

Urban Core Citizens Planning Advisory Committee November 6, 2023, Meeting Summary

Hybrid Meeting: Jacksonville Main Public Library, 303 North Laura Street, Conference Room Level, Multipurpose Room and on ZOOM

Meeting Attendance

CPAC Members: Bryant Shumaker, CPAC Chair, SPAR Council; Dimitri Demopoulos, Churchwell Lofts at East Bay Condo Association; Ernest Smith, Plaza Condominium Association; Terry Canty, Planet Watch Neighborhood Association; Keith Davis, All Things Common Ministries, Inc.; Becca Dingler, 2nd Mile Ministries; Marcia Ellison, New Town Success Zone; Kim Pryor, Preservation SOS; Deloris Swain, Grand Boulevard Crime Watch; Cindy Watson, JASMYN; Johnny B. Swain, Grand Boulevard Crime Watch.

Excused: None.

ZOOM: Juanita Senior, CPAC Vice Chair, Planet Watch Neighborhood Association; Cathy Reed, Parks at the Cathedral; Bill Hoff, SAMBA; and Coleman Shephard.

Elected Officials and Staff: Jimmy Peluso, City Council District 7; Darryl Willie, Duval County School Board; Kym Maye, Duval Soil and Water Conservation District; Chris Billings, Municipal Code Compliance Division; Lieutenant Michael Senterfitt, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office; Edwina Henry, Neighborhood Services Office; Caroline Fulton, Planning and Development Department; Dr. Dana Kriznar, Superintendent Duval County Schools; Keli Likins, Jacksonville Public Library; and Lieutenant Tennerh Minor, Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department.

Guests: Cory Haynes, JASMYN; Marlo Zarka, The Blue Zones Project-Jacksonville; Mike Haskins, SPAR Council; Laureen Husband, FNEFL; and Skylar McKnight.

Meeting Summary:

- 1. Call to Order/Verify Quorum:** Chair Shumaker called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. Edwina Henry confirmed a quorum was present.
- 2. Approval of Previous Meeting Summary:** CPAC Members approved the October 2, 2023, meeting summary.
- 3. Presenter:** The Honorable Jimmy Peluso, Jacksonville City Council Member, representing Council District 7, stated that he wants to be heavily involved in neighborhoods. Council member Peluso expressed his thanks for the invitation from the CPAC to come and speak. Chair Shumaker directed those on ZOOM to raise their hands if they have a question or would like to make a comment.

Before beginning his remarks, Council member Peluso commented on the neighborhoods in Council District 7 as being some of the strongest, with some of the oldest and deepest roots in the City of Jacksonville. He then proceeded to list the various neighborhoods, by name, in his district, citing Durkeeville, LaVilla and Springfield among others. Peluso also stated that some neighborhoods have really made lots of progress in recent years, and other neighborhoods could use a lot more help from local government resources. Both he and Mayor Deegan campaigned on infrastructure spending.

- Infrastructure Spending – Peluso stated how important it is to talk to members of the community and hear what they are asking for, with the expectation that the City of Jacksonville will come through on those needs and suggestions.
- Capital Improvement Plan Budget – the capital improvements budget has lots of projects in it, and many of them are in Council District 7, some of which are not main priorities. Council members will be speaking with their CPACs to make sure certain projects that have been ignored for so many years are finally making it into the budget process.
- Vetting Public Works Projects – The process of vetting projects needs to be realigned to ensure that projects undertaken are a real priority of the current administration, city department or agency so that they get into the budget.
- Homelessness and Supporting the Unhoused – Fixing homelessness in the City of Jacksonville will also fix so many other problems, like reducing the number of emergency calls to JSO and the Fire Department. Mayor

Deegan and members of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce recently visited Charlotte, South Carolina to learn how they have managed to address the issue of homelessness in the downtown area.

- Special City Council Committee on Homelessness – Mayor Deegan and Ronald B. Salem, Council President have asked for a special committee and Council member Peluso would like to see the creation of a Homeless Trust with a dedicated funding source, so that funds won't have to come out of the mayor's budget or the general fund.
- Questions - Council member Peluso took several questions from CPAC members ranging from a request for legislation to address public urination and defecation to "urban camping" allowances. Council member Peluso was asked to have his Executive Council Assistant keep the CPAC apprised of his Council Committee Meetings on Neighborhoods and Homelessness. And lastly, the Council member was asked to commit to attending the CPAC meetings either quarterly or semi-annually, especially on matters pertaining to the CIP, as his schedule permits. He agreed to perhaps once a quarter, schedule permitting.

