**June 15-16, 2020 City Council Committee Meetings Email Public Comments**

**Received through 2:00 p.m. on June 15th**

**Non-First Baptist Church demolition permit appeal**

**6-10-20**

**Subject: 1555 N. Pearl Street**

Dear Ms. Brown:

By way of introduction, my name is Roland Falcon and I am a practicing attorney in Jacksonville. My office is located at

233 E. Bay Street, Suite 1010, Jacksonville, Florida 32202, My office phone phone is 904.350.9960 and my email address is rolandfalcon@rfalconlaw.com.

My personal residence is the Murphy House located at 1542 N. Pearl Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206. The Murphy House has historical significance in many ways to the city. I have been restoring this historic home for a very long time. My present problem is that it has come to my attention that the owner of the building located at 1555 N. Pearl Street, across from my residence is planning to turn it into a restaurant and bar. No one is the two block radii want this monstrosity to hurt our small and wonderful street (The actors from the Keystone Cops from the 1920's filmed and lived on this street). I am giving notice to the counsel that we want to be heard on this matter. I tried to locate the meeting date but I could not find it. Please let us know of the time and date so that we can attend. Thanks. Roland Falcon, Attorney at Law. (904)614-4040.

**6-12-20**

**Subject: 🚧🙏🙏❓❓❗Can City Council pass legislation REQUIRING soc distancing, masks in ALL City buildings, properties.**

We have a HEATH Committee I believe. Can and WILL the City Council not mandate social distancing and mask wearing in allll Gov Buildings and properties. Yes, that includes parks as well. List them…if more than 10 people present, etc. in Senior Centers also.

I know—Mayor would veto--- but Council could override.

WE NEED TO BE RESPONSIBLE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH OF OUR CITiZENS…..(and JSO…!)

Write the legislation and let it unset after 6 months unless renewed….which can allow for an extension.

WE JUST LOCKED DOWN FLORIDA AND THE INTERSTATES --- no out of state Visitors. I-10, I-95, etc.

No air flights in JIA with visitors, etc.

No Visitors from out of state staying in BNB. It worked.

NOW—we do the complete opposite??? And no masks, no social distancing at all?

MANDATE IT ON GOV PROPERTY.. Sounds crazy—but please do something! Protect us from Virus!! And invasion of visitors, strangers, from all over US and World. – even China. Brazil… Arizona..

Roberta Thomas

**Subject: JAX SENIOR LIVES MATTER !!! We want to live. (outside of solitary confinement!) Looks like a year?**

We want to come out of TOTAL SECLUSION and ISOLATION and live. We want to breathe!

Corona is spreading and increasing…!!! Opened too soon!!!

JAX SENIORS-- - 100 days we have locked ourselves in homes—FEARING A VIRUS THAT WILL KILL US….. and COJ now wants us to “STAY LOCKED UP” for more months of this year ! ???? while it “invites the virus to consume the city”… IT IS CRAZY We have battled and battled this killing virus! SACRIFICED!

And now?? COJ “INVITES STRANGERS, CROWDS, MEDIA” to the city ?.

And now? ? COJ and RNC wants “No social distancing! No masks. And lots of yelling to spread the virus in hotels, bars, arena.. just so a “man” can brag and densely fill a building to capacity without REGARD for others’ lives in this City ??

And now?? COJ wants to bring lots of PROTESTORS AND RIOTERS to harm our city?

And now?? COJ wants to SPREAD THE VIRUS-- FOR CERTAIN !!! FOR CERTAIN!!!

And now?? You want to put all our FRONT LINE HEALTH PERSONNEL and JSO OFFICERS back into another blasted war again to try to save lives---and their own --for what good reason ??

# JAX SENIOR LIVES MATTER ---- of do they? Nawh….. we don’t matter. Virus can kill us. Too bad..for us old insignificant folks. Young COJ wants $$$$$ and power.!

But we JAX SENIORS surely do vote at elections! Absentee ballots or not.. We VOTE! We remember who did a 180 on us..

WE WANT A HALF-WAY NORMAL LIFE AGAIN. WE WANT FREEDOM TO LIVE WITHOUT SECLUSION AND ISOLATION.. === WITHOUT CORONA FEARS..

# JAX SENIOR LIVES MATTER

God bless those in Assisted Living and Nursing Homes.. No visitors ---ever.. ever ? ? No going anywhere--- not even to see grandkids. ?

**Subject: Update regarding Shad Creek? 2019-463**

Hello,

My question is to Councilman Ferraro & Ms. Grandin. Looking forward to the zoom meeting.

Thank you,

Andrew Tully

**Subject: Speaker for 2020-0262 (NCSPHS and TEU meetings 6/15)**

Good morning,

This email is “just in case”. Ordinance 2020-0262 is set to be opened and continued due to lack of notice in both the NCSPHS and TEU Committee meetings on 6/15/20. If for some reason it does not get continued, Cyndy Trimmer or Steve Diebenow will be available to discuss this application if need be. They are in support of the application. Their address is One Independent Drive, Suite 1200, Jacksonville, FL 32202. (904) 301-1269.

Thank you so much and have a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Krista Burby

Paralegal

Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne & Diebenow, P.L.

One Independent Drive, Suite 1200

Jacksonville, Florida 32202

**Subject: Cancel the RNC convention in Jacksonville**

I am strongly opposed to bringing this convention event to Jacksonville.

\*We are in the midst of a pandemic that will be made much worse by hosting thousands of visitors from around the state and country who may have been exposed to the Covid-19 virus.

\*The President and RNC have shown no inclination to observe or support CDC guidelines to stop the spread of this virus.

\*Heightened tensions on both sides will most likely result in violence resulting in personal injury and destruction of property.

\*Militarization of police who have little or no training in de-escalation and lack accountability for their actions has diminished public confidence in the ability of the JSO to maintain order and ensure public safety.

David Johnson

2301 Plainfield Avenue

Orange Park FL 32073

**6-14-20**

**Subject: Republican National Convention**

We are in the midst of a pandemic that will be made much worse by hosting thousands of visitors from around the country who have most likely been exposed to the Covid-19 virus.

\*The President and RNC have shown no inclination to observe or support CDC guidelines to stop the spread of this virus.

\*Heightened tensions on both sides will most likely result in violence resulting in personal injury and destruction of property.

\*Militarization of police who have little or no training in de-escalation and lack accountability for their actions has diminished public confidence in the ability of the JSO to maintain order and public safety.

As a one time Florida Republican, (look it up), I am appalled and dfisgusted at the betrayal of American values.

I am an old lady who believes that black lives matter — which means they matter AS MUCH AS ALL OTHER LIVES.

Joanne Reuter

57 Ocean Oaks Lane

Palm Coast, FL 32137

505-980-9264

joannecreuter@outlook.com

**Subject: To be included as part of the Monday, June 15, 2020 9:30 AM Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health and Safety Committee**.

