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CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW MEETING

Meeting Minutes

**November 18, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

Location: City Council Chamber

In attendance: Council Members Sam Newby (President), Ron Salem, Randy White, Al Ferraro, Leanna Cumber, Terrance Freeman, Aaron Bowman, Ju'Coby Pittman, Matt Carlucci, Randy DeFoor (arrived 9:54)

Excused: Council Members Danny Becton, Brenda Priestly Jackson

Also: Kim Taylor, Brian Parks – Council Auditor's Office; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Juliette Williams – Legislative Services Division; Steve Cassada, Yvonne Mitchell, Eric Grantham – Information Support Services; Peggy Sidman – Office of General Counsel

Meeting Convened: 9:02 a.m.

Council Member Salem convened the meeting and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. Council President Newby welcomed the attendees and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. He emphasized the importance of the task of preparing a strategic plan for the City.

Mr. Salem explained the procedures and ground rules for the meeting and explained the voting mechanism using colored dots for weighted voting. The results of the prioritization and voting will be incorporated into a resolution adopting the priorities for introduction at a future council meeting. He expressed a hope that the process would result in approximately 6 priorities for each goal period (1 year, 3 years, 5 years). Council Member Pittman asked for clarification of the need to list priorities from last year's process that are already underway; Mr. Salem said that initiatives already funded and underway can be removed from the board at the group's discretion if they are considered in process and sufficiently addressed.

Five-year goals

Chairman Salem reviewed the three initiatives he submitted – primary health care for the working poor, reduce infant mortality, continue septic tank phase-outs. Council Member Bowman discussed his submission to reduce the city’s homeless population by half. Council Member Cumber asked for clarification of whether the continuation of the health care initiative from last year implies a continuation of the direct contracting with the two agencies currently being funded. Mr. Salem said it did not. Council Member Ferraro advocated for an initiative on full ADA accessibility of City parks, docks, piers, walkways and other facilities for full public activation. Council President Newby advocated for the importance of the infant mortality reduction effort, which is very geographically concentrated in Jacksonville. Council Member Pittman proposed an initiative for a retention pond safety campaign and another for an initiative on studying and remedying the issue of trains blocking access to neighborhoods.

The council members voted using their stickers and produced the following ranking for 5-year priorities:

- Continue septic tank phase-outs
- Work with local and national organizations to reduce the homeless population by 50% over 5 years; evaluate and establish strategies to rid vacant and undeveloped properties of homeless camps
- Create and enforce legislation regarding trains blocking entryways to communities and schools for longer than the permitted time countywide
- Continue the effort to provide primary health care to the working poor
- Reduce the infant mortality rate

Chairman Salem invited Jeanne Miller, CEO of the Jacksonville Civic Council, to address the group on the subject of the removal of Confederate monuments. Ms. Miller noted that the Civic Council had recently sent a letter to City Council urging deferral of the legislation regarding the removal of the Memorial to the Women of the Southland while the Civic Council undertakes a comprehensive study of monuments in the context of race and social justice, which is getting underway. The JCC has hired an expert on the issue of controversial monuments with experience from around the country and they are happy to make that expert available to the City Council to share that expertise at the appropriate time.

Three-year goals

Mr. Salem recommended removing the two proposed initiatives on funding and improving the city’s park system because of the substantial funding already allocated toward parks in the current and the upcoming City budget. Council Member Carlucci described his proposed initiatives – addressing food deserts with more grocery stores, dedicate funding to downtown riverfront parks, review effectiveness of the Public Nuisance Abatement Board, ensure the quality and livability of affordable housing projects, and supporting the Habijax tiny homes initiative to help end homelessness. Council Member Pittman proposed an initiative on beautification of main transportation corridors via tree plantings. At Council Member White’s request, the Chair directed that Council Member Carrico’s initiative on taking Jacksonville’s park system from “the biggest to the best” be returned to the board for consideration.

President Newby described his proposal for safety and crime reduction initiatives with 5 neighborhood pilot projects and also proposed a new item to increase the affordable housing supply. Council Member Ferraro proposed an initiative for city beautification, litter control, and neighborhood clean-ups and suggested perhaps merging the ideas expressed by several council members into a single overall city beautification initiative. Council Member Cumber said the first meeting of the Public Nuisance Abatement Board will be the first week of December. Council Member Bowman discussed his initiative for a comprehensive look at the City’s solid waste and recycling processes and issues. He also indicated that he would be willing to move his proposed affordable housing issue from the three-year to the one-year list. President Newby suggested expanding the existing food desert/grocery store recruitment

initiative from just the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund area to all food deserts wherever located. Council Member Freeman proposed after-school and summer programming funding as an initiative.

The council members voted using their stickers and produced the following ranking for 3-year priorities:

- Blight reduction/roadway and neighborhood beautification/neighborhood grant increases
- Work with the administration to establish policies and procedures that address solid waste and recycling issues
- Safety and crime reduction pilot projects (total \$1M) in 5 neighborhoods (Eastside, New Town, Durkeeville, Arlington, Justina)
- Funding for after-school and summer programming for youth
- Appropriate dedicated funding source for development of downtown riverfront parks
- Jacksonville's parks system will go from the largest to the best, with state of the art equipment and creative spaces that improve quality of life throughout the city

One-year goals

Chairman Salem directed that the MHOP mental health initiative and the cure violence initiative be pulled from the list of proposed priorities as already being addressed. Council Member Bowman said he would pull his proposal for an organizational efficiency study by a consultant of the Legislative Services Division; he will instead take this up with the Council President and the Personnel Committee. Council Member DeFoor advocated for her initiative to add meaningful place-making public art for each of the 14 council districts via a \$700,000 funding allocation. Council Member Pittman proposed a new initiative for neighborhood small business corridor improvements. Council Member Bowman advocated for his two proposals - a task force on developing ways to provide more low-income housing supply and developing a plan on what to do with Confederate monuments/markers in time for next year's budget. Council Member Ferraro explained his proposal to deal with recycling by resuming curbside collections immediately. President Newby added 2 initiatives - a \$200,000 allocation for workforce industrial training, and \$500,000 to continue food desert initiatives (\$225,000 to FarmShare, \$225,000 to Feeding Northeast Florida, and \$50,000 to the Overflow Health Alliance). Council Member White asked that Mr. Bowman's Confederate monument item be expanded to include the word "remain" as another option. Council Member Freeman proposed a women and minority workforce diversity initiative and another for a community grants accountability plan. He suggested that his grants accountability suggestion might be combined with Council Member Carlucci's initiative for streamlining, fair practices and funding floor for the Public Service Grant Council. Mr. Carlucci agreed to the combination of the two items.

The council members voted using their stickers and produced the following ranking for 1-year priorities:

- Resume curbside recycling
- Determine a comprehensive for dealing with Confederate monuments (remove, relocate, rename, remain in place)
- Appropriate \$200,000 for workforce industrial training
- Neighborhood commercial corridor revitalization
- Fund meaningful place-making public art installations in each council district
- Public service grants - increased funding, funding floor, process improvements, fair practices, diversity initiatives, accountability

Deputy General Counsel Peggy Sidman discussed the process for introducing a resolution to formally adopt the strategic priorities.

Public comment

Carnell Oliver said that state funding is available for some of the proposed initiatives being discussed and he believes that Jacksonville is not getting its fair share of available state funds. He is advocating for a bill in the Florida Legislature to make corporations pay all their taxes due in one year rather than spreading them out over several years. He also advocates for a bill that would allow tourist development taxes to be used for housing and other community needs beyond just tourism promotion.

Meeting adjourned: 10:54 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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