4. Elected Officials Reports:

The Honorable Darryl Willie, Duval County School Board, provided the following updates:

- The search for a permanent school superintendent has been suspended, for a couple of reasons: lack of applicants and the belief that the school district could suffice with Dr. Kriznar as she is doing a fabulous job. He also stated that the superintendent search will probably be reopened in March 2024, with an anticipated hire date some time in the summer, this timing should allow for a more robust applicant pool. He hopes that the CPAC and other community organizations will be involved, as there will be open conversations and applicant interviews will be open to the public.
- Due to the one mil increase supported by voters, the district was able to increase teacher salaries, as well as give a slight increase for office and support staff, in addition to more funding for arts and athletics. He thanked those who supported the one mil increase.
- The school district continues to have problems ensuring that student school bus routes are covered. The school board will be voting on awarding part of student transportation to another company and believes that that should help alleviate some of the stress of not having enough drivers to cover the bus routes.
- School board member Willie also noted that the Duval County Public School District spends more money than almost any other district in the State of Florida on transportation. The board will be considering this issue in the near future, to ensure that it is doing all that it can to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars.

Honorable Darryl Willie, Duval County Public School Board <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/>

Dr. Dana Kriznar, Superintendent Duval County Public Schools, commented on the following:

- The Federal Impact Aid Survey starts on November 20, 2023, and it is really important that if anyone lives on federal property or are a member of the military and have children in public or charter schools, that they fill out the Impact Aid Survey. The federal government provides compensation to the school district for those students who are federally assigned to public or charter schools.

Dr. Dana Kriznar, Duval County Public Schools Superintendent <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/>

Kym Wallace Maye, Duval Soil and Water Conservation District, gave the following report:

- The Duval Soil and Water Conservation District (DSWCD) was created in 1953 under the authority created by the Soil Conservation Act, passed by the Florida Legislature in 1937. The DSWCD was organized by concerned citizens of Duval County to help landowners and users to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources.
- Full board meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at the Duval County Extension Office, 1010 N. McDuff Ave., Jacksonville 32254, at 3:30 pm. The Plan of Work Subcommittee meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the same time and location.
- DSWCD Projects include Brownfields, farming agriculture and garden initiatives. DSWCD is identifying community gardens to see what resources can be shared with the community. Ms. Maye is involved with some of the community farms off Pearson. She believes that two reasons why community gardens don't flourish is because of a lack of resources and lack of volunteers. To address this, she would like to develop a volunteer registry where places like Tree Hill and other community gardens can log on and indicate when and how many

volunteers are needed. The registry would also list Master Gardeners who would be available to provide technical assistance.

- The next DSWCD Board Meeting is November 15, 2023. Ms. Maye would like to email interested parties a flier to attend. The meeting will focus on the garden initiative to see what kinds of ideas people have, the sort of projects they are working on, how DSWCD can assist them and what resources are missing. Duval Soil and Water Conservation meetings are always open to the public.
- Apart from her duties as an official, Ms. Maye and her partner run a non-profit organization and will be opening a food market at 2500 Myrtle Avenue North to combat food desert areas. The market will have fresh fruits and vegetables and a place for people to purchase meat. Her organization proposes to feed people once a month.
- She will be working with JSO Community Affairs, Lieutenant Archbold to hold a big clean-up on December 2, 2023. They will also be providing restrooms and places where people can wash themselves, in addition to having connections where people can wash clothes. The area is 15th Street and Myrtle Avenue North.

Kym Wallace Maye (904)255-7450 duval@ifas.ufl.edu

5. The Chair's Report: Bryant Shumaker noted that coming to the end of the 2023 calendar year, he wanted to thank everyone for their involvement.