2019-0555 is marked as DEFER. Please quit deferring it and withdraw it. The ordinance aims to make the taxpayers give $2 million dollars to get a grant restriction lifted so Curry can let a developer develop Metropolitan Park. If a developer wants to develop this land, then they should pay for it NOT the taxpayer.

2020-0316 marked as EMERGENCY. What is going on here? It looks like Curry is wanting to give $2 million of taxpayer money to help with Trump coming to Jacksonville. The city's taxpayers should NOT be funding any part of Trump coming here. Trump is an extremely divisive character.

2020-0325 Please pass this ordinance. It's a start. We need more transparency and we need the police to be wearing body cameras and turning them on.

2020-0326 I love this ordinance. It aims to encourage people to not hit kids. Please vote yes.

2020-0316 seems fishy. It was introduced June 9th and marked emergency Note the June 9th date in the article below.

Quote from this article:

Three Northeast Florida officials created a not-for-profit corporation to raise money to host President Donald Trump’s Republican Party nomination acceptance in Jacksonville. .... According to a June 9 filing with the state Division of Corporations, the committee would “assist in the planning, coordinating and implementing of the marketing and promotion of the City of Jacksonville for the Republican National Committee Nomination Acceptance.”

link to article:

https://www.jaxdailyrecord.com/article/daniel-corrigan-and-waltz-lead-rnc-host-committee

Hoping for peace,

Susan Aertker

Zip: 32257

**Comments related to First Baptist Church demolition permit appeal – 2020-188**

**6-10-20**

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]**

Mr. Chairman and members of the LUZ Committee

I am writing you today to state that I am in support of First Baptist Church and I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church

As you are aware First Baptist Church has ministered to tens of thousands of people in North Florida. The plan to revitalize the downtown campus is critical to not only the church but to the continued viability of the downtown area. Your support is important for the future of the Church, its future, and the future of Downtown.

Thanks,

Nathan DiQuattro

Black Knight Financial

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]**

Dear Honorable Chairman Becton and the Honorable Members of the Committee:

This is in reference to Resolution 2020-188, "Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee." I am respectfully in support of the First Baptist Church's claim that the subject property before this Committee for resolution should not be designated as a historic landmark which will prohibit demolition. Our expert architects have respectfully disputed the argument that this subject property is a historic landmark. This subject property as a historic landmark was also disputed many years ago by the late Dr. Lindsay when he was first presented with the opportunity to designate structures on that block as historic. I believe one of the most significant exhibits of growth and development in our city are the vibrant building structures populating the area. Our church as a corporate body intends to continue such growth and development in our city and in line with the city's plan to revitalize downtown and it's economic resources, we have agreed to rebuild and renovate this subject property pursuant to our religious, economic, social, and aesthetic aspiration and objectives as we faithfully advance the corporate existence, efficiency, and relevance to the general welfare not only for its congregation but also to the city as a whole. Your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown. Therefore, I respectfully support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church. Your favorable resolution to our petition to grant our Church permission to demolish the subject property is eternally appreciated.

Respectfully,

/s/ John Bacus De Jesus, Esq.

Serving as Deacon of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville

Phone (904)728-8066

Email: dejesuslawpllp.com

**Subject: First Baptist Church**

Councilman Ferraro,

First, let us thank you for serving as our north side Council member. We appreciate all you are doing to improve our neighborhood.

Secondly, we are requesting your support in allowing First Baptist Church to tear down and rebuild one of its buildings in order to better serve our God and the City of Jacksonville. This change in the use of our property is vital to us being able to accomplish the ministries set before us.

Thank you for your assistance.

Garry and Pam Markham

**Subject: First Baptist Church**

Councilmembers White, Gaffney, Pittman, Becton, Boylan, and Dennis

Thank you for your service to our city. We are requesting your support in approving First Baptist Church’s request to demolish and rebuild one of their buildings. This action is vital to the church’s ability to fulfill its God-given ministry of reaching our city for Christ. In this day of unrest, the ministry of First Baptist Church can be a catalyst for bringing healing to our city.

We would appreciate your support.

Garry and Pam Markham

**Subject: 2020-188 RESO-Q**

Councilman Ferraro:

Please consider my request that you support the appeal of First Baptist Church in this matter in order to permit the Church to go forward with plans to construct a new building on the site to better meet it's needs to continue ministry to the people of Jacksonville.

RESO-Q re Appeal Filed by First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, FL

 regarding Jax Historic Preservation Commission’s decision to Deny

 Demolition Permit Application for Structure at 125 W Church St, a

 Contributing Structure within Downtown Historic District, Pursuant to

 Sec 320.407, Ord Code; Adopt Recommended Findings & Conclusions

 of LUZ Committee. (West)(LUZ)(Ex-parte: DeFoor, Boylan & Bowman)

Ronald N. Grove

2152 Matefield Road

Jacksonville, FL 32224-1551

**6-11-20**

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]**

It is my understanding that your committee will meet on June 16, 2020, to consider the appeal by First Baptist Church of the denial for demolition permit by the Historic Preservation Committee. I am a native of Jacksonville and lifelong resident. I am also a lifelong (63 years) very involved member of First Baptist Church, where my children and grandchildren are also active members. I truly love Jacksonville and I also love my church and I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church.

Our pastor, Dr. Heath Lambert, has only been with us for about two years, but he has taken on a tremendous responsibility with deep consequences to his ministry and his own family, to develop a plan to move our church out of financial crisis that was not of his making. A huge part of the plan includes the sale of much of our property and the renovation of the remaining buildings.

As one who grew up riding the bus with my grandmother to shop downtown, I appreciate the history of Jacksonville and I have wonderful memories of the beautiful buildings. But I implore you to approve the permit for demolition for our church so that we can again make that block a vibrant and exciting area where people will want to come. Your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

Thank you for your time and I am praying for you as you make your decision.

Patty Vansant

**Subject: Jacksonville First Baptist Church Downtown - Request for Demolition Permit**

To City Council Members:

I am the first person to say I love historical buildings, however, the fact remains that many of Jacksonville’s historical buildings lie in ruins as the cost is too extravagant to restore them. Just to name a few on Church street already, Ambassador Hotel, FL Baptist convention Center, etc., that lie in ruins and taken over by homeless; I cannot see how the historical society sees those as attracting people to the “historic district”. If you vote to force historical Landmark designation on the FBC building on Church street – you will have another building taken over by homeless and lying in ruins.

I thought Jacksonville was all about beautifying the city and making it feel safe and attracting people to want to live downtown?? FBC of Jacksonville is trying to do just that!

Please vote to give FBC of Jacksonville the permit for demolition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara Palmer

EVP, CFO

Source International Inc

712 B N Pine Ave

Green Cove Springs FL 32043

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 (Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Com)**

Dear Councilmember Becton:

I am a native Jacksonville resident and long time member of First Baptist Church downtown. I have parked every Sunday morning on the street where the building in question is located. Believe me, it is a dead street and came as quite a surprise that this building would be considered “historical”. The smell of urine in this area is strong from homeless sleeping on the street. Demolition of this building and moving forward with church building plans would revitalize this whole city block.

