

**Minutes of City Council Workshop
2015 Downtown Action Plan
Monday, May 18, 2015 – 5:15 P.M.
City Council Chambers**

Mayor Latham called the workshop to order at 5:17 PM.

The following City Council members were in attendance:

Mayor: Charlie Latham

Council Members: Lee Buck Keith Doherty (*late*) Chris Hoffman
Bruce Thomason Phil Vogelsang (*absent*) Jeanell Wilson (*late*)

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 Assistant City Clerk Nancy Pyatte.

Purpose of Workshop

The purpose of the Workshop was for City Council to continue discussing the proposed 2015 Downtown Action Plan. The Mayor said this workshop will go to 6:30 P.M., followed by the Council Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Presentations and Discussions

Mr. Forbes stated the objective tonight is to review each slide again, addressing any questions as we go, for Council to reach a consensus on the direction to proceed with the Downtown Action Plan. Then it will come back before Council for a Plan Amendment recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency. When reviewed by the Redevelopment Agency, they will send back to Council for adoption of the Plan Amendment.

Mr. Forbes defined the concept of ‘family friendly’ and began the review of the Plan Proposal Categories - Public Spaces, Transportation, Public Safety, Commercial Spaces, Entertainment and Events, and Quality of Life.

Public Spaces

Mr. Forbes reviewed the plans for the new **Oceanfront Park** restroom, with 4 unisex stalls, and a shower near the dune walk-over. Also discussed was enhancing the lighting at various locations, including bike racks behind the SeaWalk Pavilion.

The next slide addressed renovations at the **SeaWalk Pavilion**. This includes 2 unisex restroom stalls, a ‘Green Room’ Performer lounge, and a storage/hospitality space.

Mr. Doherty questioned if the Green Room would have air conditioning and heating. Mr. Lindorff responded there will be a system installed to cool and heat that room.

Mr. Forbes moved on to **Public Art**, stating the plan is to continue with the beach/ocean life/surfer themes and install more art featuring lifeguards, fishing, and surfing. Also plans include murals which would be subject to sign code conformity and consistency with the art themes. Mr. Forbes stated there are plans to design bike racks in line with the Public Art themes.

Mr. Thomason spoke about the 'surfer dude and dudess' in front of City Hall, stating he has noticed the wear and tear from people handling it and paint scratched off from carving initials and names on these statues. Mr. Thomason questioned if there was any way to deter the public from vandalizing this property.

Mr. Forbes responded that the surfer statues existed unblemished for almost ten years. Since they were repainted a couple years ago, there has been more vandalism to these statues. The City will continue its efforts with prevention of vandalism.

Next item for discussion was **Pod-Type Seating**, which there are some located by the pier. Mr. Forbes explained this is a pilot program to provide shaded seating in the downtown area, along the boardwalk, and around Latham Plaza.

The next slide showed the **Fishing Pier**. Mr. Forbes stated the plan is to enhance the Pier entry with an archway and install more attractive security fencing. There have been discussions with Mr. Bill Gulliford, Jacksonville City Council, about maintaining the pier which has been there for ten years. We are proposing a plan to expand the pier functions to include special events that would attract more people.

Mr. Doherty inquired about the financial responsibility for maintaining the pier and building the archway and fencing.

The City Manager stated that Jacksonville is responsible for the upkeep/repairs to the pier. Our plan would require approval from the Community Redevelopment Agency to fund the upgrade to the entryway of the pier for the archway and fencing.

Next, **Signage** was addressed noting the need for more surfboard themed wayfinding signs, more motorist/pedestrian signs, and use of QR code system for public information.

Ms. Hoffman suggested painted crosswalks in addition to the motorist/pedestrian signage. She also stated that the QR code system might not be well used and that small map signs might serve better. Mr. Forbes stated that both could be used.

Latham Plaza development was the next slide, showing the addition of seating, shade structures, a small childrens playground, and exercise areas. Mr. Forbes provided photos showing examples that are at the St. Johns Town Center in Jacksonville.

Ms. Hoffman stated she thought there may be other locations better suited for a childrens playground, other than Latham Plaza.

Rather than eliminating the playground from Latham Plaza, Mayor Latham stated we should obtain a conceptual drawing with costs for planning.

Mr. Forbes moved onto **Streets** for the next slide, addressing the removal of concrete barriers on North 1st Street, improving the markings for 'roadway' and 'pedestrian space' on North 1st Street, and enhancing landscape on North 1st Street from Beach Blvd. to 6th Avenue North.

Mr. Forbes explained this street (N. 1st St.) was designed to be a destination street for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians to use together.

Chief Dooley stated there is a need for more bollards to make all these uses clearer, safer for pedestrians, and prevent unauthorized parking.

Transportation

Mr. Forbes talked about adding more **Bicycle Racks** to enhance safety and to use the decorative bike racks that look more like art.

On the **Roundabouts** on Beach Blvd. at 1st and 2nd Streets, it was noted by Mr. Forbes there have been many discussions about reducing the confusion on how they function. The best solution is to add stop signs at 2nd Street, making it a 4-way stop, like the one on 1st Street.

Discussion ensued about the engineering differences in the two roundabouts, that some people/drivers just do not understand roundabouts, and the need for consistency.

