



## JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

### **Critical Quality of Life Issues Special Committee: Affordable/Workforce Housing Working Group Meeting Minutes**

**October 14, 2022**

**9:30 am**

**Lynwood Roberts Room  
First Floor, City Hall  
117 W. Duval Street**

**Topic:** Critical Quality of Life Issues Special Committee: Affordable/Workforce Housing Working Group

**Attendance:** Council Members Pittman, Salem and Boylan; Noel Comeaux - Northeast Florida Regional Council; Dr. Charles Moreland - Mayor's Office; Colleen Hampsey - Council Research Division

Subject Matter Experts: Dr. David Jaffee, UNF Professor of Sociology and Jax Rental Housing Project; Steve Kelley, DIA; Bill Killingsworth, Director of Planning and Development

**Convened:** 9:32 am

Council Member Pittman welcomed the group and called for introductions. Dr. Jaffee, UNF and Jax Rental Housing Project, reviewed the group's progress and issues discussed at the previous meetings. He said the end goal for the group is to make policy recommendations and budgetary, fiscal and regulatory proposals. Dr. Jaffee said there needs to be a way to provide housing that is safe from market forces.

Dr. Charles Moreland, Mayor's Office, gave a presentation about the Curry Administration's history of funding for critical quality of life issues, specifically homelessness, healthcare and housing. He said that the Administration values strategic partnerships and that they approach policy through a community goals framework. In particular, critical quality of life funding choices are made by considering how to enhance neighborhoods by advancing revitalization strategies, ensuring public safety and supporting smart development; how to ensure healthy lives and well-being; and how to achieve food/nutrition security. Dr. Moreland listed some of the Administration's investments related to affordable housing, such as the Jacksonville Community Land Trust, the Jacksonville Housing Partnership, the septic tank phase out and the neighborhood matching grant program. Dr. Moreland said the Administration has invested roughly \$179 million in affordable housing programs and services in the last three years.

Steve Kelley, DIA, gave a presentation about mixed income communities. Dr. Kelley said that housing affordability is challenge to the whole community, and he said that it is a market failure when you permit the market to determine where people live. He spoke about deconcentrating poverty and the benefits of living near one works. Dr. Kelley said that mixed income communities spur economic development, and racial and social integration. He spoke about the housing market downtown, noting that downtown supports a range of rents from naturally occurring affordable housing, to subsidized housing, to market rate with rents ranging from \$1.06 -\$3.19 per sq. ft. Dr. Kelley described various DIA initiatives like Affordable Housing Support Loans, Small Scale Multifamily Housing Grants, and Multifamily Housing REV Grants. He spoke about the Jacksonville Community Land Trust, designed to create affordable housing opportunities by providing a

chance for buyers to buy a home but not the land. The land is owned by the community land trust (CLT), which is governed by a non-profit board, and there is a 99-year ground lease between the CLT and the homeowner. The CLT acquires land using “First Look” legislation which gives the nonprofit Community Land Trust priority access to city-owned properties before they are surplus. Most lots currently designated by the City for affordable housing are located in Northwest Jacksonville, and the JCLT strives to select lots with homebuyer-friendly characteristics such as tree-lined streets, sidewalks, adjacent well-kept homes, and access to retail services, schools, parks, and medical facilities.

Bill Killingsworth, Director of Planning and Development, gave a presentation about zoning, density and development requirements. Mr. Killingsworth said that the housing market doesn't exist in isolation, and he commented on the interplay with government policy and the impact of the 2008 recession. He said that zoning doesn't affect housing demand, just the supply and usage. Mr. Killingsworth said that 2/3 of the city is zoned as single-family housing (SFH) and that one option to increase housing stock would be to densify SFH zoned areas to allow accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and townhomes. Such densification would impact the college age renters and older renters, he said. Other options to increase housing stock may be to permit corner lot duplexes, small lot subdivisions, regulating building size not housing type, and increasing residential density in or near commercial zones. To ‘upzone’ effectively, the entire city would have to be rezoned all at once not neighborhood by neighborhood. Mr. Killingsworth spoke about by-right development as opposed to lengthy discretionary approvals that result in fewer homes. He discussed revising the City's land development code, which dates back to 1968, and he said his department is working with a vendor to update the code with a focus on resiliency and they will provide a diagnostic housing report.

There was a presentation from three Jacksonville residents impacted by the housing crisis in various ways. Mr. Mitchell described his situation wherein he went through a relationship breakup and was forced to find housing on his own quickly. Although he has been gainfully employed at the same place for several years, his home search was full of challenges. At first, he lived in his car and then in a tent off grid, trying to save enough money for a place. He finally found an apartment he could afford and signed a lease, even though it wasn't ideal because it was a one bedroom and he has a daughter, and the complex was not well maintained. The apartment had many structural and maintenance issues which were not addressed in a timely manner. Then the apartment complex was sold to an outside investor and his rent was almost doubled, despite being in disrepair. There was a short window (30 days) for him to find something else in his price range. Mr. Mitchell explained the hefty nonrefundable application fees and long wait times for landlord decisions. He talked about the financial stress from the rental process, as well as the emotional stress of unstable housing and the burden of time dedicated to the search. He said that he was fortunate to have a friend offer to share an apartment with him to make it more affordable. He talked about his neighbors that had to use credit cards and go into debt in order to find another place, and he said how he worried that if their new place raised the rent again that they would be ruined. Mr. Mitchell said that renters deserve a tenant's bill of rights and that there should be some sort of method by which to reign in landlord greed. Ms. Smith shared her story as a recently divorced single woman facing the rental market alone for the first time. She mentioned the excessive nonrefundable application fees required in the hundreds of dollars. She spoke about sexual harassment and intimidation of predatory landlords and neighbors. Ms. Smith also advocated for a tenant bill of rights, and a landlord registry. Ms. Gaines described her experience in the rental market as a single mother of four, and the added pressure of trying to find safe and affordable housing to raise her children and keep them in their school. She too faced exorbitant application fees and limited housing options of properties that were not well maintained. She spoke about housing as a right, not a privilege, and the mental stress caused by housing instability and from living in substandard dwellings. Ms. Gaines spoke about a tenant's bill of rights and the need for more legal assistance for renters.

Dr. Jaffee distributed a SWOT handout for the attendees to fill out that included spaces to fill in the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as related to affordable housing. After allowing a few minutes for everyone to complete the task, he collected them and will share the results next meeting.

## Public Comment

Mr. Smith spoke about the work of the Jacksonville Housing Finance Authority.

Ms. Kittle spoke about a tenant's bill of rights and legal assistance to renters.

Ms. McClain said that a tenant's bill of rights is not needed.

Ms. Garcia spoke about excessive the red tape and hoops renters face.

Mr. Spradley spoke in support of zoning changes.

Ms. Freeman talked about getting more nuance from the data provided by the Administration, showing a comparison of money spent on housing and money spent in other areas.

CVP Salem thanked the panel for sharing their experiences. CM Boylan said that the full CQLI Committee meets October 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm to check in on how the process is going with all the working groups in the room together. CM Pittman thanked everyone for coming and said the next meeting for this group is scheduled for October 28, 2022, at 9:30 am to discuss the results of the SWOT analysis.

**Adjourned:** 11:55 am

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted 10.18.22 5:00 pm