



**OFFICE OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL**

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**Notice Special Committee Meetings on the Community Benefits Agreement**

May 12, 2025

10:30

Meeting Minutes

**Attendance:** Committee Members Arias (Chair), Peluso (Vice Chair), Amaro, Clark-Murray, and Howland; Council President White, Council Members J. Carlucci, Gaffney, Jr., and Salem

**Also:** Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office; Mary Staffopoulos, OGC; Brandon Russell, Council Research

**Meeting Convened:** 10:34 am

**I. Call to Order and Introductions.**

Chair Arias convened the meeting and called for introductions.

**II. Overview of CBA:**

Mr. Peterson provided overviews of the original and supplemental CBAs, including the dollar amounts for the designated projects and the timeline for dispersing funds. The original CBA had a contribution from the Jaguars of \$118 million over 30 years (~\$4 million per year). The city match is \$56 million for park improvements along the river: Riverfront Plaza, Shipyards West, Metro Park, and the Flex Field. Per the Supplemental CBA, the City's contribution is \$40 million toward the Eastside with a minimum per year amount of \$4 million, with the goal of the funding being spent in 7 years. For the Countywide component, per year spending is \$2.5 million with a 15-year time frame. Around \$5 million has already been spent toward the Countywide portion. The Jaguars will contribute \$1 million per year over 30 years.

Chair Arias asked about progress regarding park improvements. Mr. Peterson said the city would meet its obligations if things continued with the CIP. He also stated that \$1 million for each council district, equal to \$14 million, will be appropriated in the 25-26 budget process. Chair Arias asked if the money would have a time by which it must be spent; Mr. Peterson confirmed that it does not expire. CM Amaro asked what the credits applied to the Countywide component were used for. Mr. Peterson said he would follow up with specifics. CM Salem asked for a summary of the Supplemental CBA components and noted that the Council recently appropriated 3 million for the UNF Esports Center, which would be applied to the Countywide component. Mr. Peterson confirmed it would be a workforce development project, bringing the required funding down to \$31 million for countywide projects.

### III. Creation of Eastside Distribution Structure:

Chair Arias asked Ms. Staffopoulos for guidance on how to proceed. She encouraged thinking about the level of oversight that the city will retain. She noted that the Cultural Council, established as a 501(c)(3), is a potential model for fund distribution. The Cultural Council manages the distribution of funds more independently from the City. She also highlighted the Public Service Grants Council as a contrasting model where the city would have more direct control over the distribution of funds.

CM Peluso reviewed feedback from community meetings and provided a handout outlining Together Eastside Coalition's recommended structure for governance and administration of the CBA funds for the Eastside. He also stated that the Cultural Council model allows for the most flexibility with a significant degree of accountability, including an annual audit.

Travis Williams, Together Eastside Coalition, spoke at the podium to provide context for the recommendation. He stated that flexibility and accountability were essential to the community and stakeholders and thought the Cultural Council model was best suited for these goals. He also noted that having representatives from the different sections of the Eastside was important.

Chair Arias asked Ms. Staffopoulos if they needed a board created before they began distributing funds. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that a 501(c)(3) organization must be created first. She also noted that the Ordinance Code spells out how the interaction between the Cultural Council and the City occurs and recommended referring to it as a starting point for drafting a similar ordinance outlining the process for distribution of the Eastside CBA funds. She also noted that they will need to consider the board's structure. Chair Arias asked if they were required to distribute funding during the 25-26 budget process if the organization and board were not established. Ms. Staffopoulos stated they were not required to distribute funds to the board and could allocate money to a particular project to ensure they met their funding goals for the upcoming year.

CM Clark-Murray asked if there were any aspects of the Cultural Council that Mr. Williams would not want implemented. He said that he did not have any specific elements that he opposed and generally liked the spirit of the structure. He also noted that Nelson Mullins was giving pro bono legal support to the organization and was ready to begin the work to establish the board. CM Clark-Murray asked where the Coalition was in the process. Mr. Williams stated he was waiting for approval from the special committee, but Nelson Mullins has already drafted materials to begin creating the 501(c)(3) organization.

CM Peluso reiterated that the Cultural Council model was the clear favorite among the community. CM Peluso stated that he would like to discuss the actual structure of the board and the number of board members but suggested finding a consensus around the overall model for the organization first to allow Nelson Mullins to begin its work. CM Howland stated there was a clear policy objective and was generally in favor, and asked if the structure would preclude the City Council from assigning other projects to the CBA funding requirement for the Eastside. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that they could still allocate dollars to other projects that meet the obligation, in addition to the money given to the potential organization responsible for the Eastside. CM Howland stated he was supportive of the model.

