

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONTINUED OPERATIONS**

**Virtual meeting via Zoom – no physical location**

**August 5, 2020**

**11:30 a.m.**

**Location:** Virtual meeting via Zoom – no physical location

**In attendance:** Subcommittee members Garrett Dennis (Chair), Angela DeMonbreun, Bruce Fouraker, Sandra Fradd, Ashantae Green, Lisa King, Joe Loretta, Amanda Polematidis, Jim Robinson, Jim Seaton, Nikole Ward

**Also**: City Council Member Randy DeFoor, Michael Boylan, Joyce Morgan; Special Committee members Brooks Andrews Susan Kelly, Guillermo Simon, John Sapora; Jeff Clements, Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Steve Cassada, Eric Grantham and Melanie Wilkes – Council Support Services; Susan Stewart – Jaxport; John Pappas – Public Works Department; Bill Killingsworth and Kristen Reed – Planning and Development Department; Susan Grandin – Office of General Counsel; Kurtis Wilson and Hai Vu – JEA; Sean Lahav – North East Florida Regional Council; Phillip Peterson, Heather Reber and Tommy Carter – Council Auditor’s Office; James Richardson – Environmental Protection Board

**Meeting Convened**: 11:30 a.m.

Chairman Dennis convened the meeting and a roll call of the attendees was taken.

Sandra Fradd introduced herself to the committee. She suggested 3 topics for discussion: 1) adopt a committee mission statement; 2) adopt a definition of resilience; 3) inventory what other groups are already working on resilience topics (i.e. dredging) in Jacksonville. She would like to know what the vision of each committee member is and what they hope the committee will produce as a product that will be valuable to the community.

Amanda Polematidis asked how the current St. Johns River dredging project will impact on flooding and whether its impacts are being factored into the data the Special Committee will receive. Council Member DeFoor said she’s talked to Jaxport and they suggested that the City be the local sponsor for a project in the water projects authorization bill currently pending before Congress to authorize Army Corps of Engineers projects and studies. If the City will pay a portion of the cost of a dredging mitigation study, the ACOE will pay the remainder if Congress includes the study in the water bill before passage. There is a 2 year delay before the next water bill is considered in Congress. Once a federally-supported study is completed, there is an opportunity to get federal funding for the remediation that the study recommends. Jim Seaton said that Northeast Florida needs to unify behind a single sea level rise figure and have everyone work from that figure. He recommended that the subcommittee get a presentation about what various figures are being circulated and choose a single figure for all purposes. Lisa King agreed that all infrastructure project planning and construction needs to be based on a universally agreed figure. Chairman Dennis asked Council Member DeFoor if selecting that figure is a subcommittee task or a job for the full Special Committee. Ms. DeFoor said that the study discussed earlier would be a tremendous asset in making that decision, and she will have the ACOE come to the full Special Committee to discuss what sea level rise projection they’re using for project planning.

Bruce Fouraker said the Adaptation Action Area Working Group went through this process with many agencies over several months and that’s how they arrived at Storm Surge Map 3 and the adjoining 500 years storm area as the area that needs to be planned for resilience. There’s no need to reinvent the wheel on this topic. Public Works Director John Pappas said that the projects on the City CIP list are being designed to address immediate problems but are able to be expanded or elevated depending on the results of the study currently underway to assess flooding potential.