I am in support of First Baptist Church and support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church. Your support is important for the future of our church and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

Thank you,

Donna H. Murray

5235 Tierra Verde Lane

Jacksonville, Florida. 32258

**Subject: First Baptist Church Construction Permits/Historic Designation**

I am writing concerning the hearing for First Baptist Church property to be designated as historically significant. As long as I have lived in Jacksonville, there have been various campaigns and studies to revitalize the downtown district. There has been progress made but there is still a long way to go until it is a thriving, vibrant community.

I respect the historic designations and the covenants that they entail. My home is in Avondale—when we moved here we made the choice to be in an urban, historic community—in spite of the restrictions. To place the historic designation on the First Baptist Church buildings is ridiculous. Just because they are older doesn’t mean they make a historic contribution. It also has a serious long term financial impact—the designation would make the buildings unattractive to any future buyers or make much needed renovations expensive and cumbersome if not impossible. This would not only have impact on First Baptist Church, it could also impact any potential buyers for other property and, in turn, have an impact on future growth in the downtown area. In the current economic conditions, we should be doing everything possible to make the urban core attractive to new businesses, potential buyers and new development.

Please do not place the historic designation on the buildings and approve the necessary permits to proceed with the project. Thank you for serving on the city council and your consideration.

Deb Hassenzahl

1624 Talbot Avenue

Jacksonville, Florida 32205

**Subject: First Baptist Building**

Councilmembers Becton, Boylan, Dennis, Gaffney, Pittman, White, Ferraro

As members of First Baptist Church, we want to encourage you and your committee to not allow our church’s building on Church Street to be designated as a Historical Preservation site. Our church needs to be able to do reconstruction on that building along with the other buildings on that block in order to create accommodations that we need to fiscally manage the meeting places for our church. Not being able to do that would put a financial burden on our church at a time that we need to conserve our financial resources. Since we have owned the building for many years, and it has never been designated as a Historical Preservation site before, please do not allow it now.

Sincerely,

Rabon and Arlene Patterson

RabonandArlenePatterson@Comcast.net

**Subject: Allow First Baptist Church of Jacksonville to Proceed with Construction Plans**

Dear Sirs:

I am respectfully requesting that the City Council Committee will vote YES to allow First Baptist Church of Jacksonville to move forward with the construction/renovation plan that will be presented/discussed on June 23rd. I urge each member of the committee to help our church move forward on a plan that has been carefully planned, prayed over and approved by our church members.

Sincerely,

Anita Delores Russell

Member of FBC since August, 1981

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 - First Baptist Church Demolition Plans**

Good afternoon City Council members,

I am writing to you in reference to Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee] to share my support of First Baptist Church and their plan to demolish part of their property.

I am in support of First Baptist Church and I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church.

Your support is vital for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Stark

**Subject: First Baptist Jacksonville**

Please know that we are in favor of allowing First Baptist Church to proceed with demolition of buildings on the Hobson block. We do not think these buildings need to be on the historic registry. The new plans and buildings will be a positive addition on the downtown property.

Greg Williams

Integrity Funeral Home and Cremations

1662 Stockton St.

Jacksonville, FL 32204

**Subject: First Baptist Jacksonville**

Please know that we are in favor of allowing First Baptist Church to proceed with demolition of buildings on the Hobson block. We do not think these buildings need to be on the historic registry. The new plans and buildings will be a positive addition on the downtown property.

Jill Williams

904-891-0774

**Subject: First Baptist Church Building Permit**

Dear Member of the City Council:

Thank you for your commitment to serving our community well. My name is Teri Van Duyn and I am a member of First Baptist Church Jacksonville. I would implore you to vote on the side of FBC and allow the permit being requested by our church leadership. This is imperative not only for our church but also for the well being of Downtown Jacksonville.

From my understanding, the building in question is in very poor condition and unable to meet the needs of the church as is. The plans our church has for rebuilding a beautiful structure that welcomes all people to worship necessitates the current structure to come down and start fresh. In my opinion, this new building will help beautify downtown, encourage more people to come downtown, and will help the downtown community. Especially with the new condominiums that are to be built in the community, the residents of those buildings will appreciate having safe and beautiful surroundings--not a condemned building that is unable to be used to its full potential. This new building will be used to spread love and joy among families and encourage children in the arts and community service by being kind, learning to love their neighbors, and respect one another. I work in the children's ministry at the church, and this new building plan will be such a wonderful thing for the children of Jacksonville. I would hope to use these facilities to teach children music and participate in community projects like in the past when we are able to sing in Hemming Plaza. Having newer, safer, modern facilities will encourage parents to bring their children downtown and participate in these community events. The church is here to help the Downtown Community where possible and having a newer, beautiful building attached to the amazingly beautiful historic building of the Hobson Auditorium will be absolutely striking. It will be a block that Downtown Jacksonville can be proud to display and tell about to other downtown communities.

Also, from my understanding, First Baptist built the building (back in the 1940's?) and just as a lay person it seems to me that whoever built the building and owns the building should be able to determine what to do with the building. That may simple, but that is my perspective.

Thank you for your time and concern to listen to the citizens of Jacksonville and the members of First Baptist Church. We only want to further the growth of Downtown Jacksonville and be a friend to Downtown Jacksonville and its community.

Sincerely,

Teri Van Duyn

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 First Baptist Church**

Hello,

I am writing in regards to the appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by the Historic Preservation Committee. I have been an active member of First Baptist Church for over 30 years along with my family. I am in support of First Baptist Church. I respectfully ask the City Council to issue the demolition permit to the church. Your support is important to me and for the future of our church. First Baptist Church has purchased this property and should be allowed to modify it to use for ministry purposes as the church sees fit. The church has had a presence in downtown Jacksonville for many years and is a vital part of Jacksonville and surrounding areas.

First Baptist Church has impacted so many families in a positive way. We wish to continue our vital ministries by updating our facilities in a way that will be beautiful and position our church to better serve our community.

Thank you for reading this email and giving my church your full support.

Thank you for your service to our great city.

Sincerely,

Grace Stark

**Subject: Demolition permit application**

Dear City Counsel,

I am in support of granting the permit for demolition to First Baptist Church.

I have been a member of this church since 1989 and a resident of Jacksonville for 64 years . As a whole FBC has worked hard in our city to spread the life changing gospel of Jesus Christ . It is important for us to demolish this building in order to carry out the plans our Pastor and the leadership of our church has laid before us to continue an to increase our efforts in sharing the Gospel.

Gods will be done.

Luther Scarboro

I urge you to approve the permit for demolition. Thank you for your consideration

**6-12-20**

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

Dear Sirs:

It has been my pleasure to serve First Baptist Church and to live in our wonderful city the past 24 years. God has truly blessed my life to call me to serve Him in this great city with such great people and to enjoy the richness of our great city. I appreciate your leadership in Jacksonville and pray for you that God will grant you His wisdom to make choices for our city.

