

City of Jacksonville

117 W Duval St
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 3, 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: 10:02 am Meeting Adjourned: 11:20 am

Attendance:

**Committee Members: Chair White, Vice Chair DeFoor, CM Salem, CVP Freeman, and
CM Carrico**

Excused: CM Morgan and CM Pittman

**Also: Peggy Sidman, Office of General Counsel; Trista Carraher, Council Auditor's
Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research**

Call to Order

Daryl Joseph: Proposed Park Projections Presentation

Daryl Joseph and Jill Enz, Parks Department, gave a presentation about current and future park projects, with an emphasis upon economic impact and sports tourism. See the presentation handout for graphic representations. Mr. Joseph said that the restroom, playground and courts/facility improvement projects funded through the committee's approval at the September 9th meeting are underway and he will provide a status update at the next meeting.

Ms. Enz, Chief of Natural and Marine Resources, talked about future park concepts, including a redesigns to James Weldon Johnson Park and Metro Park, an extension to the Southbank Riverwalk, a reimagined AC Skinner Park, and a build out to 7 Creeks (with bike trails and glamping options). The projects would incorporate historical information, the redevelopment of unused spaces and resiliency. Ms. Enz also noted the growing popularity of bike trail tourism, roughly a \$199 billion industry annually for direct and indirect trip related sales.

Mr. Joseph, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, talked about park projects currently in progress and the funding request being made today. The requested \$30 million would go towards community center/senior center projects (fitness, pools, technology hubs, outdoor spaces); Clanzel Brown open air gym and shaded court; artificial field turf for Fort Family Fields, Cecil Softball Complex, Drew Park, JP Small - New Museum. These projects are tied to increasing sports tourism to the city. The synthetic field turf will decrease costs for maintenance over time, and free staff resources for other projects/upkeep.

Ms. Enz described the potential for an Artist Walk under the Fuller Warren Bridge, RAM expansion, skate park, and under I-95 pickleball courts. Pickleball is growing in popularity, with a 21.3% increase in players from 2019 to 2020.

Funding request \$30,000,000

Artist Walk: Riverside to Park St. \$5 million
JP Small Museum and Water Park \$5 million
Cecil Ball Fields \$5 million
Court Complex at Myrtle/I-95 \$2.8 million
Fort Family Baseball Field - Synthetic Turf \$2.5 million
Clanzel Brown Sports Complex \$1.35 million
Drew Park \$1.5 million
12 Community/Senior Centers \$6 million
Security Cameras and Electrical Upgrades \$850,000

Council Members Comments and Discussion

CM DeFoor asked if the projects are countywide and requested a list of funding allocations for all of the current park projects. She also expressed concerns about the new park projects draining resources from updating existing parks, particularly Ringhaver and Boone Parks in her district. **Mr. Joseph** explained the long term savings associated with synthetic turf fields.

CM Salem spoke in support of increasing sports tourism through these projects.

CVP Freeman spoke in support of the intentional nature of the park project planning.

CM Carrico concurred and asked if **Mr. Joseph** has enough resources to complete the projects, especially as related to staffing. The funds at the committee's discretion are tied to capital projects and can not go towards staff salaries.

CM DeFoor asked if there is a way to set aside money for future park maintenance. **Mr. Joseph** said that future maintenance costs are included in the park planning process.

When asked about locations for security cameras (\$850,000 for Security Cameras and Electrical Upgrades included in this funding request), **Mr. Joseph** said they will coordinate with JSO to determine where they are most needed.

CM DeFoor said she would like artificial turf installed at Ringhaver Park, and noted that all council districts should be impacted through these park projects.

CM Carrico asked if there will be some amount of funds for council members to use for parks in their districts.

CVP Freeman cautioned about the optics of the members handing out money as they see fit without a transparent process for those decisions.

CM Salem made a motion to approve the \$30 million funding request, and **CVP Freeman** seconded. The request was approved with a 4-1 hand vote, with **CM DeFoor** in opposition.

CM White asked for a list of security camera locations by council district.

Mr. Joseph will provide a line item list of maintenance projects, and a status update, funded through the previously approved \$20 million.

Discuss Next Date for Meeting

There will not be a meeting in December and the committee will reconvene in January 2022.

Comments from the Public

Mr. Oliver talked about the use of City funds, school choice, property taxes as related to quality of life, and getting what you pay for in park projects.

Mr. Parker spoke in support of a recreational center in the Heckscher Drive area.

Adjourn Meeting

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted: 11.8.2021 5:00 pm