Heather Reber of the Council Auditor’s Office gave a presentation on the City’s Capital Improvement Program and the projects specifically identified as resilience-related. $47.8M in resiliency projects are identified for funding in FY20-21, followed by $54.7M in FY21-22 and $69.5M in FY22-23, then reduced funding in the following 2 years. She noted which projects are proposed to be funded by borrowing versus pay-as-you-go funding. John Pappas briefly described the nature of the 18 identified resilience projects. Chairman Dennis asked about the justification for the projects listed for the former Jacksonville Landing site and the Jax Shipyards site and recommended that they be removed from the CIP and funded by the Downtown Investment Authority, potentially through the Northbank Community Redevelopment Area’s tax increment revenues. Council Member DeFoor questioned whether the Jacksonville Landing project was for resilience purposes or for construction of a building. Mr. Pappas said that the first year funding is for studying how high to raise the land to a resilient height for future safe building based on the results of the on-going study, and future years’ funding will be for elevating the land to the appropriate design height for future construction. He noted that groundwater levels are rising so road underdrain projects are necessary and that rainfall intensity seems to be increasing (heavier rains more often) so increased drainage system capacity is needed to alleviate flooding. He also cautioned that bulkhead elevation projects necessarily entail associated stormwater outfall projects to deal with moving the rainwater that formerly flowed over the bulkhead. $2.5 million is being allocated in a new project to clean and restore major drainage ditches every year instead of only periodically and $500,000 is being added to do underdrain replacements every year. Chairman Dennis said that he could envision reallocating $1.5 million from the proposed FY20-21 CIP to fund the Army Corps of Engineers Congressionally-authorized study mentioned earlier.

Jim Seaton asked whether the City has an overall drainage master plan or works more on a project-by-project basis as needs arise. Mr. Pappas said that there is a stormwater master plan that is serving as a fundamental input into the current resilience study and that some innovative techniques (such as bio-swales) are being tried. He described the Storm Resiliency and Hardening Study that is currently underway to develop an itemized CIP list of important and needed projects. Jim Robinson asked if the ACOE water bill study discussed earlier would be a duplication of or somehow different from the resilience study currently underway by the Public Works Department. Ms. DeFoor said that the significance of getting a study included in the water bill before Congress is that it opens the door to future federal funding of subsequent projects. Mr. Robinson said that regular annual cleaning of the major drainage outfalls is very important to the overall functioning of the system and is a good first step to improving system operation.

Council Member Boylan suggested that prioritization of projects should include evaluation of the total impact of the improvements, including not only the technical details of water being moved but also consideration of the values of properties affected and the number of people impacted by the problem being addressed. Brooks Andrews said that bulkheads are often not the best tactic from a resilience perspective and asked if other options (i.e. living shorelines) are being considered. Mr. Pappas said that the City has interest in alternatives in areas where they are appropriate, but they don’t work in places like downtown that have deep water immediately adjacent to the shoreline. Council Member Morgan said that CIP project listing and prioritization is a multi-faceted effort and takes into account how serious the problems are, how long they have existed, what council districts are most affected, and a fair distribution of resources across the city. She said something needs to be done about projects that are on the books and funded, but can’t seem to get underway for whatever reason. Council Member DeFoor hoped that the Special Committee would focus on tangible benefits to communities from the project listing – how long have citizens suffered problems, how serious are the problems, how many people and properties will benefit. Spending large portions of the CIP on downtown may not be the best tactic for benefitting the most people. Bruce Fouraker asked about the compatibility of the McCoy’s Creek project planning with the Emerald Trail project planning. Mr. Pappas said they are being coordinated and the new creek design is more natural and very compatible with the Emerald Trail.

Because of the length of the discussion, the JEA resiliency presentation was deferred to the next meeting.

Jim Robinson noted that the JEA report seems to be focused on their water and sewer assets and he would like to hear about the electric side of the operation as well. Hai Vu of JEA said that he would relay that request to JEA management.

Heather Reber continued her review of the CIP projects by funding source. The CIP totals $209 million of expenditures for FY20-21. $18.9 million in projects are new to the CIP. Mr. Pappas described the scope of those new projects. Joe Loretta asked about the allocation of funding to multi-year projects and how projects are phased.

Public Comment

None

Next meeting – August 27, 8:30 a.m.; JEA water and sewer resilience study, continuation of CIP discussion

Council Member DeFoor asked Mr. Pappas to report next time what stormwater projects would make the biggest impact in the community over the next 3 years, if funding was no object. Jim Robinson said that that aspirational project list could form the basis for making practical prioritization decisions. He noted that the Special Committee has very little time to make CIP recommendations to the Finance Committee before it completes its work on the budget, so perhaps the recommendations will take a more general form of recommended policies than a specific set of project recommendations.

**Meeting adjourned:** 1:06 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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