I write today concerning Resolution 2020-188 (Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by the Historic Preservation Committee). I am in support of First Baptist Church and our efforts to move forward with our plans for bettering our church plant and bettering downtown Jacksonville. Being in downtown Jacksonville most every day and walking around to businesses for lunch, shopping, and the like, I believe that our plans go hand in hand with bettering Jacksonville and making it the city that it needs to be and a much cleaner and nicer place to live and work.

I fully support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church and believe this is very important for the future of our church, and even the future of Downtown Jacksonville. I appreciate each of you and thank you for taking time to consider our petition and thank you in advance for granting this permit.

Steve Clifton

Pastor of Care and Discipleship | First Baptist Church Jacksonville

phone: 904.366.1377

email: SteveC@fbcjax.com

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

Good morning Danny, Michael, Garrett, Al, Reggie, Ju’Coby and Randy:

This email is in reference to Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee.

I am in support of First Baptist Church, I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church as I truly believe this is a necessary move to keeping Downtown alive and continuing to grow our great city.

Your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown.

Thank you for your time,

Patrick O’Rourke

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]**

Good Morning:

Thank you for your service on the City Council. I am writing to request that you grant our appeal.

I am in support of First Baptist Church and I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church. Your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown. Having walked on this street every week for several years I look forward to the life that can be restored to this area if you allow our church to continue and enhance our ministry there.

Yours in Christ,

Randy B. Murray

5235 Tierra Verde Lane

Jacksonville, FL 32258

904-704-7833

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee].**

Dear Committee Members,

I support First Baptist Church who wants all of Jacksonville to know all of Jesus for all of life. Please issue the demolition permit to the Church. We love God and love all people.

From attending the last public meeting on this subject and the passion some people have in opposition to demolition, it appears some individuals want to prevent the proclamation of the good news that God loves you, that He sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins, that he arose from the dead to give us the promise of eternal life and a new ministry of reconciliation for all people. I really wonder if preserving historic structures represents the real motivation of the heart of those who oppose demolition or a desire to prevent First Baptist Church from sharing the love of Christ.

If City of Jacksonville officials can approve removal of a historic monument in Hemming Park,

• at night,

• without any public meetings,

• without following the guidelines for removal of historic structures,

• or protection of public property;

then please cast your net on the other side of the City Hall boat and allow demolition of a building which some members of the historic preservation committee, as recorded at the last public meeting, found difficult to justify meeting all the criteria for historic preservation.

Please vote to approve demolition and allow First Baptist Church to continue to minister to predominately black neighborhoods as it has in the past through Funday Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and many other ministries of reconciliation which change hearts through the love of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

Richard Powell

3842 Rogero Road

Jacksonville, FL 32277

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee**

Mr. Danny Becton. Chairman, et el.

Land Use Zoning Committee

City of Jacksonville

Jacksonville, Florida

By means of this Email, I am writing as the Executive Director of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, in support of the appeal of the First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, which is seeking the approval of the Jacksonville City Council to issue a demolition permit to the church for a specific building.

 Needless to say, the Florida Baptist Historical Society is interested in and strongly supportive of any church that seeks to preserve “historically significant” church buildings. Given that Florida Baptists have had churches since the days of the Florida Territory more than 200 years ago, our definition of “historically significant” would be any facility that was erected at least more one hundred years ago. And any structure built later than 1900 would have to be both “architecturally significant in its design and construction” and “historically significant in its ministry use” to merit consideration for preservation.

 However, in this particular instance, the “Singles/Administration building” of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, does not rise to the level of being “historically significant” nor “architecturally significant” in Florida Baptist life. That building was constructed for utilitarian and multi-purposes uses, but it lacked architectural significance. And just because it is “old” does not make it historically significant. The decades following post-World War II leading into the 1950s and 1960s was a “desert” of architectural form for most Baptist churches. First Baptist Church sought to construct an economical facility that could serve various ministry functions with little regard for architectural form. This was and still is typical of many secondary buildings that Baptist churches have and continue to construct all over Florida. These buildings are not designed by named architects for the purpose of making “public statements.” These secondary buildings are generally constructed primarily for economy and to ensure that it fulfills a pressing ministry need of the church. If there are to be any “public statement” buildings, they are generally reserved for the worship center or sanctuary.

 First Baptist Church, Jacksonville needs to have the flexibility to use its properties for the best possible ministry means to better serve the Jacksonville community as it has done since 1838. It is noteworthy that the church is committed to remain and fulfill its ministry purposes in the downtown urban core – not in the outlying suburbs. But in order to fulfill its ministry commitment to the city, the church needs to be able to redefine and utilize its property for the most God-honoring purposes it can.

 In conclusion, I would encourage your committee’s affirmative support of the request of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, and recommend to the Jacksonville City Council their approval of a demolition permit.

 Cordially

Donald S Hepburn

Executive Secretary-Treasurer

Florida Baptist Historical Society

P.O. Box 5548

Jacksonville, FL 32247

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

To Council Members Boylan, Ferraro, Gaffney, Pittman, White

I am a member of First Baptist Church (32 years) and I am asking for your support to issue the demolition permit that has been requested by our church so that our ministry plans for this property can move forward. Your support is important for the future of our church and the future of Downtown.

Norma Johnston

**Subject: For the record - 125 W Church St**

To Mayor Curry and the City Council,

I wanted to share my thoughts on the First Baptist Church Sunday School building. I am submitting my letter for the upcoming LUZ meeting as well.

I am a Jacksonville native, a business owner employing about 100 residents and an active community member and co-founder of #mappingjax, a group that has an active membership of over 6,000 citizens all concerned and positively inclined toward historic preservation, and it was important to me to voice my disapproval of the demolition of the First Baptist Sunday School building. It’s time for our community leadership to end the destruction of historical buildings within our city, specifically our downtown area.

 The Sunday school building easily passes the minimum criteria needed to be considered a local landmark. It has significance to our local history, was built by one of the regionally prominent architects, was the worksite of important Jacksonville landowner and developer Terry Parker, it is one of the few Renaissance Revival style buildings remaining in Florida, it is in good shape for preservation and restoration, and is an important structure to the downtown Historic District.

 This building has many factors that make it important on its own, but it is also an important fixture for the Downtown area. If it is approved to be demolished, you will be going against a clear policy that is in place to protect local architecture. There is also the risk our downtown area can not afford to make of the building being replaced by something less valuable to the community. With the owners potentially moving out of downtown due to low membership and bad business, it’s possible that this area is just being prepped for another sale that may not bring people to downtown.

 I urge you to think back to the preservation of buildings like Cowford Chophouse, Hayden Burns Library, St. James building/City Hall and the Lerner Building, among others. These beautiful buildings were renovated rather than demolished and add historical beauty that can not be recreated. We need to take pride in the historical buildings in our downtown area. If we continue to demolish buildings that have been significant to our local and architectural history, we’ll be left with the regret of demolishing a piece of our local culture.

 It is time for Jacksonville leaders to care about the culture, history and the residents of the city instead of placing more value on institutions and organizations with deep pockets and an over-reach of political influence. Any group willing to destroy historical structures that are in use and in good condition for preservation is only committed to their own interests and not the interests of the entire community.