**Action:** CM Peluso moved for the committee to recommend the Cultural Council model. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Arias asked Ms. Staffopoulos if they could start discussing the board structure now that the motion has passed. She requested a copy of the documents prepared by Nelson Mullins to prepare for a more detailed discussion of them at the next meeting. Otherwise, she affirmed that they could begin the discussion. CM

Peluso stated that the three members of the board would be Eastside stakeholders chosen by the community, one appointed by the City Council, one appointed by the Mayor, one selected by the Jaguars, and one consensus member. Chair Arias noted that in the prior community meetings, community members wanted to ensure that the Eastside representation consisted of legacy Eastside residents rather than people who owned businesses in the community but lived elsewhere.

Ms. Staffopoulos suggested discussing how the Eastside members are appointed to the board and how much control the City Council wants over that process. CM Peluso suggested possibly opening the requirements for what counts as a legacy Eastsider and suggested the consensus board member only be required to have majority support from the other board members. CM Clark-Murray asked how many neighborhoods are in the Eastside. CM Peluso stated there were five distinct neighborhoods. CM Clark-Murray asked if they considered having a representative from each neighborhood on the board. CM Peluso stated they had, but thought being too specific about where the board members reside might limit the number of applicants and impact the efficacy of the board. CM Clark-Murray stated there should be a representative for each of the five neighborhoods but noted the challenges with serving on boards. Chair Arias agreed with CM Clark-Murray and suggested expanding the number of board members from seven. Ms. Staffopoulos stated there was an opportunity for grant committees, such as the one that supports the Cultural Council, to provide opportunities for more representatives from the community to serve.

CM Amaro asked if they could expand to eight members and move the consensus position to one of the Eastside board positions. He also noted that the definition of legacy Eastsider should be broadened. CM Peluso stated his openness to a higher number but urged keeping an odd number of members to avoid tie votes. He also recommended clarifying that the Eastside board positions be open to Eastside stakeholders. CM Howland asked if an industry representative on the board had been considered, and suggested that it might bring forth co-investments. CM Peluso stated that the Council and Mayor-appointed positions could be opportunities for industry figures.

Ms. Staffopoulos noted that the Council and Mayoral appointments for the Cultural Council were dictated by the Cultural Council bylaws and recommended ensuring that the proposed Eastside organization's bylaws represented the wishes of the Special Committee, since they would be a separate 501(c)(3) organization. CM Peluso called Mr. Williams to the podium to request that the Special Committee's sentiment be reflected in any bylaws or structures created by Nelson Mullins. Mr. Williams affirmed and stated that the geographic boundaries of potential board members are essential, but expertise is also necessary.

Chair Arias asked if they could take action on the board structure. Ms. Staffopoulos recommended taking action once they receive documents from Nelson Mullins. Mr. Peterson recommended considering staff funding, the source of that funding, and whether that funding counts toward the CBA obligations. Chair Arias recommended that the money come from the CBA funding. Ms. Meyers from the Jaguars confirmed that they did not oppose that. Ms. Staffopoulos said she would review the Supplemental CBA, as this may need clarification.

#### IV. Discussion of Tax Increment Financing:

CM Peluso stated that any dollars coming in through the TIF model would go toward capital improvements in the Eastside. Chair Arias asked how much would be generated through this model per year. Mr. Peterson stated that the Council Auditor's Office had previously run models at different growth rates that he would locate to share with the Special Committee. Still, he noted that a majority vote of the City Council could deny the money if the model is codified via ordinance rather than created through the establishment of a Community Redevelopment Agency. Chair Arias asked if money was rejected by a Council vote one year,

would that push back the end date of the model. Mr. Peterson stated that it would depend on how the ordinance structured the model.

CM Amaro stated he supported the concept as a sustainable way to extend the impact of the initial investments. CM Clark-Murray asked Mr. Peterson to restate the difference between a CRA and a TIF. Mr. Peterson restated the differences. He also updated Chair Arias with the projected money generated through the TIF model; \$130-500 million is projected, assuming a growth rate ranging from 5-10 percent. CM Peluso suggested specifying a higher vote threshold to reject money generated by the TIF model to prevent a future Council from denying the funds. He also recommended that the TIF be structured at 80 percent over a 30-year period. Chair Arias said they would act on the board structure at the next meeting and move into the other items before the Special Committee.

#### V. Public Comment:

Eric Paul McNeil expressed his desire to establish a senior citizen technology center. Latavia L. Harris discussed the Eastside's economic needs and urged the committee to ensure strong checks and balances on the distribution of funds. Jackie Lattimore expressed her desire for the committee to consider the entirety of the Eastside.

**Meeting Adjourned: 11:58**

Minutes: Brandon Russell, Council Research

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Posted: 5.21.25 9:00 am

