

**Minutes of City Council Workshop
2015 Downtown Action Plan
Monday, April 13, 2015 – 3:00 P.M.
City Council Chambers**

Mayor Latham called the workshop to order at 3:00 PM.

The following City Council members were in attendance:

Mayor: Charlie Latham

Council members: Lee Buck Keith Doherty Chris Hoffman
Bruce Thomason Phil Vogelsang Jeanell Wilson

Also present were City Manager George Forbes, Deputy City Manager Trish Roberts, Police Chief Pat Dooley, Public Works Director Ty Edwards, Planning and Development Director Bill Mann, Parks and Recreation Director Gary Meadors, Community Redevelopment Specialist Steve Lindorff and City Clerk Laurie Scott.

Purpose of Workshop

The purpose of the Workshop was for City Council to discuss the proposed 2015 Downtown Action Plan.

Mayor Latham introduced the Core Team working on the Downtown Action Plan and discussed how the plan was developed.

Mr. Forbes introduced Mr. Steve Lindorff who reviewed the history of the 2007 Downtown Vision Plan.

Mr. Forbes discussed the 2015 Downtown Action Plan and presentation format.

Presentations and Discussions

Mr. Meadors discussed the plan proposals for Public Spaces to include Restrooms and Lighting.

Mr. Lindorff discussed the plan proposals for building a permanent Oceanfront Park restroom facility and installation of outside showers. Next, he spoke of the proposed renovations to the Sea Walk Pavilion.

Council members inquired about the cost effectiveness of building a two stall facility versus four stall, location of the facility, clarification on indoor or outdoor showers, site location, installation of shower for performers at the Sea Walk Pavilion, adding more trash receptacles, maintenance and hours of operation. They also questioned if consultant's recommendations were incorporated in this presentation.

Mr. Doherty recommended building the Oceanfront Park restrooms facility with four stalls.

Ms. Roberts presented the plan proposals for Public Art. She reported public comments, surveys, and tours recommended more Public Art downtown.

Mr. Forbes discussed the plan proposals for Pod-Type seating; improving pier entrance signage, security fencing at the pier, attracting special events for the pier, traffic calming signage for pedestrians, and use of QR (Quick Response) codes by visitors.

Council members inquired if the Pods were removable, who would fund security fencing at the pier, does special events on the Pier need to have prior approval by the City of Jacksonville, use of temporary signage at walkways, and the use of QR codes in other cities.

Ms. Hoffman stated Public Art in public places would be a great addition to the City and she suggested using local resources and artists for design and not commission art work from outside sources.

Mr. Meadors discussed the plan proposals for enhancements to Latham Plaza. Suggested enhancements include adding seating and shade structures, playground areas for children, installation of exercise facilities and equipment.

Mr. Vogelsang opposed playground areas at Latham Plaza. He stated this area is more suited for Special Events.

Ms. Hoffman agrees Latham Plaza is more suited for Special Events. She also supports using Latham Plaza as a gathering place for exercise groups.

Mr. Doherty supports using Latham Plaza for exercise groups. He stated we should concentrate on using Latham Plaza more as a gathering space, using minimal investment to the infrastructure.

Mr. Forbes discussed the plan proposals for removing concrete barriers on North 1st Street, improving the delineation between roadway and pedestrian space on North 1st Street, and enhancing landscape maintenance on North 1st Street and avenues between Beach Boulevard and 6th Avenue North.

Mr. Forbes discussed the plan proposal for Transportation/Bicycling. The proposal includes additional, decorative bicycle racks. He discussed modifying roundabouts on Beach Boulevard at 1st and 2nd Streets to reduce confusion.

Council members inquired about initiating a traffic study for making 1st and 2nd Streets one way and modifying the design of the roundabouts to improve function.

Mr. Doherty would like to see an increase in the number of bicycle racks available for citizens. He agrees with the idea of using decorative bicycle racks throughout the City.

Mr. Forbes discussed the plan proposals for Pedestrian Safety. The plan proposes to monitor the on-going FDOT pedestrian safety study being conducted for A1A in Jacksonville Beach, construct a well-marked pedestrian crossing, with flashing signal and pavement lighting at 2nd Avenue North and 3rd Street at 2nd Street.

Council members inquired about building a crossover for 3rd Street, and the length of time pre-set on traffic signals for pedestrian crossing at intersections.

Mr. Forbes distributed the flyer to Council with information on the Beaches Trolley with hours of operation, routes, and fees. He discussed the plan proposal to improve public information on the Trolley routes, schedules including the use of QR codes to obtain route and schedule information. It was proposed to improve trolley routes and provide stops at optimum locations. Fifteen minute headways were suggested during peak months, and to consider expanding trolley service during major special events.

Mr. Forbes discussed the plan proposal for parking. The proposal includes constructing a surface or structured parking facility on CRA-owned land on North 2nd Street between 3rd and 4th Avenue North, including facilities to store police equipment. The plan proposes to explore feasibility of private funding with a provider such as “Beachside Buggies” to offer a shuttle program for Downtown workers on weekends utilizing parking spaces at the City’s O & M Building on Shetter Avenue. The plan suggests preparing a pilot program seeking to reduce non-residents parking in residential areas where there is no off-street parking available adjacent Downtown.

Police Chief Dooley discussed how the Police Department will be conducting the site evaluations by going block by block starting with a pilot project between at 4th Avenue South and Beach Boulevard to see if there is parking provided on-site to each property and determine if there is a need for resident parking in that area. Next, a system will be developed to provide stickers to residents in that area. They will also visit individual businesses on 4th Avenue to ensure that two hour parking spaces are available to them in order to create turnover for their businesses.

Mayor Latham recommended a seven minute recess.

Workshop reconvened at 4:30 P.M.

Council members inquired about the City’s plan on deciding whether to build a surface lot or parking garage, if the parking structure will be mixed-use, and will it be funded by Community Redevelopment Authority.

Police Chief Pat Dooley discussed the plan proposals for managing the Night time Economy. Suggestions include training the downtown community policing team on code enforcement and ensure there is a positive police presence. Assist businesses with crime prevention to include better environmental design. Continue police patrols in areas where illegal activities are occurring. Develop programs to train employees and partner with businesses to provide consistent training and procedures, including uniforms, not over serving patrons, etc. Recommend changing the alcohol ordinance to prohibit restaurants from removing tables and chairs to become nightclubs. Consider modifications to the regulations governing the hours of operation for restaurants with 4-COP-SRX beverages licenses.

At 4:44 P.M. Mayor Latham adjourned the presentation and advised he will schedule another date and time to reconvene the Workshop.

The Workshop adjourned at 4:44 P.M.

Submitted by: Laurie D. Scott
City Clerk

Approved:

/S/ William C Latham

William C. Latham, MAYOR

Date: May 4, 2015