

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL MEMBER RANDY DEFOOR NOTICED MEETING ON**

**RESILIENCY ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING ISSUES**

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

**November 19, 2020**

**2:00 p.m.**

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

**In attendance:** Council Members Randy DeFoor and Michael Boylan

**Also**: Jeff Clements and Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Steve Cassada, Eric Grantham and Melanie Wilkes – Council Support Services; Kealey West – Office of General Counsel; Melissa Long – Neighborhoods Department; resiliency subject matter experts Shannon Blankinship, Bruce Fouraker, Adam Rosenblatt, Guillermo Simon, Jim Schwarz, Steve Swann, Amanda Polematidis, J. Logan Cross, Quinton White, Todd Sack

**Meeting Convened**: 2:00 p.m.

Council Member Randy DeFoor convened the meeting and turned the meeting over to Shannon Blankinship to lead the discussion. The working groups will break out into discussion sessions for the first hour, then will reconvene to recap their discussions for the full group. She asked the working groups to try to be clear and concise in their recommendations, to make sure they are clear to the public who may not have much experience in or knowledge about resiliency, and to prioritize their ideas. The next subcommittee meeting will be on December 10th to discuss a revised and polished document produced after today’s discussion and determine next steps for the subcommittee. Council Member DeFoor reminded the group of the full Special Committee on Resiliency meeting tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

The three hazard topic working groups spent one hour in breakout sessions then reconvened to report on their discussions.

Hazard 1 working group: Shannon Blankinship reported that her group identified 5 recommended priorities: 1) enforcement of a 25 foot average buffer from development impacts around wetlands and waterways; 2) require wetlands mitigation within the same basin as the impact being mitigated; 3) enforce the existing 6-foot low maintenance buffer requirement around waterways; 4) require that new septic tanks in AAA area be located on no less than 1 acre of land and use advanced nutrient treatment; and 5) implement a green infrastructure action plan. Kealey West of the OGC asked for clarification of the meaning of “basin” in proposed recommendation #2 because that word has different uses for different regulatory and development purposes. Ms. Blankinship said the group did not choose a specific definition and would leave that the OGC to determine in the final drafting process.

Hazard 2 working group: Guillermo Simon said his group had one primary priority – adoption of a green infrastructure plan, particularly with regard to the importance of trees to resiliency both in the form of water absorption and to deal with heat islands. Kevin O’Halloran has developed a very interesting and useful analysis tool with multiple layers of resilience-related data mapping. Tree planting should be a priority for multiple purposes. Goals for tree canopy coverage should be developed for different areas of the city based on differing conditions. Educating property owners about the importance of trees will help raise awareness. Two other ideas being considered but not yet added to the master list are light colored roofs to reduce heat absorption and somehow dealing with the increasing intensity of rainfall. In response to a question, Mr. Simon said that tree planting around stormwater ponds is part of one of their recommendations. Todd Sack said the recommendations should address both education and community feedback and acceptance of resiliency issues because that’s vital for ultimate success. Council Member Boylan recommended that the St. Johns River Water Management District regularly inspect stormwater ponds to ensure their proper functioning. He expressed concern about the potential effect of trees on the operation of stormwater ponds through leaf and debris fall and perhaps impediments to mowing and routine maintenance.

Hazard 3 working group: Adam Rosenblatt said his group had three primary priorities: 1) promote a robust tree canopy, particularly in more under-invested neighborhoods; 2) develop a heat emergency preparedness and response plan similar to the existing plan for hurricane/tropical storm response (trigger point, hospital admission policies, emergency shelters, etc.); and 3) develop a greenhouse gas emission inventory for the city to establish a baseline of information from which to plan a response and reduction targets.

Ms. Blankinship discussed next steps. The subcommittee’s next meeting is scheduled for December 10th at which time a revised spreadsheet of all the proposed recommendations will be discussed, including hopefully their relationship to the work and recommendations of the other two subcommittees. Council Member DeFoor noted that the full Special Committee on Resiliency will meet tomorrow at 2 p.m. The agenda will include presentations by Roderick Scott of the Flood Mitigation Industry Association. Alec Bogdanoff of the American Flood Association, and Planning and Development Director Bill Killingsworth who will discuss the Adaptation Action Area Comprehensive Plan amendment recommendations that have been under review by the Infrastructure and Continued Operations Subcommittee.

**Meeting adjourned:** 3:50 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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