Steve Williams

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee**

To Whom it May Concern:

 I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the First Baptist Church, your support is important for the future of our church, its future,and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

I would sincerely appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Emmett Wester

8037 Cumberland Gap Trail, Jacksonville, FL 32244

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee**

Dear Committee Members,

I support First Baptist Church who wants all of Jacksonville to know all of Jesus for all of life. Please issue the demolition permit to the Church. We love God and love all people.

From attending the last public meeting on this subject and the passion some people have in opposition to demolition, it appears some individuals want to prevent the proclamation of the good news that God loves you, that He sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins, that he arose from the dead to give us the promise of eternal life and a new ministry of reconciliation for all people. I really wonder if preserving historic structures represents the real motivation of the heart of those who oppose demolition or a desire to prevent First Baptist Church from sharing the love of Christ.

If City of Jacksonville officials can approve removal of a historic monument in Hemming Park, at night, without any public meetings, without following the guidelines for removal of historic structures, or protection of public property; then please cast your net on the other side of the City Hall boat and allow demolition of a building which some members of the historic preservation committee, as recorded at the last public meeting, found difficult to justify meeting all the criteria for historic preservation.

Please vote to approve demolition and allow First Baptist Church to continue to minister to predominately black neighborhoods as it has in the past through Sidewalk Funday School, Vacation Bible School, childrens choir special programs and many other ministries of reconciliation which change hearts through the love of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

Jacob and Kristin Miller

8327 Haverhill St

Jax, Fl 32211

**Subject: FBCJAX request to demolish building**

Ladies and Gentlemen: Please consider favorably our church’s request to demolish our Singles building on Hogan Street.

Our overall plan to change the footprint of FBC will be an enhancement to downtown and a vitally needed change to our downtown campus in order for us to continue our presence and our work in the city of Jacksonville.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Hodges

Member FBCJAX

265-7444

**6-13-20**

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee**

Mr. Becton, Mr. Boylan, Mr. Dennis, Mr. Ferraro, Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Pittman, Mr. White:

I am in support of First Baptist Church.

I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church.

Your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown

Sincerely,

David M. Welch

7855 Timberlin Park Blvd.

32256

**Subject: "Resolution 2020-188[Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]"**

Dear Committee Members,

I support First Baptist Church and ask you to please issue the demolition permit to the Church. Our church has faithfully supported the City of Jacksonville by remaining in the Downtown area when others have left for the suburbs. Our desire is to continue to be a good neighbor by providing an attractive building that will only enhance the city’s efforts for revitalization and, more importantly, allow FBC to continue to minister to ALL the citizens of our great city by showing them the love of Jesus. We love God and all people and want to be able to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and how He can change hearts and lives when one comes to know him in a real and personal way.

Please vote to approve the demolition!

Sincerely,

Donna Powell

**Subject: "Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]."**

Respectful Council Members,

I worship at First Baptist Church in downtown Jacksonville and have been a member for more than 6 years. I am in support of First Baptist Church requesting to issue the demolition permit that was denied by the Historical Preservation Committee.

I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church would respectfully ask you for this support as requested so that our ministry plans for this property can move forward. Your support is vital to the life and future of our church and its ability to continue a presence in the future of downtown.

Thanking you in advance for your support,

Vanessa Cherry

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

Dear Sirs,

I support the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville in regards to “Resolution 2020-188.

I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church.

Your support is important for the future of our church and the future of Downtown,

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Bill and Carol Monroe

Members since 1988.

**Subject: Demolition permit for FBC Jacksonville**

Jacksonville Council Members,

This email is in support of Resolution 2020-18, appeal by First Baptist Church Jacksonville of denial of demolition permit by the Historic Preservation Committee.

Our family has been members of FBC since 1951. In that building, my wife and I have both taught Bible classes for college students and adults. It has been a functional building, useful for a specific time. We believe that the church’s plans to use this property to meet other needs is progressive and timely.

When visitors to our city are attending an event at one of our convention or entertainment sites, we believe it is doubtful that the organizers of such events will encourage them to tour the First Baptist Church Sunday School Building because of it’s architectural significance and uniqueness.

For this reason, we are asking the Council Members to support issuing the demolition permit for the church as your support is important for the future of our church, and for the future of downtown.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Philip R. and Marjorie Harrison

**Subject: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

My name is Deborah Wilmot. I attend First Baptist Church downtown Jacksonville.

This e mail is In regards to "Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]. I am in support of First Baptist Church. I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church.

Please grant our request

Deborah Wilmot - EA

Debbie’s Accounting Service, Inc

3575 Southside Blvd.

Jacksonville, FL 32216

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

Dear Sir,

I wanted you to know that my wife, Terry and I have citizens of the Jacksonville community forty-four years. We have also been active members of FBC, Jacksonville thirty-six years. Please know the following:

1. We are in support of First Baptist Church.

2. We are also support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church.

3. And, we are asking because, your support, is important for the future of our church and the future of our downtown.

Thank you for your faithful service and your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Aaron and Terry Thompson

**6-14-20**

**Subject: Re: Resolution 2020-188 Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee**

To Whom it May Concern:

> I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the First Baptist Church, your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

>> I would sincerely appreciate your support for the issuing of the demolition permit in this matter.

>> Thank you for your time and consideration,

>Respectfully,

Wilbur Grooms

12747 Burning Tree Ln. E.

Jacksonville, FL. 32223

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee.**

Danny Becton – Chair

Michael Boylan - Vice Chair

Garrett Dennis

Al Ferraro

Reggie Gaffney

Ju'Coby Pittman

Randy White

Refererence "Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee].

I am in support of First Baptist Church. I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church. Your support is important for the future of our church, its future serving Jacksonville, and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

I want to thank you for your help with this matter.

Blessings in Christ,

Kenneth C Judd

Subject: Resolution 2020-188 (Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit)

Mr. Becton, Mr. Boylan, Mr. Dennis, Mr. Ferraro, Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Pittman, and Mr. White:

I wanted to appeal to you strongly to allow First Baptist Church of Jacksonville to receive their requested permit for demolition of the old "Singles Building", which is owned by First Baptist, and is on the church property near the church auditoriums.

Please reference Resolution 2020-188 (Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee), and the meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 5pm, in which the decision on the First Baptist appeal will be made.

The Singles building does not have any real historical significance for Jacksonville, and it is in disrepair. The property on which the building stands is very much needed as part of the First Baptist construction plans to rennovate some of the church properties, and to make many of the other existing church properties that are no longer needed available for sale to Jacksonville.

If this building is not demolished, it will make it a great deal more difficult to put up for sale the other church properties that surround the auditoriums, and I am fully in support of First Baptist Church and the demolition of this building. I absolutely support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church.

Your support is important for the future of our church, and the future of downtown Jacksonville. I don't know if you've seen the plans for the rennovation of the (truely historic) Hobson Auditorium, and surrounding buildings, which will go a long way toward beautifying a significant part of downtown Jacksonville, but you should take a close look at them when you have time - please do!

