

# City of Jacksonville

117 W Duval St  
Jacksonville, FL 32202



## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

10:00 AM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall

### **Special Committee on Parks and Quality Life**

*Council Member Randy White, Chair*  
*Council Member Randy DeFoor, Vice Chair*  
*Council Vice President Terrance Freeman*  
*Council Member Kevin Carrico*  
*Council Member Joyce Morgan*  
*Council Member Ron Salem*  
*Council Member Ju'Coby Pittman*

Meeting Convened: 10:01 am Meeting Adjourned: 11:11 am

Attendance:

**Council President Newby; Council Members White (Chair), DeFoor (Vice Chair), Freeman, Morgan, and Salem**

**Excused: CMs Pittman and Carrico**

**Also: Trista Carraher, Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research**

**Call to Order, Introduction of Committee Members**

**Council President Newby welcomed the group and discussed the committee's charge and the importance of their upcoming work.**

**Discuss Charge of Committee**

**The members discussed the committee charge: This committee was formed to address the current and future needs of parks, community centers, learning centers as well as quality of life matters throughout the city. This committee will be charged with making recommendations for the distribution and oversight of \$100 Million allocated in FY '21-'22 budget. The focus of this committee will be to ensure that citywide parks and community centers meet a consistent level of services to ensure a high quality of life for all citizens.**

**The committee is charged with providing a detailed report that will include but is not limited to**

**the following matters:**

**Complete an evaluation on current levels of services for citywide parks, senior centers,**

**learning facilities and community centers**

**Review and address the current backlog of maintenance needs of citywide parks, senior**

**centers, learning facilities and community centers**

**Provide recommendations for improvements to citywide parks, senior centers, learning**

**facilities and community centers to address infrastructure, maintenance and safety needs**

**Complete an assessment of past and current youth and senior programming to evaluate**

**impacts and accessibility for all citizens.**

**Assess status of current recreational and learning facilities and provide recommendations**

**for improving connectivity and providing a supportive learning environment for citizens of all ages**

### **Discuss Direction of Committee**

Chair White requested an updated book of parks and facilities in his district, and similar ones for the other members, from Daryl Joseph, Parks Director.

### **Discuss Fund Allocation**

There was some discussion about fund allocation for the \$100 million in FY '21-'22 budget. CMs Morgan and DeFoor said they need more information about park needs/conditions before thinking about actual sums.

### Comments from Director of Parks, Daryl Joseph

Daryl Joseph, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, spoke about the many parks and other facilities under his purview. Jacksonville has a sprawling park system comprised of 405 park facilities, 194 playgrounds, 184 tennis courts, 316 basketball courts, 74 community centers/senior centers, 36 pools, and 26 boat ramps. CM DeFoor asked about park maintenance, shortfalls, which parks are used more frequently or underused. She also suggested a parks tour and said that the committee needs a list of clear goals.

CM Freeman spoke about the impact of youth sports and asked what Mr. Joseph's ideas might be for the funds. He also asked about overlap between potential park projects and park projects funded already in the CIP.

CM Salem said he would like to see some of the funds go towards big picture items that would distinguish Jacksonville in some way.

Chair White explained his idea for designating the available funds, wherein the group would address the amount in segments of \$25 million, allocating \$1 million for each council district member to use for appropriate projects, \$600,000 for each at-large member, with some of the funds going towards park safety measures (lightning detection, AED Automated external defibrillators, and security cameras), and some for community centers.

CM Morgan said she needs more park overview before taking about set amounts of money.

CM Freeman commented on the slow moving nature of government actions, and how that may end up with some kids falling through the cracks because programs or improvements come too slowly. He also talked about park infrastructure disparities in different parts of the city.

CM DeFoor said there should be a park master plan, and that all of the parks in the city should be of equal quality and state of repair. Mr. Joseph said that his department is already working with consultants on a master plan.

CM Salem commented on the differing needs in parts of the city and how one set pot of money for each district may not be the best approach.

Stephanie Burch, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, spoke about the importance of parks to community quality of life, and also mentioned libraries and how they could intertwine with parks for programming and/or locations. She also suggested that the committee consider whether the funds should go towards any possible new facilities, pickleball courts, community centers or pools. CM DeFoor and Salem said that libraries should be separate from this particular batch of funds.

CM Morgan asked about the timeline for the master plan and how much it will cost. Mr. Joseph said he will invite the consultant to a future meeting to make a presentation and that the cost is roughly \$200,000-\$400,000.

CM Freeman asked if the funds for the Emerald Trail were to come from the \$100 million, but that is a separate project with different funding sources.

CM DeFoor requested from Mr. Joseph a list of immediate parks needs with associated costs. CM Morgan asked for a list of what is included in the CIP.

CM White emphasized the need for safety features, like lightning detection, at parks with athletic fields, and Mr. Joseph said that it could be done rather expeditiously if the

committee agrees and that the devices require a power source at the park. AED systems have more requirements as far as storage and user training.

#### **Discuss Future Dates**

The committee will meet monthly with the September meeting date to be determined based on the council schedule.

#### **Comments from the Public**

Ms. Powell spoke about resiliency, shade trees and the heat index, social equity and how parks are community gathering places. Another attendee spoke about installing a labyrinth in a park location to enhance peace and mindfulness. One attendee talked about park inequities based on neighborhood or zip code. One attendee noted that parks are for everyone of all ages. Mr. Nooney spoke about the budget, waterways and Pottsburg Creek. Mr. Scott talked about social justice and corruption. Ms. Blankenship, RAP, talked about parks as key components of neighborhood infrastructure.

CM DeFoor said that we should strive to have not only the biggest park system but also the best one in the country.

#### **Adjourn Meeting**

**With no further business, CM White adjourned the meeting.**

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research  
CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151  
Posted: 8.6.2021 5:00 pm