The next slide was about the **Pedestrian Safety** for A1A in Jacksonville Beach. This is an ongoing FDOT study about plans for pedestrian crossing and pavement lighting at 2nd Avenue N. and 3rd Street.

The **Beaches Trolley** slide represents our support of JTA's operations at the Beaches.

Next, Mr. Forbes talked about the plans for a surface or structured **Parking** facility on North 2nd Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues North. In addition, there could be a shuttle program for the downtown business employees who utilize parking spaces at the City's O & M Building on Shetter Ave. The City would not fund this – it would be negotiated between the businesses and the shuttle provider.

Mr. Forbes stated a pilot program is being initiated by the Police department to reduce the non-resident parking in residential areas where there is no off-street parking available adjacent to the downtown district.

Chief Dooley stated this pilot program will start from Beach Blvd. and go to 4th Avenue South, block by block, to first verify if there is on-site parking for the residents or not. If there is resident parking

available then there will not be a program for that area. If there is no available resident parking, then it will be evaluated by working with the property owners to validate how much parking is needed. Then spaces will be designated and residents will be required to obtain/buy a parking permit.

Ms. Hoffman referred back to the plans for a parking facility stating there should be an economic model developed to show revenue versus cost for each type of facility. This will provide information in order to make the best decision.

Mr. Forbes displayed the next slide, which showed a proposed **282 space parking facility** design developed in 2009.

Public Safety

Mr. Forbes reviewed the section for **Managing the Nighttime Economy**. The City has been successful improving these activities by training police on code enforcement, assisting businesses with crime prevention, increased police patrols, and providing employee training programs for businesses serving alcohol. This will also include modification of the alcohol ordinance to prevent restaurants from becoming nightclubs and modifying hours of operation for restaurants and/or bars.

Mr. Thomason commented on the ordinance modifications and the importance of having those changes in place for prospective businesses coming into the area. They need to know all the rules are before committing to a location.

Commercial Spaces

This slide showed the **Incentives for Non-Alcohol Businesses** and **Business Development** in the downtown redevelopment area, such as incentives for remodeling, rebates for grease interceptors, recruitment of a mix of restaurants and retail businesses, and attractions/festivals during the off-peak seasons.

The next slide was on **Downtown Branding and Marketing**. Mr. Forbes said the surfboard theme and the ideas from Ms. Hoffman and Mr. Doherty to add maps to the wayfinding signs would work well in the downtown area. This slide also includes locating the visitor center at the Beaches Historical Park and providing proper signage.

Mr. Forbes addressed the next item, **Public Welfare and Safety**, stating the Mission House is doing a great job, along with the HOPE team, and the CHOP program, to assist the homeless population.

The next slide is on **Zoning Regulations**. The City Manager talked about reviewing the codes for outdoor bar and restaurant spaces, restaurant parking requirements and considering parking reduction to encourage restaurants development, as opposed to bars. Mayor Latham encouraged implementing these incentives as soon as possible.

Also to be considered is allowing outdoor acoustic entertainment in the Land Development Code. Discussion ensued and it was suggested to remove the word 'acoustic' because it was too limiting. (note: drums are acoustic) It was agreed to remove 'acoustic'.

Entertainment and Events was the next slide and Mr. Forbes stated some of these items are already in effect – events in non-peak season, alcohol free events, more outdoor movies. Mr. Forbes said he would like to eliminate (d), the addition of another jazz series, because the 2016 event calendar is already full.

Quality of Life

The last slide, on **Cleanliness**, reviewed proposals for pressure washing streets, the SeaWalk, and dumpster areas. The City needs a program developed for property and business owners to assist in keeping our Downtown clean.

We have a Cleanliness Campaign 'Leave Only Your Footprints Behind'. We need to review the beach clean-up contract for effectiveness and enhance services between Beach Blvd. and 6th Avenue North on weekends and holidays.

There was a brief discussion about enforcing clean-up with citations, and getting the message across not to litter and to clean up.

The City Manager stated all the major areas have been covered here tonight and we'll make some changes as discussed, and bring back to the Council to request the Community Redevelopment Agency to add these items to the Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Public Comment

Ken Marsh, 2027 Gail Avenue – talked about preventing oil on streets from the delivery trucks and also talked about the pilot program to reduce non-resident parking. Mr. Marsh distributed a letter to the Council. (attached)

Brenda Shields, 18th Street North – talked about her concerns with outside music/entertainment.

Mick DuRocher, 41 Millie Drive – talked about reaching out to public for input, parking, homeless programs, surveying hotel guests as to how they liked the city.

Mike Stang, 1020 19th Street North – talked about parking, cleanliness, and how garbage trucks leak fluids on the street.

Chris Hoffman addressed the comments about public input, stating she has her notes from the first meeting which included flip charts made from citizen comments. Taxi stands and outdoor dining were items citizens want to see downtown.

Minutes of City Council Workshop
Held on Monday, May 18, 2015

Mayor Latham also commented about public input, stating all the workshops are publicized. The Council and Staff have spent lots of time in meetings, listening to the public, to develop the Downtown Action Plan. The Mayor closed stating the Council was elected to do what is in the best interest for the City, for the Community, and that's done every day.

The Workshop adjourned at 6:43 P.M.

Submitted by: Nancy J Pyatte
Assistant City Clerk

Approved:

/s/ William C. Latham

William C. Latham, MAYOR

Date: June 1, 2015