

The Better Jacksonville Plan
Citizens Oversight Committee
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2003

Press Secretary Sharon Ashton called the committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. because co-chairs Ron Salem and Flossie Brunson were not in attendance.

Ashton recognized committee member Angie Vanetter for recommending that all committee members receive a gold shovel lapel pin in celebration of The Better Jacksonville Plan groundbreakings.

Ashton turned the meeting over to Mayor Delaney who began his presentation of The Better Jacksonville Plan Quarterly Report.

Revenues are looking great. Collections are up and on target. Next month, the City plans to sell \$200 million in bonds. All in all, The Better Jacksonville Plan is fiscally sound.

The Minority Business Enterprise program is going well. Nearly 29% of the money spent so far on Better Jacksonville has gone to companies owned by African Americans, women, or other minorities.

Construction of the arena is currently 35% complete and construction of the baseball park is currently at 60%. The first baseball game is scheduled for April 11th.

Construction has started on the new Main Library. It's on time and on budget.

Design is under way on all the branch libraries with the exception of the San Marco Branch that is under construction. This branch will re-open in a few months.

Groundbreaking for the County Courthouse Complex will be scheduled within the next couple of months. Demolition of existing structures will take place first and then construction of the new complex can get under way.

The City's street team has resurfaced 934 miles of streets to date. Resurfacing on the downtown streets is under way.

Forty-two miles of sidewalks have been constructed.

Park improvements are going well with 156 parks currently getting enhancements.

Environmental cleanup is moving slowly. Working with the EPA is a slow process.

As part of the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund, five big projects totaling \$6.8 million and seven smaller projects totally \$1.4 million are in the works.

Construction is under way and going well on the Cecil Equestrian and Recreation Complex. Currently, our team is clearing land to make way for new facilities there.

Construction of the “Range of the Jaguar” is on time and on budget at the Jacksonville Zoological Gardens.

Every Better Jacksonville Plan project, with the possible exception of the courthouse, is on time and on budget. The courthouse complex is a massive project, the single largest project in The Better Jacksonville Plan, and it is too early to tell where we are with the numbers.

It was requested by the committee to have an update on the road projects that the Jacksonville Transportation Authority is managing at the next meeting. There was also a request for a map that indicates the locations of all the park improvement projects.

Mayor Delaney turned the meeting over to Mark Middlebrook, the executive director of The Preservation Project. (Power point presentation attached.)

Four years ago, The City of Jacksonville kicked off the Preservation Project, a program designed to buy land to take it out of development, to put it aside and to preserve it for future generations.

The City of Jacksonville, with our partners, has now acquired 62 square miles of land as part of the Preservation Project

The City has partnered with the State and National Park Systems to create one single park experience.

Jacksonville now has the largest urban park system in the United States with 113 square miles of parkland. That is more than 73,000 acres of greenspace for our residents and tourists to enjoy.

A total of 12% of our city is now parkland. We have the largest urban park system in the United States.

The Preservation Project provides an opportunity for Jacksonville to practice smart growth management, to protect environmentally sensitive lands, to preserve water quality and to provide public access to some of our area’s greatest natural assets.

With over 2,000 acres, Cedar Swamp, located off of J. Turner Butler Boulevard, is more than double the size of the famous Central Park in New York City.

Preservation Parks are a combination of passive and active parks that are open to the public. Over \$71 million has been invested in active parks.

The Timucuan Trail is a partnership of City, State and National parks. According to the National Parks System, it is the first partnership of its kind.

Groundbreaking for Castaway Island will be in the next couple of months and the Ribault Clubhouse, located within the Timucuan Trail, will be scheduled this spring.

Mayor Delaney and the committee discussed the costs associated with the County Courthouse Complex. The Mayor explained that the City is in the early stages of the project and costs fluctuate up and down.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.