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CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2025
5:00 pm

Location: City Council Chamber, 1st floor, City Hall

In attendance: Council President White; Council Members Lahnen, Boylan, Amaro, Carlucci, Freeman, Howland, Gay, Miller, Diamond, Johnson, Gaffney Jr., Clark-Murray and Peluso

Also: Kim Taylor, Ed Linsky, Phillip Peterson, Trista Carraher, Council Auditor's Office; Mary Staffopoulos, Shannon MacGillis and Carla Lopera, Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Meeting Convened: 5:05 pm

Council President White convened the meeting and called for introductions. He confirmed quorum with 14 members present. CP White explained the purpose of the meeting, which was to address pending Ordinance 2025-396 and to continue consideration of Ordinances 2025-319 and 2025-339 as initially discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting on May 21, 2025. Ordinance 2025-396 was introduced May 27, assigned to the Committee of the Whole and was on second reading at this meeting. Ms. Staffopoulos, OGC, explained the legislative timeline for Ordinances 2025-319 and 2025-339 and planned future meetings of the Committee of the Whole. She said that the items could be discharged at the June 10th council meeting by the council president, and potentially amended on the floor, or they could be reassigned to standing committees for more consideration.

With the departure of Council Member Freeman, there was no longer quorum. CP White explained that the meeting would now function as a workshop, for discussion and questions, but no voting. Due to the lack of quorum, Ms. Staffopoulos said that for this meeting, there will be no actions taken on, nor amendments offered to, either bill. Council Member Lahnen mentioned an amendment he may offer at a later time that reduces the sale price for the Bay Street parcel to \$6.25 million, confirmed by Bryan Moll, Gateway. Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office, reviewed the handout of Auditor recommendations and things to consider. Ms. Boyer said DIA has no objections to the Auditor's recommendations.

Q & A

Council Member Lahnen asked about the use of TIF dollars for future incentives.

Council Member Carlucci asked to hear the pros and cons of the land exchange again. Ms. Boyer said DIA favors the land exchange option because no upfront cash is required, exchange can be completed upon legislative approval, publicly supported purpose and design, recurring revenue stream through 2% hotel surcharge, ROI from 1.5 to 2.0, savings on parks costs, long delayed effort to develop the Riverfront, and an asset returned to the tax rolls.

Council Member Miller said he'd like to hear from someone who supports the option to purchase the Bay Street parcel. He called Mr. Hooper and Mr. Wohlers, DIA Board, to the podium to speak about why they voted in opposition to the land exchange. Mr. Hooper said he felt he did not have enough information to vote in support of the exchange, noting the renderings but the lack of presented budget. Mr. Wohlers said he voted in opposition because of the process, the fact that the land purchase was not presented, and the optimal use study is still out for bid. Council Member Amaro asked them how they voted on previous projects. Council Member Peluso mentioned a potential amendment he may offer at a later time to transfer responsibility for the riverfront restaurant to the purview of the Parks Department.

Council Member Boylan asked about the optimal use study. Ms. Boyer explained the delay in the optimal use study due to an unexpected staff departure. She said the RFP for the entity to conduct the study is still open for bids, with no contenders thus far. Council Member Howland asked about the provisions for a re-purchase incorporated into the land exchange agreement. Mr. Moll, Gateway, talked about his underwriting, his past experience with big projects in Tampa and DC, and his large investment downtown.

Council Member Johnson asked about the next steps. Cyndy Trimmer explained the property disposition process, noting the usual 2 steps wherein underwriting is in the second step. She indicated that was why the budget was not presented to the DIA Board. Ms. Boyer also spoke about the property disposition process. Patrick Krechowski, DIA Board Chair, agreed that the budget would not have been presented at the juncture of the first step of the disposition and the vote by the board. Council Member Howland talked about prioritizing downtown projects, and considering the scope of the entire UF project. Council Member Lahnen talked about how the land exchange protects the General Fund.

Ms. Staffopoulos listed the possible next steps with Ordinances 2025-319 and 2025-339. She said there could be more noticed Committee of the Whole meetings prior to the June 24th council meeting, or the bills could be discharged at the June 10th council meeting and potentially amended on the floor, or with a 2/3 vote the bills could be reassigned to standing committees and go before council for final approval June 24th.

Council President White adjourned the meeting.

Public Comment

James Schwartz and Matt Clark

Meeting Adjourned 6:41 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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6.4.25 Posted 5:00 p.m.