

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY**

**MEMBER TO MEMBER MEETING ON EDUCATION, PROTECTION OF LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ISSUES**

**Hybrid meeting in City Council Chamber and virtually (via Zoom platform)**

**December 2, 2020**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber and virtually (via Zoom platform)

**In attendance:** Subcommittee Members Randy DeFoor and Michael Boylan; Subject matter experts John Burr, Joshua Gellers, Barbara Gubbin, Bill Hoff, Kelly Rich, John Sapora

**Also**: Subcommittee subject matter experts Jim Seaton, Todd Sack, Mark Middlebrook; Jeff Clements, Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Steve Cassada, Eric Grantham and Melanie Wilkes – Council Support Services; Kristen Reed – Planning and Development Department; Susan Grandin and Kealey West– Office of General Counsel; Sean Lahav – Northeast Florida Regional Council; Susan Stewart and Nick Primrose – Jaxport; Sandra Homrighouse – Ethics Office;

**Meeting Convened**: 11:00 a.m.

Council Member Boylan convened the meeting and welcomed the subcommittee attendees. A roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Ordinance 2020-526 RFP update

Kristen Reed of the Planning and Development Department reported that a purchase order will be issued this week to hire the same firm working on the Public Works Department’s resiliency study to perform the Adaptation Action Area community outreach process as an add-on to their Public Works contract. John Sapora will be very helpful in publicizing the process and identifying potential interested stakeholders – more suggestions of potentially interested parties are welcomed. She hopes to start the preparation process in December and do public engagement workshops in February. Mr. Boylan said he hopes that eventually a permanent third party resiliency advocacy entity will be created that could help perform the functions of education and outreach.

Chief Resiliency Officer hiring update

Council Member DeFoor reported that very spirited debates were held in the Finance and Rules Committees yesterday on the ordinance to create the CRO position. The bill as introduced would created a Resiliency Division in the Planning and Development Department. The administration opposed creating a division at this point; they prefer to hire a CRO first and let them recommend what’s appropriate. The bill was amended in both committees to codify the CRO position in the Planning Department but not create a division. The bill should be approved by the full Council next Tuesday. Council Member Boylan reiterated that an external advocacy agency is needed beyond the CRO position to do what needs to be done outside of City government. The bill didn’t say much about an education function for the CRO but that is a necessary component. Ms. DeFoor said the Special Committee on Resiliency has already done lots of important work and codifying the CRO position is a very significant step because it makes the position more permanent than just being a budget line item. She recommends that the Education Subcommittee make a recommendation on an outside advocacy agency. Mr. Boylan said it’s almost time to start making budget recommendations on resiliency activities for next year.

Ms. DeFoor said the Special Committee meets next Friday, December 11th, at 2:30 and additional subcommittee meetings will be held on January 7th and 21st. The full Special Committee may wrap up itw work in February.

Education and Community Outreach Subcommittee work summary

Sean Lahav of the Northeast Florida Regional Council said he’s in the process of finalizing the next newsletter which will be published next week. This edition will highlight the individual perspectives of subject matter experts from each of the three Resiliency subcommittees.

Mr. Lahav said he’s had great discussions with subject matter experts John Burr, John Sapora and Shannon Blankinship about ideas for how to wrap up the Special Committee’s work. Each subcommittee has produced an observations document to be reported to the full group, then he will meet with each subcommittee to talk about identifying priorities to be conveyed to the new CRO.

John Sapora – Education Subcommittee report ideas

Mr. Sapora said that he has been working with John Burr, Shannon Blankinship and Ashantae Green on compiling the work of the subcommittee and trying to formulate a final report. This subcommittee has developed fewer concrete action steps than the other two subcommittees, so its report will be a little different. The subcommittee has arrived at three priorities: 1) Adopt a definition of resilience – original and eventually expanded to cover more issues. Barbara Gubbin said she’s challenged by the definition the special committee adopted, which still seems to be primarily flooding- and storm-related and not as broad as the group had talked about early in the process. John Sapora said the definition can be expanded when the CRO is hired and public outreach occurs and other important issues are identified. John Burr said a lot of the recommendations are written with the idea that the CRO pick them up and run with them. 2) Establish a community engagement structure for the CRO to work with – diverse representation, coordination with existing groups, community knowledge survey. 3) Create a community engagement process which is more than just education, help City officials prioritize neighborhood resource allocation and support community revitalization plans. 4) Establish education and public engagement tools, particularly social media platforms and resource guides. 5) Use a social justice and equity lens that will help change discourse and resource allocation and be more inclusive. 6) Participate in resiliency learning, advocacy and funding networks. 7) Promote wide public use of risk exposure tools to warn the public of environmental hazards such as flooding and sea level rise. 8) Include citizen subject matter experts in the CRO selection process. Assistant General Counsel Susan Grandin said the selection process as amended by the committees yesterday will include nomination of the CRO by the Mayor and confirmation by the City Council. Joshua Gellers asked how the subject matter experts could be involved in the hiring process. He would prefer more specificity in the recommendation about how the subject matter experts could participate in the process. Council Member Boylan said a process needs to be worked out with Planning Director Bill Killingsworth on what kind of input mechanism he would be comfortable with. Susan Grandin said it is not the usual practice but agencies like the Downtown Investment Authority have used it. Council Member DeFoor said she thinks it would be unwise to try to amend the pending bill to add a citizen participation requirement. There will be public hearings on the appointment at the Rules Committee and City Council. John Sapora thinks a more informal process of meeting candidates and asking questions would be most helpful. Barbara Gubbin said the Library Board of Trustees allowed the public to watch its interviews with Library Director candidates. She thinks subject matter experts could watch the process and maybe suggest questions to be asked of candidates. 9) Implement the AAA Working Group recommendations on education and community outreach. 10) List community assets.

Mr. Sapora invited further suggestions for additions and improvements, to be submitted through subcommittee staff member Jeff Clements.

John Burr said he felt that the administration’s opposition to creating a CRO Division in the Planning Department indicates a lack of enthusiasm for the position. Council Member DeFoor recounted yesterday’s committee meetings and said that the CRO position got conflated with other political issues swirling in Council and that doesn’t necessarily indicate any reluctance regarding the position. The two committees and the administration agreed to the hiring and to codification of the position, so that’s the key thing. The Mayor has previously said he supports hiring a CRO so this week’s debates are probably more about other things than the value of the position. Ms. Gubbin asked if the budget allocation is sufficient to get the quality of person that’s desired and if there is enough money for a community survey, outreach efforts, etc.? Ms. DeFoor said the administration has said the position’s salary will be $125,000 and anticipates that the CRO will be hired and then help develop a budget for that function. The City Council’s strategic plan proposed $300,000 for the function for next year. Todd Sack said that there are other resources (e.g. Environmental Protection Board, local universities) that can help with things like surveys that won’t take City funding in the first year. Mr. Boylan cited the example of the Mayor’s Director of Strategic Partnerships as a position funded by private resources for the first 2 years of its existence.

Ms. DeFoor announced that next week’s Special Committee topic is social justice in resiliency.

Public comment

None

**Meeting adjourned:** 12:03 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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