

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425

4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

904-255-5200

**SPECIAL COMMITTTEE ON RESILIENCY MEETING MINUTES**

**Virtual meeting – no physical location**

**August 28, 2020**

**2:00 p.m.**

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

**In attendance:** Council Members Randy DeFoor (Chair), Michael Boylan, Garrett Dennis, Joyce Morgan

**Also**: Susan Grandin and Kealey West – Office of General Counsel; Jeff Clements– Council Research Division; Steve Cassada, Melanie Wilkes and Eric Grantham - Council Support Services; Cheryl Brown – Council Secretary/ Director; Bill Killingsworth, Kristen Reed, Helena Parola, Susan Kelly – Planning and Development Department; John Pappas – Public Works Department; Beth Payne and Sean Lahav – Northeast Florida Regional Council; Carla Miller – Ethics Office; Phillip Peterson – Council Auditor’s Office; Kurtis Wilson – JEA; Subcommittee citizen experts Quinton White, Jim Seaton, J. Logan Cross, Mark Middlebrook, Joe Loretta, Sandra Fradd, Amanda Polemitidis, Nikole Ward, Guillermo Simon, Kelly Rich, John Sapora, Joshua Gellers, Joshua Rosenberg, Adam Hoyles, Bruce Fouraker, Barbara Gubbin, Shannon Blankinship, Steve Swann, Ashantae Green, Angela DeMonbreun, Barbara Ketchum,

**Meeting Convened**: 2:02 p.m.

Council Member DeFoor called the meeting to order and the attendees were introduced for the record.

Miami-Dade County Resilience

Jim Murley, Chief Resilience Officer for Miami-Dade County, made a presentation on the county’s resilience plan, which started back in 1991 with work on sustainability and CO2 reduction efforts. Miami-Dade County is part of the Global Resilient Cities Network with cities and counties around the world, an effort supported by the Rockefeller Foundation to promote resilience worldwide, and Mr. Murley recommended that Jacksonville consider joining. He also recommended membership in Resilience Florida which lobbies the legislative and executive branches in Tallahassee on resilience issues. He underscored the importance of cooperative efforts with the St. Johns River Water Management District which has jurisdiction over many water issues. He noted that four counties in southeast Florida have formed the Southeast Florida Regional Compact on Climate Change to collect data and best practices on a regional level and to lobby for the region’s needs at the state government level.

Mr. Murley said that the Regional Compact produced sea level rise projections through 2120, which is updated every 5 years with a multi-faceted working group that reviews all published data and studies and focuses on the data relevant to the four county region. These projections are the only sea level rise projections used in the four county region because it has proven to be the best model and has tremendous buy-in from around the community, and is constantly improved. He strongly encouraged the development of a research network via a memorandum of agreement with the local colleges and universities that have great resources in faculty and students to contribute to the resilience effort via their research.

Mr. Murley described his office’s positon in the county organizational chart, as a unit under the deputy mayor in charge of planning, building, zoning and resilience. The county’s budget is consciously built around resilience strategies and budget requests are evaluated on resilience considerations. That demonstrates both to the government and to the general public the seriousness of the commitment to funding resilience. His office developed the Resilient 305 strategy to unify all of the county’s existing plans with regard to impacts of resilience on places, people and pathways. The plan has three cross-cutting themes: social equity, innovation and technology, and intergovernmental collaboration. The first Resilient 305 summary report is nearly ready for release, reporting the progress being made on 59 action items.

The Army Corps of Engineers is currently undertaking four studies in Miami-Dade County on coastal storm risk, harbor deepening, beach preservation, and the regional South Atlantic Coastal Study. Participation with the Corps of Engineers is vital because it brings federal funding and research expertise into play.

Miami-Dade views sea level rise as a long-term stress, not a short term shock, because its impacts will show themselves over the long term and require long-term solutions. The county is evaluating five different approaches to sea level rise, ranging from raising land via fill to building elevated buildings on stilts to concentrating building density and transit on the highest ground to developing blueways and greenways through neighborhoods to absorb flooding without impacting structures.

Outreach and public education are key, and in Miami-Dade they do it in conjunction with educational institutions (colleges, K-12) and with community partners.

Mr. Murley said that for practical purposes the plan looks most immediately at the next 20-years because that is the timeframe for capital improvement planning and the county’s Comprehensive Plan. Long-term assets like water and sewer treatment plants with planned lifespans of 50 or 70 years require planning for sea level rise over that full time horizon. He presented seven lessons learned throughout their process: 1) hire a chief resilience officer; 2) strengthen and build on regional collaborations and networks; 3) build a relationship with the Army Corps of Engineers; 4) use your budget to support your resilience goals; 5) engage citizens through well-planned outreach; 6) strengthen relations with local academic institutions; 7) work all across departments to incorporate sea level rise projections and identify implementation pathways for resilience.