- He thanked Rosemary Wesolowski, Neighborhood Services Office, for the wonderful job she did coordinating the Urban Core CPAC Meetings, and he also thanked Edwina Henry, Neighborhood Services Office, for picking up where Rosemary left off.
- In the spirit of the on-coming holidays and as his gesture of thanks, Chair Shumaker invited everyone to enjoy the refreshments he brought to the meeting: sandwiches, bottled water and cookies. There was a ten-minute break.

6. Staff Reports:

Jacksonville Public Library – Keli Likins announced that the Main Library will host a "Lit chat" with author, Steve Berry, on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 6:30 pm. Tickets are required for this Library Foundation event, which will include dinner and drinks. Proceeds will go to the Jax Kids Book Club, which is a program to ensure that every voluntary pre-kindergarten student in Duval County receives a backpack of free books.

Keli Likins – 904-255-6090 KLikins@coj.net

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office – Lieutenant Mike Senterfitt resumed the conversation on homelessness, and added that prior to becoming a police officer, he was a paramedic, so he has been working with the issue of homelessness for about 35 years and in his personal opinion, he feels that law enforcement is often placed in a position of having to deal with mental health crises and it rarely turns out well for the officer.

- The Baker Act, is often misunderstood. It is an emergency act that allows police officers to take someone into custody, not under arrest, if they pose an imminent and immediate danger of death, or great bodily harm to themselves or others. He provided two examples to illustrate his point. He added that it is heartbreaking that there are no long-term mental health facilities available.
- Lieutenant Senterfitt said to keep in mind that homelessness has multiple issues to address and that it is important to get the right solutions for the right people according to their needs. He feels that the more law enforcement officers can be relieved of non-law enforcement duties the better off everyone will be. Mental health issues need to be handled by mental health professionals.

Lieutenant Michael Senterfitt – Zone 1 (904) 924-5361 JSODistrict1@jaxsheriff.org

Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department – Lieutenant Tenneth Minor, Plans Review Department, is filling in for Captain Johnson and covered the following points:

- Daylight Savings Time - She encouraged everyone to check their smoke detectors, change the batteries (even if the unit isn't chirping).
- Frying Turkeys – Lieutenant Minor strongly advocated against trying to fry the turkey while still frozen. Additionally, she wants everyone to follow the Florida Fire Prevention Code and grill 10 feet from the building.

Even though the code does not include individual homes, she still encourages the 10 feet distance as a benchmark.

- Slow Cookers / Crock Pots – her advice was to not leave them unattended while cooking and said that the same is true for candles. So, keep a watchful eye open.
- Christmas Trees – Fresh trees are fragrant and lovely, but extremely flammable. She recommends not leaving the Christmas tree lights on over night and to make sure the tree is receiving moisture. The tree should have a one-inch flat cut at the bottom.

Lieutenant Tenneth Minor – (904) 255-8557 TMinor@coj.net

Municipal Code Compliance Division – Chris Billings, Supervisor, gave the following report:

- 1,529 total inspections were conducted in October.
- 239 systematic inspections were completed in the Phoenix area from October 3 through 9, 2023.
- The goals of the systematic inspections are to ensure uniform enforcement and promote property values by addressing a lot of issues that go unreported or unaddressed, and it's helpful for MCCD to have a presence in the neighborhood.
- Starting November 14, 2023, MCCD will be visiting Springfield's Main Street corridor, looking at local businesses and private properties. MCCD will be looking for compliance with zoning regulations, any kind of structural or maintenance issues, and any unaddressed nuisance issues.
- Property owners are highly encouraged to be vigilant by checking their property areas for things such as dead or dying trees, nuisance yard debris, unsafe structures, unmaintained residential structures. These issues become a blight in the neighborhood.
- Call 630-CITY to report issues or use the MYJAX reporting application at www.myjax.custhelp.com.
- November is Open Enrollment time for healthcare and an increase in snipe/litter signs is expected. Within the last three weeks, 164 signs were removed, and the signs were put right back up as soon as they are removed. Signs in the public right of way are against Municipal Code 741. Any private citizen can remove these signs.

Supervisor Chris Billings – (904) 497-9543 CBillings@coj.net

Public Works Department – Not present.

