



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

TRUE COMMISSION LEGISLATIVE TRACKING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 13, 2009 9:30 a.m.

City Council Conference Room B
Suite 425, City Hall
117 W. Duval Street

Attendance: Wes Benwick (Chair), Committee Members John Palombi and Joe Andrews

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Chairman Benwick.

Staff presented follow-up information from questions raised at the previous meeting regarding the process of acquiring retention pond sites for road projects and the Jacksonville Journey service procurement process. The pond acquisition process is a joint effort of the Public Works Engineering and Real Estate Divisions and is influenced by a number of factors including topography, size of pond required, environmental considerations (flood plains, wetlands, soil contamination, soil types), permitting requirements, and availability and cost of land. The City selects its preferred site and obtains an independent appraisal as does the property owner, and then negotiations begin. The City may also institute condemnation proceedings when starting negotiations in the event that negotiations fail to reach an acceptable deal so as not to delay the procurement process and thus the road construction process by waiting until after the negotiating process is unsuccessful. The independent appraiser determines the basis on which the land is to be appraised. Depending on the nature of the area where the project is being done (virgin land or built-up older neighborhood) the City may have a choice of several acceptable sites, in which case they can negotiate on price, or only one feasible site which can make negotiations difficult and condemnation necessary.

With regard to Jacksonville Journey procurement, those services are being procured in the usual manner by the Procurement Division through the competitive sealed proposal process. The specifications for each service are developed by the staff of the user department with expertise in the area (i.e. Children's Commission, Recreation and Community Services Department) in conjunction with procurement personnel. The Risk Management Division adds mandatory insurance requirements.

The committee discussed the Council Research Division's bill summaries, the administration's Fact Sheets and the operations of the Mayor's Budget Review Committee, which meets bi-weekly to approve all requests for legislation arising from the operations of the Mayor's administrative departments. In the committee's opinion neither the fact sheets nor the bill summaries are totally informative to a member of the general public who may have no knowledge about the particular subject area – they seem to presume a certain pre-existing level of understanding about City operations and finances.

2008-185: the bill would appropriate \$200,000 in the form of a grant and a loan from the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund to a company to expand a commercial truck wash operation on Edgewood Avenue. The committee discussed the need for information on the effectiveness and track

record of the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund. What is the fund's current balance? How successful has the fund been in recent years in meeting its objectives? Staff was asked to request additional information on the fund for the next meeting.

2009-183: Commissioner Andrews wondered why the City would want to encourage ex-offenders to come to Jacksonville by offering assistance in hiring. Doesn't it stand to reason that providing additional services or preferences will attract more ex-offenders to the city to partake of that service?

At the conclusion of the Legislative Tracking Committee's agenda, TRUE Commission Chairman John Palombi and Commissioner Benwick discussed the commission's Vice Chair position, currently vacant due to the resignation of Commissioner Pam Korn. Mr. Benwick indicated his willingness to assume the Vice Chair position by appointment for the remainder of Ms. Korn's term through the commission's June 2009 meeting, at which time new elections for officers will take place.

There was discussion about the continuing turnover in commission membership, and the need to encourage more commissioners to become active participants on the committees where most of the real work of the commission gets done. Staff was asked to develop a format to publish the attendance at the committee meetings for the period August 2008 through January 2009, and to publish formal committee membership rosters.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division
630-1405

Posted 2.27.09
8:35 a.m.