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**JACKSONVILLE WATERWAYS COMMISSION
River Accord Task Force**

Meeting Minutes

April 19th, 2024 10:00 a.m.

Location: Lynwood Roberts Room, 1st floor, City Hall

In attendance: Council Member Jimmy Peluso (Chair); Commissioner Richard Hartley; Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper; Shannon MacGillis, Office of the General Counsel; Captain Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator; Adam Hoyles, Ex-Officio Member

Also: Cori Hermle, St. Johns River Water Management District; Eamon Webb, Council Research

Meeting Convened: 10:00 a.m.

Council Member Peluso called the meeting to order. He stated that he wanted to complete the Memorandum of Understanding for the new River Accord before his term as chair of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission ends in June. He explained the six categories for goals listed under the River Accord: 1) water quality, 2) water supply, 3) septic system phase out, 4) strengthening our tributaries, 5) river access and recreation, and 6) resilience and flood protection. He stated that he would like to see all stakeholders present consider specific goals within these categories and metrics for how these goals could be measured to be successful; he gave “decreasing nitrogen levels” as a goal that could be easily measured.

Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper, emphasized that she would like to see an individual basin management action plan (“BMAP”) focusing on the tributaries of the river system. She added that the new

River Accord could “raise the red flag” on developments occurring upstream that could negatively impact water quality in Jacksonville, providing as an example a \$400 million project was recently passed by the State legislature that would divert stormwater away from the Indian River Lagoon and could lead to some of this stormwater flowing into the headwaters of the St. Johns River. Council Member Peluso noted that the “policy recommendations” portion of the new River Accord would be a good place for the City to address regional concerns, even if the City could not directly implement policies outside of the Duval boundaries.

Commissioner Hartley asked about the \$400 million Indian River Lagoon Project that Ms. Rinaman referenced by Ms. Rinaman; Ms. Rinaman explained that the downstream effects of this project were very concerning even under the state’s best-case scenarios.

Council Member Peluso repeated to all stakeholders present to prepare specific goals and measurables for the River Accord document; he stated that a meeting for May would be noticed shortly. Ms. Rinaman asked whether regional stakeholders could be brought into these meetings, and Council Member Peluso stated that all stakeholders with an interest in the river were welcome. He added that conversations with additional stakeholders would not be bound by Sunshine law, so communication with them outside of this Task Force would be welcome.

Cori Hermle, St. Johns River Water Management District, noted that there would likely be overlap between a River Accord and the Regional Resiliency Action Plan. Council Member Peluso explained that regional considerations would be considered when putting together this document. He stated that he felt that it was important for the City to have its own plan on file to coordinate and guide City efforts even if there were similar documents regionally.

Council Member Peluso stated that the next meeting would be held on May 10th and would likely be a longer, two-hour meeting, and he directed all stakeholders present to have specific goals, projects, and measurables in mind for this meeting. Ms. Rinaman asked whether these documents should be prepared and submitted ahead of time, and Council Member Peluso stated that having them prepared and submitted ahead of time would allow for their distribution. Council Member Peluso added that the May 10th meeting would not be the last meeting of the Task Force and that there would be more time for stakeholders to consider options for projects, goals, and measurables.

Adam Hoyles, Ex-Officio Member, asked whether the administration had been involved in conversations about the River Accord, and Council Member Peluso confirmed that they had been.

Council Member Peluso stated that a goal of a River Accord would be to make “digestible” to the public the various efforts of City and regional stakeholders in protecting and providing access to the river. Ms. Rinaman asked if the final document would be presented at the May JWC meeting, and Council Member Peluso stated that the June meeting would be more likely for a presentation.

Public Comment:

John Nooney noted that there was new leadership at JEA. He stated that he believes that public access to the waterways is the worst that it has ever been in the City; he stated that there was an opportunity for a public access project at the site of a FEMA repetitive-loss property on Pottsburg Creek.

Meeting adjourned: 10:23 a.m.

Minutes: Eamon Webb, Council Research Division
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