

City of Jacksonville

*117 W. Duval Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 5, 2024

12:00 PM

Council Chamber, 1st Floor, City Hall

Special Committee on Homelessness & Affordable Housing

*Council Member Joe Carlucci, Chair
Council Member Ken Amaro, Vice-Chair
Council Member Raul Arias
Council Member Jimmy Peluso
Council Member Chris Miller*

Meeting convened: 12:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 1:03 pm

Attendance: CP Salem; CMs J. Carlucci, Amaro, Arias, Miller, Peluso (12:12 pm arrival) and Boylan

Also: Mary Staffopoulos, OGC; Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Introductions & Opening Comments

CM J. Carlucci welcomed the group, called for introductions and reviewed the agenda.

Mary Staffopoulos, OGC, discussed the requested changes made to the ordinance establishing the Homelessness Initiatives Commission. Per the discussion at the previous meeting, Ms. Staffopoulos said the new draft includes reference to a liaison from JSO in addition to the council member liaison. The preferred JSO liaison will have experience with the homeless/chronically unhoused population. The new draft also designates that the strategic plan will be a 5-year plan, and the review of the strategic plan and annual action plan will be submitted to council on or before March 1st each year. Lastly, the new draft specifies the commission meeting schedule to be once monthly with exceptions made for the summer and November-December holiday breaks. Ms. Staffopoulos will amend the existing draft to state that the reporting on the strategic plan and the annual action plan will be made to the relevant committee of reference (such as NCSPHS), and not to the full council.

CM Boylan extended appreciation for the work this committee has undertaken thus far. He asked why projects located within Community Redevelopment Areas are exempt from the 4% of the approved economic development agreement incentives that will go toward funding of homelessness initiatives, if approved through Ord. 2024-41. Ms. Staffopoulos explained that there are strict statutory limitations on how CRA dollars are spent. When asked, Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office, said that based on the incentives given in 2023, the 4% for the Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund would total \$1.24 million.

CP Salem also extended appreciation for the committee's progress, and asked if nonprofit service providers who receive funds from the City for existing programs will be eligible for funding through the Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund. CM J. Carlucci said that the entities will be permitted to apply for/receive funding from multiple City sources.

New Business Updates

CM Peluso talked about methods to protect unspent or carryover funds from being swept back into the General Fund. He mentioned the possibility of a public fee to create a dedicated funding source, and requesting some funding carve out from the legislature. Mr. Peterson said that the funds will not revert to the General Fund but will remain in the special revenue fund. CP Salem noted that the Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund can also accept donations from the private sector. The group discussed legislation to cap the incentive percentage at 5% going forward, so other programs do not use this mechanism for revenue and chip away from the City's general revenue, unless there is a super majority vote (14) to approve a change.

CM Boylan asked about grants requiring a City match and said that the matching funds should be drawn from a source other than the Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund.

Ms. Staffopoulos said she will draft legislation to cap the percentage at 5%, to be filed this cycle and per the committee's request there will not be a waiver to remove the requirement for a super majority vote.

Discussion

Trisha Bowles, OGC, talked about a possible funding mechanism permitted by Florida Statute 125.01055 which states that an affordable housing linkage fee ordinance may require the payment of a flat or percentage-based fee, whether calculated on the basis of the number of approved dwelling units, the amount of approved square footage, or otherwise. In exchange for a developer fulfilling these requirements a county must provide incentives to fully offset all costs to the developer of its affordable housing contribution or linkage fee. Such incentives may include, but are not limited to: (a) Allowing the developer density or intensity bonus incentives or more floor space than allowed under the current or proposed future land use designation or zoning; (b) Reducing or waiving fees, such as impact fees or water and sewer charges; or (c) Granting other incentives.

CM Peluso proposed increasing the garbage fee and using the funds the City currently pays to offset the fee deficit for homelessness and affordable housing initiatives.

Heather Horovitz, Jacksonville Housing Authority board vice chair, and Vanessa Dunn, acting JHA CEO, gave a brief presentation about some of their projects and partnership with the City. Ms. Horovitz mentioned the Franklin Arms acquisition, that includes 98 units. CM Peluso asked about HUD vouchers. CM Boylan asked about coordination between JHA and the Jacksonville Housing Finance Authority. Lawsikia Hodges, OGC, explained that both are independent agencies and that JHA serves a more specific population of low income individuals and families. Ms. Hodges described a draft for a new bill that will require JHA to report to council each August regarding programs and goals.

Comments

Dawn Gilman, Changing Homelessness, talked about House Bill 1365 and Senate Bill 1530 that, if passed, would ban counties and municipalities from allowing sleeping or camping on public grounds without a permit. The bills state that counties may designate certain county property for public sleeping or public camping to be used for a continuous period of no longer than 1 year, and requires that municipalities provide full-time security, electricity, water, access to clean and operable restrooms, behavioral health services, and prohibit drugs and alcohol. Ms. Gilman noted the undetermined costs to fulfill this mandate and said there is no state funding tied to the bills. CM Peluso talked about the impact on the jail if individuals do not comply and are arrested instead.

Closing Remarks

Public comment: Carnell Oliver spoke in opposition to the homeless camping legislation, and he advocated for the housing allowance provided in Norway, increasing millage rates, and for a 'housing for all' policy.

With no further business, CM J. Carlucci adjourned the meeting. The next meeting for this committee will be on 2/20/2024 at 12:00 pm.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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Posted: 2.7.24 5:00 pm