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CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Meeting Minutes

**May 21, 2025
1:00 pm**

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

In attendance: Council President White, Council Members Salem, Clark-Murray, Miller, Gaffney Jr. Lahnen, Boylan, Arias, Gay, J. Carlucci, Peluso, Amaro, Carlucci, Johnson and Pittman

Also: Kim Taylor, Brian Parks, Heather Reber, Phillip Peterson, Trista Carraher, Council Auditor's Office; Mary Staffopoulos and Carla Lopera, Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Meeting Convened: 1:02 pm

Council President White convened the meeting and called for introductions. He confirmed quorum with 15 members present. CP White explained the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss pending legislation 2025-319 and 2025-339. Ms. Staffopoulos, OGC, explained the legislative timeline and planned future meetings of the Committee of the Whole. She said that for this meeting, there will be no actions taken on, nor amendments offered to, either bill.

Lori Boyer, DIA, gave a presentation about Ordinance 2025-319. She outlined the steps in the required property disposition process, in keeping with state statute and authorized by Ordinance 2022-372. Ms. Boyer talked about prospective closing dates for the 801 W. Bay Street parcel, which could be between July and December. She talked about Riverfront Plaza, the East Landing Lot, and the removal of the Main Street Bridge ramp. Ms. Boyer shared DIA's support for the land exchange instead of the direct purchase of the Bay Street parcel for the following reasons: no cash 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.

Ms. Boyer talked about the redevelopment agreement that does not approve future incentives and requires future council approval for a completion grant, the developer could ask for a \$20 million completion

grant later. She explained the cap on incentive requests and the process to re-acquire the land if the incentives aren't approved within 15 months.

Bryan Moll, Gateway, spoke about his firm's expertise and experience in Tampa and Washington DC. He spoke of the private equity fund focused entirely on Downtown Jacksonville, and the significant investment in downtown development. Mr. Moll talked about the need for ground level activation and the community benefits of this large-scale project. He talked about the Riverfront Plaza proposal and the details of that project, including condos, a hotel and food/beverage operators. He mentioned the project's increase in ad valorem on the downtown tax roll. Mr. Moll spoke about the option to purchase the Bay Street parcel and the process thus far, with 3 appraisals. The purchase price, if that option is selected, would be an average of the 3 appraisals - \$6.95 million. He talked about the strengths and weaknesses of both the purchase and the exchange options. Patrick Krechowski, DIA Board Chair, talked about the vision for downtown development and the need for small and large transformative projects.

Q & A

Council Member Lahnen asked about the cost of the parcel purchase and how many council votes are required for passage. He asked about the cost savings related to the beer garden wall, an estimated \$1-2 million. He inquired about the use of TIF dollars.

Council Member Salem asked about the DIA Board's 5-2 vote to approve the land exchange proposal and why they were not presented with an opportunity to vote on the purchase option. Ms. Boyer explained that the vote was to comply with state disposition requirements, which is not required for a direct purchase. Council Member Salem asked for the names of investors. Cyndy Trimmer, Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne & Diebenow, spoke in opposition to disclosing investor names as that is atypical in such proposals.

Council Member Arias asked a series of questions about the development agreement incentives and other TIF funded projects. He expressed support for smaller DIA projects. Council Member Miller expressed hesitation related to undisclosed future incentives. Council Member Joe Carlucci asked about loan options instead of grants. Council Member Peluso spoke about the limitations on TIF funds.

Council Member Clark-Murray asked about the sometimes-controversial use of reserve funds and the expected JEA contribution to the City. She mentioned that investor lists were not required for other projects. There was discussion about Council Member Salem's connection to JWB, and he clarified that his investment with JWB ended in October 2024.

Council Member Carlucci shared support for the land exchange and asked about the resiliency focus for the project. Council Member Boylan asked for the Auditor's concerns related to this project. Mr. Peterson reviewed the handout of considerations for Ordinance 2025-319. Council Member Johnson spoke about the visionary nature of the project. Council Member Joe Carlucci suggested that the DIA use internal funds for the parcel purchase.

Public Comment

Elias Hionides, Dimitri Demapoulos, Micah Heavener, and Matt Clark (did not speak)

Meeting Adjourned 3:30 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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5.27.25 Posted 5:00 p.m.