Thank you for carefully considering this appeal, and please do allow First Baptist to move ahead with it's plans - they will greatly benefit Jacksonville, as well as the church and it's members.

Sincerely,

Jim Giles - First Baptist member, and 38 year resident of Jacksonville

**Subject: Respectfully Submitted by Timothy Denham, Member FBC Downtown Jacksonville since 1983, 1971 Graduate Samford University, 1983 Recipient U.S.A.R. {ARCOM w/bronze cluster}**

Reverenced herein: "Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]."

First, "I am in support of First Baptist Church" Jacksonville for the reasoning briefly & respectfully submitted below.

Second, "This Citizen of Jacksonville supports the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the First Baptist Church to whom I and my family have been members since 1983.

Third, "The support of all of you is important for the future of our church aka (His Church) , its future, and the future of Downtown."

All our FBC members will be very grateful for your help in the above matters as I further attempt to communicate herein:

In 1892, "His Church", then called First Baptist Church, worshiped in our building located between Church and Hogan Streets, a building totally destroyed in the Great Fire of 1901 which ravaged downtown Jacksonville. In 1903 "His Church", still worshipping in downtown Jacksonville, added a new foundation for another building, now known as the Hobson Auditorium and later, in 1927, added an "Educational Building" at 125 West Ashley Street, which still serves "His Church" in Downtown Jacksonville today. During the early 20th century "His Church" in downtown Jacksonville did not fare well financially and by 1940 this "Educational Building" was repossessed by creditors. That year, 1940, "His Church" was Led by "His Holy Spirit" to hire Homer G. Lindsey, Sr. as the senior pastor of "His Church" in downtown Jacksonville. And within just a few years, under Pastor Lindsey Sr.'s "humble walk with God" from 1940 thru 1975, Pastors' Homer Lindsey, Sr. and as Co-Pastor with Homer G. Lindsey, Jr., This "Educational Building" at 125 West Ashley Street was repurchased and "His Church" in downtown Jacksonville experienced even faster growth, emerging as a megachurch with thousands of new members to serve the spiritual growth and needs of Downtown Jacksonville. Then, It wasn't until 2019 that this "writer" knew God's Holy Spirit once again was leading "His Church" when this First Baptist Church of Downtown Jacksonville hired our current Senior Pastor, Dr. Heath Lambert, who has been "humbly walking with God" among us Since 2019 and I pray for many years beyond until Jesus comes for His Bride, His Church. Not for our glory, but for "God's Son"! In Nov of 1974, "His Church", Downtown First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, raised a 10-story 1-ton 38 foot Cross to Glorify His Son. It appears, we're raising His Cross once again! Help us!

This writer now suggests we instead of stealing God's "Educational Building" to preserve an outdated, unuseful structure for antiquity, we allow GOD's Church, led by God's Chosen Senior Pastor, Dr. Heath Lambert, begin to complete the demolition and renovation in accord with "His Church's" specifications (Meaning God's Church) for "His Church's" Christian Educational Building. And instead, if desired by all, include a very "attractive to all", bronze plated street sign instead for all who pass by to see and read - Proudly Displayed - documenting the above true history of this Educational Building, perhaps including a brief interim occupancy, I understood, by Gulf Life and Jacksonville University or any other edits acceptable to both parties...Keeping in mind, the idea is to "Keep the Fear of God" in mind...and keeping tourists and visitors interested in return trips to our Great City of Andrew Jackson-ville. This City, Our Nation is in dire need for more State-of-the-art Christian Education Buildings.

The above Church, "His Church", is not a building,{ 2 Chronicles 7:14 kjv "If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land}, but "His Church" are "His people" who are given "Free Will" because He loved them and still does. Whether we answer His "call" is totally up to us but we cannot blame God, because if you read this email, YOU WERE JUST CALLED AGAIN BY HIM THROUGH ONE OF HIS PEOPLE, ME! Educating everyone is key, is The Key! We need more, not less, USABLE State-of-the-Art "Christian Educational Buildings" and teachers ! This short probationary period on earth before facing "eternal" life or death reality is a gift ! Don't take such a precious thing for granted. It's all about "Love" and "Free Will" and "Our Choice" "My Choice" "Your Choice" ! We must teach our children and teach them well and they must teach their children well, using "God's Word", "His Love Letter to Mankind", "His Church"! We are "One Nation Under God" whether you believe it or like it or not. But we and God Love you and you are "Free to Choose"! Choose wisely for all of us and our Nation, please!

I'll pray "God's Will" shall also be seriously taken under consideration HERE for our Nation's and our Children's sake.

"In God We Trust"

A Jacksonville Citizen, Member of the above mentioned First Baptist Church, "His Church" of Downtown Jacksonville

Tim Denham

An American Patriot, Retired Soldier, USAR/FLARNG Veteran, & Child of our King of Kings

Also: Son of USMC Capt. WWII (Guam/Okinawa) and Korea; Brother of USN Capt./Diver

Timothy (Tim) J. Denham, SFC, USAR/FLARNG, Retired {ARCOM w bronze cluster}

E: TJD8787@aol.com

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

To: Councilmen Becton, Boylan, Dennis, Gaffney, White, Ferraro, and Councilwoman Pittman

In regards to the appeal by First Baptist Church of the denial of demolition permit by the Historic Preservation Committee, We are in support of First Baptist Church. We support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church. Your support is important for the future of this church and the future of Downtown. In light of the current social condition of Jacksonville, having a positive, thriving and benevolent force such as First Baptist Church in the heart of Downtown can only help our great city move in the direction it should go...that of being a city for all peoples. With the increased housing opportunities that have become available in recent years, we need to be able to build community and involvement to help strengthen these new neighborhoods. First Baptist Church, while drawing people from all over the First Coast, has been committed to the Downtown and it's development while ministering to the spiritual needs of those who pass through the church doors. Just as the city has to progress with better programs, facilities, events, tourism options, etc., so too does this great church. People will always be more important than some fancy brickwork that most people have never noticed. Please allow First Baptist Church to build a facility that will be welcoming, clean, safe. and highly functional for all people of any race, political preference, or gender.

Respectively,

Ken and Chris Sandstrom

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Batpist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]**

Honorable Chair Danny Becton, Vice Chair Michael Boylan, Garrett Dennis, Al Ferraro, Reggie Gaffney, Ju’Coby Pittman, Randy White

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and concern about resolution 2020-188. First of all I am in total support of First Baptist Church, which in their process to redevelop and right size their downtown campus opens up a number of downtown city blocks for the growth and revitalization of our downtown area.

I support our City Council in the issuance of the demolition permit for the church. In closing, it’s important for the church to have your support for the future and its key role in the core of downtown Jacksonville.

I thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on this very important matter in the life of the First Baptist Church in downtown Jacksonville.

