

City of Jacksonville

*117 W. Duval Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 29, 2025

1:00 PM

**Council Chamber,
1st Floor,
City Hall**

Special Committee on the Future of Downtown

Meeting Convened: 1:01 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 2:48 pm

Attendance: CVP Carrico; Committee Members J. Carlucci, Gaffney Jr., and Miller; Council Members Salem, Carlucci and Peluso

Excused: Council Member Diamond

Also: Brian Parks and Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office; Carla Lopera, Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Meeting Call to Order

Welcome and Introductions

CVP Carrico convened the meeting and called for introductions.

Committee Members opening thoughts

CVP Carrico spoke about the work of this committee thus far. He mentioned legislation recently filed that makes adjustments to the DIA CEO approval and removal procedures, among other things. CVP Carrico said that the bill does not include a provision for a dedicated attorney from OGC to provide staffing to DIA, and he recommended that the position be considered during the upcoming budget process.

Review DIA Filed Legislation

Carla Lopera, OGC, explained Ordinance 2025-395. The bill adds DIA as an entity that may propose legislation to be introduced at the request of the council president. The bill also specifies that the DIA CEO be appointed by the DIA Board and confirmed by council, and that the CEO may be removed by a majority vote of the DIA Board or majority vote of the full council. The bill changes the threshold to \$10 million for council approval of incentives, excluding REV grants. Lastly, DIA is directed to annually prepare and submit to the City Council a Five-year Capital Improvement Plan with its proposed budget, to assist the Council in its review of the budget.

CVP Carrico said the bill encourages less red tape for projects, autonomy for DIA and also accountability. He spoke of some push back he's received as to the part of the bill related to the council's role in confirming or removing DIA's CEO, as it may impede with recruitment for the new CEO. Council Member Gaffney Jr. asked what the current removal processes is. Ms. Lopera said there is no provision for removal in the Ordinance Code but most likely was included in the CEO's employment contract.

Council Member Carlucci expressed opposition to council having the ability to remove the CEO, noting that it could be politicized and that such an ability is not replicated with other independent agencies like JTA or JEA. He inquired about the request for emergency passage.

Council Member Peluso asked about REV grants and TIF funds. He asked why incentives have to be approved by council since the DIA's budget is also approved by council. He proposed not changing the threshold for council approval of incentives and leaving as is at \$18 million. The Chair asked the Auditor's how many projects fall into that range of incentives. Mr. Parks said they will gather that information and report back.

CVP Carrico asked the group for other accountability mechanisms, if council does not take up the responsibility for removal. Council Member Joe Carlucci indicated that removal of the CEO would be under some sort of extreme circumstance, not willy-nilly. He suggested another option, wherein council could pass a resolution about removal and send it to the DIA Board, but still retain the ability to take action if the DIA Board does not. Patrick Krechowski, DIA Board Chair, spoke about needing clear expectations for the DIA Board. He said that the board already evaluates the CEO for accountability. Council Member Miller asked about the votes needed for removal, whether it would be a simple majority or 2/3s vote.

Council Member Salem asked if council has the authority to dissolve DIA. Ms. Lopera explained the statutory implications, since DIA serves as the CRA for downtown, so if dissolved council could fill the CRA function. Council Member Salem noted that JTA, JPA and JIA are joint City-state entities, so it makes less sense to have council play a role in the selection or removal of CEOs. He said that JEA would make a more similar comparison, and that his wished council had that ability a few years back.

The committee discussed Ordinance 2025-385 an appropriation of \$45,000,000 to provide funds for future residential development/redevelopment incentives for several parcels located on the City's downtown riverfront. The funds include the City's portion of the unassigned balance and a

portion of the City's reserve for workers' compensation from Self Insurance retained earnings. Mr. Parks explained the funding source from accrued past favorable variances. CVP Carrico shared hesitation in combining residential development adjacent to "nightlife" areas downtown, because of noise issues. Council Member Peluso noted that noise is a part of urban living.

CM Gaffney Jr. asked if the funds have to be replenished, if it would be disbursed as a loan or grant, and whether the parcel where the jail sits currently would be a part of the development area. CM Miller asked how this could interact with the potential UF land swap, and he asked about the projected deficit for the next 3 years. There was discussion about the area of focus for these funds. CM J. Carlucci said that his funding source protects General Fund dollars, and will be in an account that will gain interest. CM Peluso recommended broadening the target area to include Hogan and Laura Streets. He also spoke about public dollars being utilized to preserve historic buildings. CM J. Carlucci talked about how this riverfront area is essential to activate Bay Street. CM Salem asked about a DIA optimal use study for this area from last year.

Laura Street Trio Update

Mike Weinstein, Mayor's Office, spoke about the status of the Laura Street Trio. He indicated that the foreclosure process is underway, at the end of which the buildings may be sold at auction to the highest bidder. CM Miller asked about the history of the Trio and whether the liens/fines could be forgiven. Mr. Weinstein explained that there are multiple lien holders. CM Salem shared his skepticism about restoring the buildings due to the extent of the degradation. CM Peluso spoke in support of preserving the historic Klutho designed buildings.

Questions from Committee Members

There was more discussion about the possibility of council confirming the new CEO of DIA, if 2025-395 passes in its current iteration. Ms. Boyer explained the issue with the timeline since her contract ends at the end of June and the new CEO will begin some time in July. With the council break in July, the timeline would be pushed back into August.

There was inquiry about Ms. Boyer's role to aid in the transition of the new CEO. She said she will act as a consultant in the beginning, as needed. CM Miller asked her what her current contract stipulates for removal. Ms. Boyer said that it would take a vote of 2/3 of the DIA Board. CM Gaffney Jr. asked about how the search for a new CEO is going. Cameron Hooper, DIA Board, said that 3 candidates have been selected and they are in the interview stage right now.

CM Salem asked Ms. Boyer about the optimal use study conducted for the riverfront parcels. Ms. Boyer explained that a recent DIA staffing change delayed the study, but the new property disposition manager has taken hold of the project and the bidding window for interested parties to do the study is currently open for another 2 weeks.

Public Comment

William Harrell spoke about the unfinished phase 2 of the project surrounding the USS Orleck.

Meeting Adjournment

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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Posted: 5.30.25 5:00 pm