

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**NEIGHBORHOODS, COMMUNITY SERVICES, PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**FOOD DESERTS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Conference Room A, 4th floor, City Hall**

**January 13, 2020**

**2:00 p.m.**

**In attendance:** CM Newby (Chair), CM Carlucci, CM Diamond, CM Gaffney, CM Morgan and CM Pittman

**Also**: Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Richard Distel– Council Research Division; Sharonda Davis – Legislative Services Division

**Meeting Convened**: 2:00 p.m.

CM Newby started the meeting with introductions and then a discussion of the additional NW Economic Development Funds. CM Newby asked if they would want to add more money to the Food Deserts account from the NW Economic Development Trust Fund. There is $5.4 million dollars in the NW Economic Development Funds and $1.8 million in the Food Deserts fund currently. There was originally $4 million in the Food Deserts Subcommittee fund. CM Newby asked if more money could then be focused on smaller emerging markets.

CM Gaffney said that approximately 800 to 1,200 attended the event put on by Winn-Dixie to feed the residents. CM Pittman said her event had 900 people that needed food. CM Gaffney said that most of the people he talked to at the Gateway event run by Winn-Dixie did not have jobs and drew the connection between food insecurity and lack of employment for the residents. CM Diamond said the cycle of not having a job or enough money for food is about figuring how to balance all the underlying issues and solve multiple problems at the same time. CM Diamond said that whatever the City Council can do to help break this cycle is crucial. CM Newby said it might not just be a food desert, but a food crisis. CM Morgan talked about the food pantry work done in her district and the importance of that safety net. CM Carlucci suggested raising the milage rate to raise funds for food deserts.

CM Carlucci talked about his meeting with Paulette Turner, Paul Crawford and Kirk Wendland of the Office of Economic Development. It was to discuss Ms. Turner’s goal of opening a grocery store. CM Carlucci said work was needed to be done before building the store. The biggest current obstacle is that the building would need to be rezoned. Ms. Turner has capital but would need a loan to complete the construction of the store. CM Newby and CM Pittman stressed that smaller markets might not even know the funding sources exist and that reaching out to small markets would be important to strengthen food access. CM Newby and CM Carlucci suggested having a Town Hall to hear what the needs of the community are and let possible small markets know that there could be grants available to help fund their stores.

Kirk Wendland was asked to detail the updates with the Gateway Grocery store. Winn-Dixie is aiming for a mid-February opening. Mr. Wendland also gave an update on the Mobile Markets. Feeding Northeast Florida must purchase a truck by the end of January and then begin in service at the first quarter of this year. The JTA Ride-Share is aiming to start February 1st and advertising will begin soon.

CM Gaffney closed the meeting saying that the Subcommittee has agreed that they will ask for more money to be added to the Food Desert Fund. At the next meeting the Subcommittee will discuss how much should be added, how to add a small markets category and a future Town Hall.

CM Newby adjourned the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:48 p.m.

Minutes: Richard Distel, Council Research Division

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