Sincerely,

Benson K. Birchwood

6013 Robbins Circle South

Jacksonville, Fl. 32211

**Subject: Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee**

Councilmembers Boylan, Dennis, Ferraro, Gaffney, Pittman, White

Thank you for your service to our great city by serving on the Jacksonville City Commission. We understand these are difficult times and many important decisions are facing our city during your term in office.

We are writing to you in support of First Baptist Church and support of the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the church. As a member of First Baptist Church for over 29 years we have been a part of the wonderful ministry through 4 different pastors. First Baptist Church has served this community for over 182 years and been a vital part of Downtown Jacksonville.

Your support is important for the future of our church, it’s presents in Downtown, and the future of Downtown Jacksonville.

Best Regards,

Jim & Sandra Parrish

5663 Greenland Road, Unit 2006

Jacksonville, FL 32258

904-334-8743

**Subject: Demolition Permit**

Dear Committee Members,

I support First Baptist Church who wants all of Jacksonville to know all of Jesus for all of life. Please issue the demolition permit to the Church. We love God and love all people.

 It appears some individuals want to prevent the proclamation of the good news that God loves you, that He sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins, that he arose from the dead to give us the promise of eternal life and a new ministry of reconciliation for all people. I really wonder if preserving historic structures represents the real motivation of the heart of those who oppose demolition or a desire to prevent First Baptist Church from sharing the love of Christ.

If City of Jacksonville officials can approve removal of a historic monument in Hemming Park,at night,without any public meetings,without following the guidelines for removal of historic structures,or protection of public property;

then please cast your net on the other side of the City Hall boat and allow demolition of a building which some members of the historic preservation committee, as recorded at the last public meeting, found difficult to justify meeting all the criteria for historic preservation.

Please vote to approve demolition and allow First Baptist Church to continue to minister to predominately black neighborhoods as it has in the past through Funday Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and many other ministries of reconciliation which change hearts through the love of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

Joe and Debbie Amy

8616 Andaloma Street

Jacksonville, FL 32211

**6-15-20**

**Subject: First Baptist Church property**

Good morning folks,

I'm writing to ask this group to consider allowing my church to move forward with development plans for its property that includes two old buidings on Ashley Street.

Some folks are asking this group to have these two buildings designated national historic buildings. I'm not sure what proponents for historic registry status find worthy about these two buildings that merit this designation.

I wonder if these folks have ever been in either of these buildings. I've been a member of the church for over 35 years. Over the years, I've had many Sunday school classes in these buildings. I don't think they are particularly worthy of saving.

I love old arcitechture and am an advocate of historic preservation. I'm a past president of St. Nicholas Area Preservation, and am the organization's current historian.

I was opposed to the demolition of the old City Hall, which was a gorgeous example of mid-century modern architecture, a style that has almost dissapeared in our City. Yet this building was torn down, I think without any public input. I was also in favor of saving the old Veterans Memorial Coliseum, which is long gone. And I advocate for the preservation of the old Armory Building.

Our church's plans for the property include the restoration of the historic Hobson Auditorium--a much more historic and interesting structure. Moving forward with the development plans will ensure the preservation of this beautiful and historic site.

If the church cannot move forward, I think the ultimate fate of the Hobson Auditorium is bleak.

Thanks for your consideration.

Erik Kaldor, GRI, Realtor ®

904-226-0433

Watson Realty Corp

5443 San Jose Blvd.

Jacksonville, FL 32207

**Subject: First Baptist**

First Baptist has been my church home for many years. As the church goes through a time of change and restructuring, we need the city council support. Please support First Baptist’s request to remodel and reconstruct existing buildings. Please support the plan to streamline properties and this may include selling and demolishing existing buildings. Thank you for all you do.

Richard L. Weaver, VP

Caduceus Consulting

www.caduceusconsulting.com

238 Ponte Vedra Park Drive

Suite 103

Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

**Subject: FBC request**

I am writing to ask you to approve First Baptist Church’s request to tear down buildings at 124 W Ashley in order to erect new buildings for use in the church’s ministry to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and to grow Christians.

These buildings have no historic or architectural value. The new buildings will be inviting and add interest and value to Downtown Jacksonville. First Baptist Church has been a valuable asset to Downtown Jacksonville for 182 years and will continue in their ministry for the betterment of Jacksonville. I just ask that you see that granting First Baptist’s request is the just decision to make.

Thank you for your time.

Karen Cannon

957 Ashington Lane

Jacksonville, FL 32221

**Subject: Request for consideration**

Committee Members, would you please be so kind as to consider voting to approve First Baptist Church Jacksonville’s request to demolish the Administration Building and the Lindsay Building? This is an earnest, costly endeavor on the part of the church to remain downtown and maintain a presence in serving our city in countless ways. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Tom and Jean Cotchaleovitch

Jacksonville

**Subject: City Council Meeting, June 16, 2020**

I am speaking at this meeting and this is my message I want put into the records:

My name is Jeannette Meadows. I received a letter requesting my presence since I spoke at the first meeting regarding this Demolition Permit Application submitted for the building in question.

I am passionate about my personal relationship with Jesus Christ, God Almighty, so I will begin by telling you HE is the creator of this universe and He created us, because He wants fellowship with us. Everything on this planet belongs to HIM and we have been put here for a short period of time to bring honor and glory to His Holy Name and worship Him! That is why He gave us life! He is Sovereign and Holy God and we will all stand and give account one day of how we lived our lives during this time here on earth, specifically whether or not we received His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior from our sins, because He loves us so much and is not willing any should perish! Unbelief does not change this TRUTH! We are to worship HIM and care about people and not old buildings, which is why this Application is being denied by the Historic Committee. It is a fearful thing to come against God’s church by putting buildings or things in the way of reaching other souls being ministered to and won to Jesus Christ so they can be saved and go to heaven when they die. FBC has served the downtown area since the 1800’s. We are a safe haven for all to enter in and be helped in time of need. Lost souls and people needing help are what is important, not brick and mortar!

There are countless buildings in the downtown area that ARE on the Historic Register and they are in shambles, many boarded up and no one is doing anything about them and they are an eyesore to the downtown area. The building in question has never been on the Historic Register, so why now? It would cost tens of thousands of dollars plus to bring the building up to code and it cannot be sold as it is. So, if denied its demolition and our rebuilding of this property we own, this building will just be added to many other abandoned buildings downtown.

Our Pastor, Dr. Heath Lambert, has fervently sought God’s will, studied our properties and met with lawyers, contractors, staff and Trustees of our congregation for over four years. It has unanimously been determined that the entire block on which this building is located is the BEST and ONLY block which will provide all the needs of our congregation inclusively. We will be selling all the other properties.

So, please, approve this demolition and let us continue to worship in our planned new facilities for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God and continue to make downtown a better place and improve this area. People are always blessed when the Holy Spirit of God is allowed and welcomed to move amongst our midst and keep the evil in this world from having victory in this area! There is no Plan B for us in downtown!

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak!

Jeanette Meadows

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

In reference to Resolution 2020-188 (Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee), we are in support of First Baptist Church. We support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church. Your support is important for the future of our church, its future, and the future of Downtown.

