

City of Jacksonville

117 W Duval St
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

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-Excused Absence
Council Vice President Terrance Freeman
Council Member Kevin Carrico-Excused Absence
Council Member Joyce Morgan
Council Member Ron Salem
Council Member Ju'Coby Pittman*

Meeting Convened: 10:02 am Meeting Adjourned: 11:41 am

Attendance: Committee Members White, Pittman, Freeman, Salem and Morgan

Also: CM Carlucci; Peggy Sidman, Office of General Counsel; Trista Carrahar, Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

GIA Consultants Presentation - Downtown Parks Master Plan

Daryl Joseph and Jill Enz, Parks Dept, spoke briefly and thanked the committee for their support. He mentioned the planning component of the Downtown Parks Plan, in coordination with DIA. Lori Boyer, DIA, talked about how that fits into the 5 year update to the CRAs for the North and Southbanks. The Downtown Parks Plan will look at an inventory of assets and identify gaps and needs. There has been feedback that indicates that downtown residents want a dog park and more play areas. The Downtown Parks Plan is one part of a comprehensive Parks Master Plan that is just in the beginning stages.

Kristen Cayborn, GAI Consultants, gave a presentation on the assessment of the parks downtown, excluding the sports complex area and Met Park. The intent of the GAI report is to focus on the needs of the growing downtown residential population. In their analysis, GAI compared Jacksonville's downtown with other riverfront cities, they looked at gaps and needs, an asset inventory and they gathered input from the public through surveys. The report investigates how to improve existing parks, where to add new parks/acquire park land, integrate with downtown development, costs and sequencing of projects.

The GAI park inventory list 20 locations downtown, with 14 active amenities and 7 buildings. The survey results reflect the desire for access and connectivity (water access, transit, sidewalks), programming and events, and amenities (courts, open spaces, outdoor dining). GIS mapping shows that there is a need for more play spaces, dog runs, shaded areas in the particularly in the LaVilla, Church and Cathedral neighborhoods.

Ms. Cayborn talked about five main initiatives: Unify the Northbank and Southbank Riverwalk as a downtown destination, connect parks with trails and sidewalks, activate underused parks with capital improvements and programming, develop new neighborhood parks, and update downtown codes and design standards. Ms. Cayborn talked about shared streets (pedestrian and bike friendly), murals/public art, and the difference between neighborhood parks and destination/signature parks and how they meet varied needs of residents.

CM Salem asked about park maintenance costs, and Ms. Cayborn said such costs are considered in the planning process.

CM Morgan asked about project timelines, and Ms. Cayborn said that the timeline is contingent upon several things including DIA's annual budget.

CM Pittman asked about marketing to inform the public and visitors about park assets. Ms. Boyer said that you can't really market parks until after they are built. Mr. Joseph said that the new parks/park improvements have themes and are designed to be a distinct experience.

CVP Freeman asked about priorities and whether setting aside land for new parks would impede development in that area. The GAI study considered land acquisition with a focus upon land that is already off the tax rolls, and it was noted that development and park land can coexist and improve the quality of life for the whole area and the residents. Ms. Boyer spoke about the integration of land use and future

planning, for example she has the outline of an idea to work with DCPS to gain some land not being utilized by Lavilla School of the Arts for park/recreational use.

Mr. Joseph mentioned the amount of permitted events planned for downtown (200 plus) and an eventual online event dashboard-type of platform to share the calendar with the public.

CM Morgan asked how much resiliency is considered in park planning. Mr. Joseph said that it is a big part of the plan process. Ms. Boyer said that DIA includes resiliency in the criteria for RFP applications and incentive agreements.

Ms. Cayborn discussed the preliminary stages of the Master Recreational Improvement Plan, the last of which was conducted in 2003. Currently they are reviewing documents and previous studies, examining the changes in demographics/population since the last study, and inventorying facilities with a consideration of social equity and resiliency. She described the FOCUS Matrix (Future Opportunity Continuous Upgrade Strategy) which identifies and prioritizes projects. The evaluation categories include health safety and welfare; planning, development, environmental and social resiliency; demographics, facility access; mobility; and specific community needs. Phase 2 of the Master Plan will include public input and strategy recommendations.

CM Pittman asked how many of GAI recommendations are usually implemented by cities. Ms. Cayborn said she didn't have a percentage, but that full implementation is the goal depending on resources and all recommended actions will eventually come before council for a vote.

CM Carlucci - 2021-566 - Resolution Recognizing and supporting a Holistic approach to Jax Downtown Riverfront Development

CM Carlucci was in attendance to speak on behalf of 2021-566, which is a resolution supporting a holistic approach to planning Jacksonville's downtown riverfront development. The bill has already been introduced, but was not approved to move forward by the Rules Committee and has now been rereferred at the request of the sponsor. 2021-566 also endorses DIA resolution 2021-12-03 which adopted the recommendations from the DuPont Riverfront Activation Plan. Ms. Boyer said DIA has no issues with the current language of the bill, which was modified with a substitute to include these changes: 1. Makes minor corrections to wording. 2. Adds reference to DIA resolution 2021-12-03 on downtown riverfront activation. 3. Removes references to all named organizations except the Downtown Investment Authority and the City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department. CM Morgan is a co-sponsor of the bill and said that is good to show support for DIA and their action plan. 2021-566 will be back for the Rules Committee to discuss next week, on February 1.

Council Members Comments and Discussion

Discuss Next Date for Meeting - February

The next meeting will be scheduled for some date in April and Mr. Joseph will provide an update on ongoing projects.

Comments from the Public

Ms. Wilson, Greenscape, spoke about the importance of tree planting, trees recently planted at the Equestrian Center, a recent tree giveaway wherein they distributed 2000 trees, and the importance of shade.

Mr. Washington, Durkeeville Historical Society, spoke about the history of baseball in that neighborhood, the recent park/museum improvements, and the need to attract more visitors to learn about the historical background in Durkeeville.

Mr. Oliver talked about park staffing, increasing the parks budget with City funds not private dollars and corporate taxes to create more revenue.

Mr. Johnson, EWU, talked about potential field improvements for conference games.

Mr. Nooney talked about waterway access and FIND grants.

Adjourn Meeting

Rollcall

Present 5 - Chair Randy White, Vice Chair Terrance Freeman, Vice Chair Joyce Morgan, Vice Chair Ron Salem, and Vice Chair Ju'Coby Pittman

Excused 2 - Vice Chair Randy DeFoor, and Vice Chair Kevin Carrico

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151

Posted: 1.28.22 5:00 pm