Neighborhood Services Office – Edwina Henry, Neighborhood Coordinator, gave the following report:

- The Neighborhood Awards and 30th Anniversary of CPACs Event was held on October 19, 2023. The event was well attended, so many thanks to those who were there. Photos from the event will be available for viewing online within the next few weeks.
- The City of Jacksonville is in the process of upgrading the website and coj.net will become Jacksonville.gov. Please note that all coj.net links will be automatically redirected to the corresponding Jacksonville.gov pages.
- Renovations to the Ed Ball Building first floor training room are nearly complete. It is anticipated that the UC CPAC Meetings will be returning to the Ed Ball Building before Spring. Details to follow.

Edwina Henry - (904) 255-8260 of EHenry@coj.net

7. Old Business – None.

8. New Business – Chair Shumaker addressed the following:

- The January and September 2024 meeting dates need adjusting because the second Monday is not available. After discussion, it was properly moved and seconded to move the January and September meeting dates to the second Tuesday. Therefore, the UC CPAC will meet on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, and Tuesday, September 10, 2024. The motion carried. The original first Monday meeting dates needed to be adjusted due to the New Years and Labor Day Holidays.
- Members were asked to forward suggestions for speakers/presenters to address the CPAC in 2024.
- Membership wanted to know if it were possible to have a guard at the Main Street entrance to accommodate those arriving for the meeting instead of having to walk through the entire library. Edwina will make the request of the Library Conference Staff. However, she is hopefully optimistic that the Ed Ball Building training room will be available for the UC CPAC Meetings before spring.

9. Subcommittee Reports:

- **Governmental Affairs** – Dimitri Demopoulos: One item was discussed. No action was taken.
- **Nominations and Elections** – Cindy Watson and Terry Canty: The Nominations Subcommittee met in October and presented Bryant Shumaker for Chair and Ms. Juanita Senior for Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor. The slate was carried by unanimous consent. Chair Shumaker thanked the membership for their continued support. He also stated that going into his second year as chair, a big focus will be on growing the CPAC. He feels that CPACs have a great deal of potential and with the many efforts that are going on within the city that if we really work together and have a point of focus, we could do a lot of good.
- **Blight and Code Enforcement** – Kim Pryor: The Blight Subcommittee met on Friday, November 3, 2023. It was a good first meeting. The subcommittee will be requesting additional information from MCCD to better understand blight issues in the Urban Core. MCCD Supervisor Billings will be invited to the January Blight Subcommittee meeting to work through some data points.
- **Homelessness** - Cindy Watson: The subcommittee did not meet. No report. However, Ms. Watson did announce that she will be retiring from JASMYN at the end of the year, and she will also be stepping back from CPAC and as Chair of the Homeless Subcommittee. She also announced that she has nominated her JASMYN colleague, Cory Haynes, to become a CPAC Member. Chair Shumaker thanked Ms. Watson for her CPAC Service, in addition to thanking her and Mr. Smith, as well as the rest of the subcommittee, for getting JSO more involved.

10. Public Comments and Announcements:

- Marlo Zarka, Public Policy Lead, Blue Zones Project in Jacksonville. Ms. Zarka is a Springfield resident (32206) and stated that the Blue Zones Project will be moving its headquarters into the Springfield area in the new year and will be looking to get more involved in the Urban Core as they participate in a number of the CPACs that are in the designated zip codes of focus (zip codes 32206, 32208, 32209, 32210, and 32244). She has two quick updates to share: (1) The Blue Zones Project recently worked with the City Council and got their first unanimous vote on legislation which passed "Smoke Free Parks." So now smoking or vaping will be prohibited in all of the city parks. Blue Zones will be developing a public awareness campaign to highlight "Smoke Free Parks." (2) The Blue Zones Project along with partners at the Jaguar Foundation Groundwork, the City of Jacksonville, the Phoenix Arts District, as well as Feeding Northeast Florida, will be launching the "Trash Olympics" in 2024. Information is on the flier – the date will be announced soon. Ms. Zarka indicated she will be back in January with more details.

Marlo Zarka, Marlo@bluezones.com <http://bluezonesprojectjacksonville.com>

11. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm

The next Urban Core CPAC Meeting is Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 5:30 pm. Join us at the Main Public Library, 303 North Laura Street, 32202, in the Multipurpose Room or virtually on ZOOM.