

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING**

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

**August 12, 2020**

**4:00 p.m.**

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

**In attendance:** Subcommittee members Brooks Andrews (Chair), Adam Hoyles (Vice Chair), Sarah Boren, J. Logan Cross, Bruce Fouraker, Ashantae Green, Patrick Krechowski, Mark Middlebrook, Joshua Rosenberg, Adam Rosenblatt, Dr. Todd Sack, Guillermo Simon, Steve Swann, Dr. Quinton White

**Excused**: Kevin O’Halloran, Shannon Blankinship

**Also**: Council Member Randy DeFoor; Jeff Clements, Yvonne Mitchell and Anthony Baltiero – Council Research Division; Steve Cassada, Eric Grantham and Melanie Wilkes – Council Support Services; Susan Grandin – Office of General Counsel; Susan Stewart – Jaxport; Sean Lahav – North East Florida Regional Council; Kristen Reed and Helena Parola – Planning and Development Department; James Richardson – Environmental Protection Board; Kurtis Wilson – JEA; Emily Pierce – Adaptation Action Area Working Group; Bill Joyce – Public Works Department

**Meeting Convened**: 4:00 p.m.

Chairman Andrews convened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. He announced that Sarah Boren and Bruce Fouraker have joined the subcommittee and reviewed the agenda for the day.

Working Groups

Mr. Andrews reviewed a few minor changes to the committee’s working group topic areas and in the membership of those groups. He also reviewed the assignment of committee members to the overarching theme areas of Land Use Planning and Environmental Justice. Sean Lahav of the NEFRC said he has been in contact with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding their ongoing Southeast Area Coastal Study (SACS); a study stakeholder meeting will be held on August 25th which a limited number of subcommittee members may attend virtually. Chairman Andrews designated the co-chairs of each of the working groups to be the participants in the stakeholder meeting if they are available; substitutes will be appointed if they are not. Todd Sack requested that a member of the Environmental Justice theme area be a participant in the stakeholder meeting as well.

Adaptation Action Area Working Group Report

Emily Pierce, Chair of the AAA Working Group, made a presentation on its findings and recommendations. The group, mandated by policies in the City’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan, made policy level decisions based on a 2060 planning horizon. They identified a better coastal flooding potential zone, expanding the City’s existing boundaries, and evaluated the City’s existing programs and policies. The Working Group heard many presentations and evaluated a tremendous amount of information. She hopes that the subcommittee’s working groups will all choose a few of the recommendations that fall within their scope and push for their adoption. The recommendations fall into 5 areas: education and community outreach, land development regulations and procedures, economic and human resources, inter-agency coordination, and infrastructure. Three immediate recommendations were the creation of a position and hiring of a Chief Resiliency Officer, the commissioning of a vulnerability assessment, and expansion of the AAA boundary to reflect Jacksonville’s riverine and coastal system. The first two are in the process of being achieved, the last has not yet been addressed.

Ms. Pierce said that that the Working Group made a large number of recommendations and she hopes that the Special Committee will take them up and advocate for their implementation. Expansion of the AAA boundary should be a top priority for immediate action, followed by: education about and promotion of green infrastructure solutions within the AAA; development of a resilience scorecard or rating system that gives credit to developers for environmental mitigation strategies and integration of disaster planning into land use decisions; encouragement of “soft” solutions (such as living shorelines) rather than bulkheads and other hardscape options; land acquisition for stormwater mitigation via increased storage capacity; tree planting and removal of invasive species; and updating the Master Stormwater Plan and mapping of areas that are not yet mapped for stormwater and flood zone designation. She recommended that the group watch the “Sinking Cities” series broadcast on PBS, particularly the episode on Miami, to see what has been tried in other cities and what has and has not worked well.

In response to a question from Council Member DeFoor, Ms. Pierce said that one of their recommendations was that the City actively explore the many potential funding sources for resiliency work, including the Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, etc. Ms. DeFoor said that the City has missed its opportunity to get a project in the water resources bill currently pending in Congress, but Mayor Curry has committed the City to being ready with a project for the next cycle in two years. Guillermo Simon cautioned that FEMA maps are drawn for a particular purpose and are not definitive for all uses, so should be considered as one source of information among several. In response to a question about why the AAA boundary change recommendation was not implemented, Ms. Pierce said that it is a complicated issue and will need to be clearly explained to City Council by someone they respect and trust. Sarah Boren said that there is some private funding available for resiliency issues and recommended that the City do pre-planning and be application-ready when opportunities arise. She expressed the hope that the Chief Resiliency Officer position will persist from one mayoral administration to another because continuity is so important in making sure policies are adopted and implemented over time.

Working Group Breakout Sessions

Chairman Andrews asked the working group chairs to lead a discussion about whether the topics as initially stated are appropriate and sufficient to address their task. Melanie Wilkes of the City Council staff explained the meeting breakout process.

When the working groups reassembled, representatives from each group made brief presentations about their discussions. Steve Swann of the Sea Level Rise group said their topic is very broad and will need some refinement and narrowing to a manageable scope. They will need to pick several topics and take advantage of data already available from other studies. Educating the public will be important and looking at the resilience matrices being used by other jurisdictions to help evaluate their capital improvement planning could be useful. Adam Hoyles of the Extreme Rainfall and Flooding group said they talked about limiting the working group’s scope to actionable items. They believe that there are already ordinances on the books that are not being effectively enforced, so that may be one area of “low hanging fruit” that could be immediately pursued. Adam Rosenblatt of the Increasing Temperature and Heat Waves group said that they will need to do more data collection than the other groups since a tremendous amount of data already exists for water-related issues, but not as much for temperature issues.

Chairman Andrews said that there will be discussion at the next few meetings to discuss data availability and issue refinement to hone in on the work plan going forward.

Council Member DeFoor announced that the full Special Committee on Resiliency will be meeting on August 28th at 2 p.m. and the guest speaker will be Jim Murrell, the Chief Resiliency Office for Miami-Dade County.

Next meeting – Thursday, August 27th at 4:00 p.m. (pending confirmation).

**Meeting adjourned:** 5:38 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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