles who commit misdemeanor or municipal law violations; offenses associated with the use and/or possession of firearms, or certain traffic offenses are ineligible. Juveniles may be issued civil citations rather than be arrested and enter the criminal justice system. Additionally, when a civil citation is issued the juvenile is referred to a Teen Court or Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB). Juveniles who successfully complete the program will have no arrest record of their offense. Sanctions from a Teen Court or NAB typically include a community service hours, letters of apology, essays on behavior that led to issuance of citation, drug testing and drug abuse counseling, mental health counseling and family participation. The recidivism rates for civil citation recipients are lower than for other juveniles who are arrested and/or incarcerated. There is also a financial savings associated with the civil citation program from decreasing the costs for arrest, processing, and supervision. Commissioner Sloan spoke about Neighborhood Accountability Boards, on which he has volunteered, and how they engage the whole family and all involved parties in the process.

The primary JJAC recommendations were: transfer diversion programming from the State Attorney's Office to the Kids Hope Alliance; implement a case management structure for diversion that tailors services and programs based on a needs assessment instrument; develop a continuum of available diversion programs, which includes restorative justice and credible messenger mentorship pilot programs, and a pathways-to-career program; limit the State Attorney's Office's role in diversion to the front-end (referral) and back-end (successful or unsuccessful completion) only; eliminate the initial judicial hearing required for diversion participation; eliminate all jail tours from prevention and diversion programming; school and community requests for diversion programming should go directly to the Kids Hope Alliance, not to the State Attorney's Office, eliminating at-large referrals; make post-completion services available for children and families who choose to engage in the services beyond the child's completion of diversion.

The SAO has already acted upon some JJAC recommendations, specifically the

elimination all jail tours from prevention and diversion programming which generally produce negative effects in which juveniles had worse outcomes than youth who did not go through the programs. The SAO also agrees that diversion programs should be moved out of the State Attorney's Office, and instead be managed by the Kids Hope Alliance. KHA was created to serve as a central coordinator for children's programming and provide funding and resources to youth and community-based programs that serve youth. Juvenile justice is one of the KHA's five Essential Services categories. The management of diversion programming and determining which entities will implement diversion programming following transfer from the SAO will go through the formalized City Request for Proposals process.

KHA has roughly \$500,000 budgeted for juvenile diversion programming. Chairman Griffin asked whether those funds will be sufficient for the services. Ms. Lambert said that most diversion program funding comes from the state or federal grants. The SAO currently has funding only for the staff needed to implement their diversion program. Commissioner Gentry expressed frustration with the manner in which the previous State Attorney handled diversion/civil citations and other juvenile cases and skepticism with putting another responsibility on KHA. Commissioner King was hopeful that the SAO can share some data which might be helpful to the commission.

V. Update from Data and Research Subcommittee

Ronnie King, Chair of the Data and Research Subcommittee, presented a report from their first meeting on December 3rd. Mr. King said that the group decided that Jacksonville Sheriff's officers making arrests would not be the appropriate persons to be collecting data. The subcommittee also considered what sorts of crimes to be considered for analysis and decided to confer with the full commission before deciding. There was some discussion of just examining the case history behind murders, as the number of individuals would be smaller, but the commission consensus was to consider aggravated assault, attempted murder and murder. Commissioner Joseph mentioned the need to look at more than zip code and family structure, but also varied program participation (after school, summer jobs, re-entry services etc). Ms. Grant and Dr. Waytowich spoke about qualitative data collection and the importance of including protective factors as well as risk factors. Commissioner Glasser said that perhaps the commission should look into which crimes are declining and focus upon those less. Rob Mason, Public Defender's Office, said that social factors are collected from their clients but that confidentiality must be considered in order to share that data. Any data would have to be presented de-identified and in aggregate form.

Commissioner Danford spoke about the neighborhood bill of rights and the need for citizen input into anti-crime efforts. Dr. Danford also asked about how much money the City is expending on crime reduction programs already and how those programs are evaluated for effectiveness. Commissioner Denton talked about a temporary sub-subcommittee that will study existing academic criminological research and will include Commissioners Grant and Waytowich. Commissioner Sloan spoke about how much data is already out there and accessible. Mr. Sloan also talked about the urgency of action and the importance of speaking to people on the street about what is happening in their communities. Commissioner Geismar talked about assessing how personally invested people are in various programs/services, as well as the connection between neuroscience and aging out of criminal behavior. Commissioner Griggs emphasized the value of youth involvement, particularly at-risk youth. The Chair agreed and added that the city needs more programs designed for teens. Chairman Griffin also said that the commission has a need for a full time administrator in the upcoming months.

Damien Cook, City of Jacksonville Grants Administrator

Damien Cook, Grants Administrator, was in attendance to speak about City funded crime reduction programming, specifically Cure Violence. Cure Violence uses a public-health approach that treats violence under the idea that violence is a contagion that can be controlled. Cure Violence is based upon the philosophy that violence behaves like a contagious disease, transmitted through exposure, acquired through contagious brain mechanisms and social processes, and can be effectively treated and prevented using health methods. The program uses an approach designed to stop the spread of violence by using the methods and strategies associated with public health methods/disease control: detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating the highest risk individuals, and changing social norms. In March 2019, the City appropriated \$764,823 for Cure Violence and \$1,595,000 in September 2019.

The program was implemented this year in the city's Northwest and Eastside target areas and is administered by the Northwest Jacksonville Community Development Corp. and the Noah's Ark Project, respectively. Cure Violence brings in local staffers, with historical criminal experiences, as quasi-caseworkers, some with an outreach function, others responding to violence by trying to stop potential retaliation. They will be familiar, non-threatening individuals who do not report to and are unaffiliated with law enforcement. Mr. Cook compared violence in neighborhoods to microorganisms in the spread of plague in the middle ages, particularly in the manner that both regionally cluster, spread from one location to another and are transmitted between individuals through exposure. Being the victim of or exposed to violence greatly increases risks and alters community norms. Mr. Cook also noted that since the program began in Jacksonville there are already initial positive results, with multiple conflicts de-escalated or diffused. Dr. Danford asked about the restoration of rights after release from prison, but Mr. Cook indicated that right now the focus for Cure Violence is getting individuals to put down their guns. The goal is more to persuade would-be shooters not to acquire guns, and not to use them on one another, rights restoration would be down the road.

Mr. Cook spoke briefly about the Richard A. McKissick Memorial Re-Entry DAWN Program, a grant-funded program within the City's Office of Grants and Compliance. The DAWN program works with incarcerated adults, ages 18+, who are housed in JSO facilities, to provide GED and Adult Basic Education instruction, life skills training, and transitional counseling classes. DAWN also provides access to job training and soft skills.

Stephen Siegel, SAO, recommended a book to the group, "Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence--and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets" by Thomas Abt. The book discusses urban crime and possible ways to reduce it, by fundamentally rethinking how law enforcement and other government resources are used.

VI. Public Comments – 3 Minutes Each

Stanley Scott spoke about the leadership problem in the city. Another attendee expressed frustration with current crime trends. Kimberly Miller, Director of Governmental Relations at Duval County Public Schools, extended the DCPS superintendant's support for the commission's work.

VII. Wrap-Up and Adjournment

There will be a meeting for the academic research sub-subcommittee on January 14th, 2020. The next full commission meeting will be scheduled some time after the holidays.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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