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OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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April 29, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council Members and Staff

FR: Ronald B. Salem, Pharm. D., President
Jacksonville City Council

RE: 20240429 Charge Memo for Special Committee on the Future of Downtown

Background:

Downtown Development is of paramount importance to a given community, serving as the centralized touchpoint and societal cross-roads for a City's culture, history, economics and identity. The City of Jacksonville's downtown has a beautiful but aging, dynamically geographic core and riverfront.

The City has attempted different methods of stimulating downtown economic development and growth over the years, including the institution of the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) in 2012 to serve as a downtown-focused Community Redevelopment Agency. This was an effort to, among other things, reverse years of accumulated slum and blight in a defined geographic area. The initiating legislation for this endeavor is set forth in Ordinance 2012-364-E (along with an associated bill 2012-212-E) all of which have been subsequently amended since then.

The progress that has occurred over the past 14 years since the inception of the DIA, as far as Downtown Development is concerned, is at best, debatable. While many variables can be attributed to fluctuations of Downtown, such as market-forces, geo-political shifts, or mother-nature herself, the things that the City does have control over, such as Downtown-dedicated resources, time and funds, should be examined. The past 14 years provide a broad panoramic to be reviewed and studied, particularly as situated within the bosom of the Consolidated City of Jacksonville format.

Charge:

Accordingly, I am hereby creating a Special Committee of the City Council on the Future of Downtown to address the following matters:

1. To examine the efficacy of the DIA with respect to Downtown.
2. To examine the efficacy of the DIA as a Community Redevelopment Agency in a Consolidated Government setting.

3. To examine and explore other jurisdictions that have had Downtown successes over the past 20 years and what their governmental structures are with respect to their Downtown governance.
4. Examine and explore what if any amendment, elimination, addition or modification should be considered for the benefit and governance of the City of Jacksonville's Downtown.

The public discussion that accompanies this exploration will allow the needs and concerns, overall to the health of Jacksonville's Downtown, and thereby to the very identity of Jacksonville itself, to be properly aired and framed. The purpose of this examination is to arrive at solutions beneficial to Jacksonville in spurring proper and healthy economic growth in the City's Downtown. This discussion should include the DIA itself, including its staff and Board, interested stakeholders in Downtown, including participating non-profits and Downtown ambassadors, the development community, particularly those who have ownership interests and ventures in Downtown, and the public at large. The Special Committee shall meet approximately twice per month.

I would like to thank Council Member Kevin Carrico for chairing this Special Committee.

Members:

Council Member Kevin Carrico, Chair
Council Member Rory Diamond, Vice Chair
Council Member Joe Carlucci
Council Member Reggie Gaffney, Jr.
Council Member Chris Miller

Deadline:

The Special Committee of the City Council on the future of Downtown is tasked to report its findings and recommendations on these matters on or before June 30, 2024. I am hopeful that the charge of this Special Committee will be extended by the next City Council President.

Thank you to each of the Council Members and staff who make the commitment to serve on this important committee.

Cc: Council Members and Staff
Margaret "Peggy" Sidman, Director/Council Secretary
Merriane Lahmeur, Chief, Legislative Services Division
Yvonne Mitchell, Chief, Administrative Services Division
Jeff Clements, Chief, Research Division
Teresa Eichner, Chief, Public Information
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