Bruce Fouraker asked about the sub-offices under the Chief Resilience Officer and job descriptions for the positions in the office. Council Member Morgan asked the specific day-to-day duties of a chief resilience officer. Mr. Murley said that he focuses greatly on what his county commission is most interested in at the time and on building collaborations. In response to a question from John Sapora about how the county pitches resiliency to the development community as a benefit and not a burden, Mr. Murley said that they partner with the Urban Land Institute and the Beacon Council on studies and keep up with the news of the development industry so as to be aware of what is on the minds of the building and development community. He communicates regularly with oceanfront developers about how to make their buildings safer and more resilient, which is becoming increasingly important to buyers. Council Member Boylan asked about how land use planning and zoning interact with resilience planning. Guillermo Simon asked about the relationship with the state via the water management district and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Murley said that FDEP has reorganized its office of coastal protection and is investing substantial funding into technical assistance to local governments. Jim Seaton noted that the role of the chief resilience officer seems to be about being a convenor and facilitator of joint efforts. He asked whether the City’s Planning Department is the best place for a chief resiliency officer who would report to the Planning Director. Mr. Murley said that his office started in the Planning Department, but eventually migrated to a direct report to an assistant mayor where he has great support from the mayor for his office and its work. Adam Hoyles asked about nuclear power’s role in Miami’s future, especially given the potential impact to the Turkey Point nuclear plant from sea level rise. Mr. Murley said that Miami is served by Florida Power and Light so has access to their full range of power generation capacity, which is increasingly using solar and natural gas power.

Sarah Boren asked if Mr. Murley had any advice on whether to start more narrowly or more broadly in scope when taking first steps and introducing the public to the concept of resilience. He said that the public will demand solutions to short-term issues like street flooding in any event, so those events can be used as a vehicle to engage the public to talk about the bigger picture and longer-term trends. Ms. Boren asked about how to ensure longevity of the program and deal with the legacy of old ordinances and practices that are counterproductive to long-term resiliency. Mr. Murley cited the example of septic tanks as a long-standing issue with no easy solution because of the tremendous cost and the impact to individual homeowners, despite what ordinances may require. Ashantae Green said that she is greatly impressed by Resilient 305’s holistic approach to resilience in its many facets, not just stormwater flooding and sea level rise. Mr. Murley said their approach has evolved over time and has been customized to fit the Miami-Dade context, with a focus on implementing action items. Community participation in developing the strategy is important for getting community buy-in that helps to hold the government accountable for progress.

John Burr requested that Mr. Murley’s PowerPoint presentation be provided to all the members for further perusal. Barbara Gubbin asked about how the elected leadership and the general public were engaged in the discussion and how their buy-in occurred. Mr. Murley said their library was a key partner for data storage and distribution and as a location for convening meetings. He said that the arts community has been very important in publicizing the issue and engaging a wide variety of people in interesting ways. They hold Zoom seminars with a variety of groups and constituencies to spread the message of resilience. Sean Lahav asked about important lessons for downtown development and resiliency. Mr. Murley said that local governments need to press the Army Corps of Engineers to think about different options apart from their usual tool kit such as seawalls. They are asking that natural shorelines be considered by the Corps along with hardened structures. The Florida Inland Navigation District has funded a project in Miami looking at public access to urban waterways and would probably do the same in Jacksonville. Council Member Carlucci asked what salary range would be reasonable for a chief resilience officer in a city the size of Jacksonville and how much staff would be appropriate for that office to do the work that needs to be done. Mr. Murley said that pay scales vary from place to place; his salary is set by the Mayor at whose pleasure he serves, so is individual to him. The 13 employees who report to him are in the county’s normal pay system.

Subcommittee Reports

Council Member Dennis gave a report on the work of the Infrastructure Subcommittee. They have identified funding for resilience as a major issue. Houston passed a very large bond issue to deal with the impacts of a major flooding event, and Jacksonville needs to consider its options for bonding for infrastructure improvements. The committee looked at the proposed Capital Improvement Program for projects that are not ready for construction in the near term so that funds could be identified for reprogramming to immediate resilience uses. The importance of getting a project into the Congressional water projects authorization bill was identified.

Adam Hoyles gave a report on the work of the Environmental Planning Subcommittee. The subcommittee split into three groups to work on different hazards –1) sea/river level rise and coastal surge, 2) extreme precipitation events and changing rain patterns, and 3) climate change/mean temperature rise/heat waves. Overarching themes are land use planning and environmental justice. The subcommittee structure has been changed somewhat to make the citizen members into non-voting subject matter experts so they are not subject to Government in the Sunshine regulations.

Council Member Morgan gave a report on the work of the Education and Social Outreach Subcommittee. They too have broken out into three subgroups. One is working on collecting and publicizing the work of the three subcommittees and the Special Committee. Another is working on coming up with a good definition of “resiliency” to help the general public understand what it means. The third is looking at partnering with community resources that already have visibility and respect in the public and can help to get the word out credibly.

Susan Grandin of the Office of General Counsel gave an overview of a document she will be sending out regarding the status of the citizens serving the subcommittees as non-voting subject matter experts rather than formal voting subcommittee members, which would subject them to Sunshine Law restrictions. The only voting members of the subcommittees will be the City Council members. She cautioned against using the term “working groups” to describe the breakout sessions that have taken place at subcommittee meetings, since they are not acting in an official capacity as delegates of the subcommittees.

**Meeting adjourned:** 4:02 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

[jeffc@coj.net](mailto:jeffc@coj.net) 904-255-5137

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