 Jerry and Carolyn Shackelford

**Subject: First Baptist Church Downtown -- Land Use and Zoning**

Councilmembers Becton, Boylan, Dennis, Ferraro, Gaffney, Pittman and White

I was present last fall when we, the congregants of First Baptist Church, voted to demolish the buildings adjacent to the Hobson Auditorium for the purpose of building a more functional structure. I am curious as to how (or why) a group of people (who are most likely not FBC members) would be able to manipulate this city council committee to overturn a church vote. Is that even legal? Is it moral? Is that the legacy you would want to leave for your time on the city council? Do these “save the building” people have some strange affection for characterless, old buildings in general, or do they just want to oppose FBC in particular? My family and I (all of whom are Duval County registered voters) implore you to permit FBC to continue with its plans.

Sincerely,

Mary Brooks

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

Council Members,

We are writing to you regarding Resolution 2020-188 (appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee).

First let us say that we are in support of First Baptist Church and we support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church.

Thank you for your service to our city. We can’t imagine some of the difficult decisions you are required to make and we trust you will seek wisdom as you make this decision.

First Baptist has been an integral part of downtown Jacksonville for over 180 years. Our church has sought to be a faithful member of the downtown community and through the years we have invested countless man hours of volunteer service to our community and we have invested millions of dollars in facilities in downtown Jacksonville. All of the hours that have been volunteered and all of the money that has been given have come from countless thousands of people…one person at a time. We are not a business; we do not receive money from the city or from any other form of government. What has been done at First Baptist Church through the years has been done by individuals who love Jesus and love the citizens of Jacksonville.

The buildings of First Baptist Church have been paid for by prayer, hard work, and tears. We own the buildings and we have earned the right to make changes to our buildings to improve our ministry for the future just as we have done for over 180 years. We are asking you to follow well established history and wisdom from prior city leaders that allows us to use our property as we see fit. We truly believe this is exactly how each one of you would feel if this were your personal property.

We understand there are a few people in the city that do not share our point of view. Let me remind you that the people that dispute how we should use our property are not members of our church, they have not volunteered or served in our ministry to help this community, and they have not contributed any money for the building of our facilities.

We are respectfully asking you to do the right thing and support issuing the demolition permit to the Church.

Respectfully,

Terry and Becky Davidson

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188**

This is in reference to Resolution 2020-188.

I am in support of First Baptist Church.

I support the City Council issuing the demolition permit to the Church.

It is important to the future of our church, and the future of downtown Jacksonville, that you support the the reconstruction plans of First Baptist Church. To allow the demolition of outdated use buildings, so that FBC can make better and more economical use of our properties.

It was thought that this issue was settled years ago, when a letter was signed between the City of Jacksonville, and First Baptist Church, that allowed FBC to use it's properties as the Church saw fit. Over the years, other buildings, purchased by FBC, have been demolished to make way for new and improved buildings, and garages (which benefits the city).

Thank you for your support of First Baptist Church, and it's contributions to the thousands of members, and the City of Jacksonville.

Respectfully,

Jerry Rigdon

**Subject: Jacksonville First Baptist Church Downtown - Request for Demolition Permit**

To City Council Members:

Downtown Jacksonville is a neat waterfront town. It has so much potential for new growth. But in the last 20 years, there are a lot of dilapidated buildings, which look condemned. Actually, I think they are condemned and have been for a while. More and more buildings are looking run down and it’s on almost every city block now. The cost of renovations and preservation is so expensive, so much so, no one can afford to fix them up, which is why they still look like they do.

It’s more cost effective to tear them down and start anew. New, clean buildings will bring more people into the downtown area. I see a lot of buildings that need to be torn down, instead of sitting there rotting. The Ambassador Hotel is definitely one that either needs to be fixed or torn down. Since the Ambassador Hotel is now a historical landmark for Jacksonville, it’s going to sit and rot and eventually have to be torn down, due to huge non-cost-effective repairs and the liability it puts on the city for being in that very condition!

The building looks horrible and makes Jacksonville’s downtown area look unkempt, because on every street block there’s another “historical” building in ruins. Preservation is VERY expensive, if it wasn’t, we wouldn’t have to write this letter! I don’t understand why the City Council would want to keep an old condemned building versus a new one.

We do not want our church building to be another eye sore in the spotlight of downtown Jax. Please vote YES on demolition permit.

Let ‘s make downtown Jacksonville better by replacing dilapidated buildings, with beautiful new ones! Please VOTE YES ON DEMOLITION!!

Thank you for your considerations.

Lara Anthony

Intego Warranty, Inc.

lanthony@integowarranty.com

**Subject: First Baptist Sunday School Building**

Good Afternoon LUZ Committee,

I am writing to express my passionate opposition to the demolition of the First Baptist Church School Building.

I believe that the building meets at least 6 of the 7 requirements for landmarking and as such deserves a landmarking hearing. Also as stated by many, this building represents the history and aesthetics of what characterizes our city and downtown. We are removing our identity and the unique of our architecture by permitting this building to be torn down.

I encourage the LUZ to not allow this demolition.

Most sincerely,

John Erstling

3320 Riverside Ave

Jacksonville, FL 32205

**Subject: First Baptist Sunday School Building**

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Let’s create instead of demolishing.

I encourage the LUZ to not allow this demolition.

Most sincerely,

Jensen Hande

**Subject: Resolution 2020-188 [Appeal by First Baptist Church of denial of demolition permit by Historic Preservation Committee]**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you today in hopes that you and the rest of the city council will vote in favor of First Baptist Church and issue the demolition permit for the Sunday School Building downtown.

I am a lifetime, multi-generational member at First Baptist Church and have heard my entire life from the people of this city that FBCJAX owns too much land. Now that our church is creating a MUCH smaller footprint to allow growth in the city, we are getting push back even still. Help us help Jacksonville grow by allowing us the opportunity to sell all the blocks outside of the one city block containing the Sunday School building and even more importantly, the Hobson Auditorium.

Voting in favor of First Baptist Jacksonville gives us the opportunity to revitalize the actually historic Hobson Auditorium. Original Stained glass replaced and a building brought back to its former glory. THAT is preserving Jacksonville and it’s history. Blocking FBCJAX from demolishing the Sunday School building will only create another empty, decrepit building downtown when there are already too many. Blocking FBCJAX will mean a new plan being put in place that may require a bigger footprint and preventing us from selling as much property.

Most of the letters in your inbox, voicemails on your phone are from people who have never even walked past the building. People that saw a post on a mapping jax Facebook page and wrote in because somebody told them to. I implore you to listen to those who this actually impacts. People like my four and two year old that can benefit long term from the beautiful plans that have been created. Plans that protect and refurbish a historic building like the beautiful Hobson Auditorium. Please do not allow an old, rundown, outdated, unusable building to sit on that land forever.

Please consider giving the city of Jacksonville not just something beautiful, but something USABLE. Something people can go in and not worry about it being up to code. Something my kids can grow in and be proud of in the future. Thank you for your time.

- Lauren Moore