

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY MEETING MINUTES**

**Hybrid City in-person/virtual meeting**

**City Council Chamber and Zoom virtual platform**

**February 25, 2021**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber and Zoom virtual platform

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

**Also**: Susan Grandin and Kealey West – Office of General Counsel; Jeff Clements and Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Steve Cassada, Eric Grantham, Melanie Wilkes - Council Support Services; Tommy Carter – Council Auditor’s Office; Susan Stewart – Jaxport; James Richardson – Environmental Protection Board; Melissa Long – Neighborhoods Department; Kelsey Cox – Public Works Department; Kristen Reed – Planning Department; Beth Payne and Sean Lahav – Northeast Florida Regional Council; citizen subject matter experts Amanda Polematidis, Nicole Hamm, Lisa King, Kevin O’Halloran, Joshua Gellers, Joe Loretta, Todd Sack, Rose Nettles, Laura D’Alisera, John Sapora, Adam Rosenblatt, Shannon Blankinship, David Bruderly, Barbara Gubbin, Mark Green, Jim Schwarz, Gloria Teague, John Burr, Ellen Glasser, Ashantae Green, Guillermo Simon, Sarah Boren, Joshua Gellers, Brooks Andrews, Bill Hoff

**Meeting Convened**: 2:01 p.m.

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

Ms. DeFoor reviewed the history of the Special Committee’s creation and its work and thanked the committee members, the citizen subject matter experts, and the many guest speakers and other contributors for their outstanding work throughout the process. She outlined the fundamental recommendations made by the full Special Committee in its early meetings:

* The City should hire a Chief Resiliency Officer.
* The City should conduct a vulnerability assessment.
* The City should expand the boundaries of the Adaptation Action Area (AAA) beyond the limits of the current Coastal High Hazard Area.

The Chair briefly reviewed the highlights of the subcommittee findings and recommendations:

Education, Protection of Local Neighborhoods and Community Outreach Subcommittee

* Adopt a working definition of “resiliency”.
* Expand the resiliency definition over time to include more than flooding and sea level rise within Duval County.
* Establish a community engagement structure for the office of the Chief Resiliency Officer.
* Create a community engagement process that helps City officials prioritize neighborhood resource allocation and support community revitalization efforts.
* Establish education and public engagement tools such as user-friendly websites, newsletters, social media platforms and resource guides to reach diverse audiences.
* Use a social justice and equity lens that will help change public discourse and resource allocations to be more inclusive of various populations and address unfair or exclusionary practices by government and business.
* Participate in resiliency learning, advocacy and funding networks.
* Implement the Adaptation Action Area Working Group recommendations on education and community outreach and align with other recommendations.

Infrastructure and Continuity of Operations for Essential Services

* Quantify the magnitude of Jacksonville’s resilience requirements.
* Adopt one sea level rise figure to guide infrastructure project planning and construction across the city.
* Update the Building Code
* Incorporate neighborhood-specific criteria while prioritizing resilience decisions.
* Promote developer/property owner resilience roles.
* Promote the private sector business case for resilience.
* Examine how the North Florida Land Trust could potentially acquire land to provide flood storage capacity.
* Explore ways to disclose flood zone and prior flooding information on real estate transactions and lease agreements.
* Identify flood-prone areas where people and homes are the most vulnerable and recommend solutions to protect those neighborhoods.
* Publicize the drainage system’s 92 outfall spot cleaning locations in a way that the general public is aware of where the work is taking place to prepare for potential heavy rains.
* Assess private sector assets such as grocery stores, gas stations, hospitals, etc. to see how vulnerable they are and their impact on the community if damaged.
* Submit projects for inclusion in the Congressional 2022 water projects bill.
* Review the Master Stormwater Management Plan update.
* Consider resilience when appointing JEA board members.
* Pursue creative funding measures to address the city’s resilience needs.

Environmental Planning

The Environmental Planning Subcommittee focused its discussions and make recommendations in 3 hazard areas: 1) Sea/River Level Rise, Coastal Surge and Extreme Tides; 2) Extreme Precipitation Events and Rain Patterns; and 3) Mean Temperature Increase and Heat Waves. Recommendations include:

Hazard 1

* Create a green infrastructure action plan.
* New septic tanks need more scrutiny.
* Tributaries should become natural again.
* Keep shorelines natural.
* Absolutely protect existing wetlands.

Hazard 2

* Set and meet ambitious tree planting goals.
* Utilize the Stormwater Management Plan to fully understand current and future risks, engage the community, and incentivize stormwater best practices benefitting neighborhoods.
* Incentivize low impact development and eliminate off-street parking minimums.

Hazard 3

* Increase and maintain Jacksonville’s tree canopy by 40% by 2040.
* Develop a heat emergency preparedness and response plan.
* Strengthen and enforce the current COJ sustainable buildings ordinance (2009-211-E).
* Obtain LEED for Cities certification.
* Create and implement a greenhouse gas inventory and reduction plan.

Chairwoman DeFoor said the Special Committee has produced a good plan, but implementation is needed. Resilience is not high on many people’s agendas and a lot of funding and prioritization will be needed. This is a non-partisan issue. A more resilient city incurs fewer disaster losses (deaths, injuries, business and disruption, government response costs, infrastructure, etc.).

**Motion** (Boylan): approve the Special Committee final report as presented today -

**Motion** (Dennis) on p. 41, amend recommendation #7 to remove the name of North Florida Land Trust and substitute language referring generally to “conservation non-profits and other partners” – **approved 5-0**.

Council Member Morgan said this is a fantastic report. She said her subcommittee’s (Education and Community Outreach) final report had eight footnotes and asked if they should be incorporated into the final report as well. Ms. Morgan read the footnotes into the record.

**Motion** (Morgan): include the Education and Community Outreach Subcommittee’s 8 footnotes in the final report – **approved 5-0**.

**The Boylan motion, as twice amended, was approved 5-0.**

Ms. DeFoor thanked the General Counsel’s Office and the City Council staff for their tireless work in helping to shepherd the process to a successful completion.

The subcommittee chairs presented certificates of appreciation to the citizen subject matter experts in attendance at the meeting and thanked them for their outstanding service.

Council Member and former Special Committee Chairman Carlucci thanked and congratulated Chairwoman DeFoor for leading the process to a great conclusion. Now it’s time for implementation through the City Council and Chief Resiliency Officer to put the plan into action and really make a difference in Jacksonville’s future. Council Member Boylan noted that Hurricane Irma (which was not a hurricane when it hit Jacksonville) produced 112,000 applications to FEMA for emergency relief, which was all due to flooding that must be remedied. He thanked everyone involved for their contributions.

Chairwoman DeFoor presented tokens of appreciation to the Special Committee members, to citizen subject matter expert Brooks Andrews and to Sean Lahav of the Northeast Florida Regional Council. Mr. Andrews said he sees a change in understanding and attitude in Jacksonville on resilience and environmental issues and that is heartening. He echoed earlier comments about this report not gathering dust on a shelf but rather being put into action in the short- and long-term. The Chief Resilience Officer will need a great deal of support to tackle all of the issues that need to be addressed, and the citizen subject matter experts who supported this special committee are passionate advocates

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:57p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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