

JHPC

Demolition by Neglect Task Force



February 27, 2025

I.

Introduction of Task Force



JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

II.

Review

Draft

Recommendations



JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

*(Bill Hoff - **DRAFT** - Report Document)*

Title Page

Preamble: History, justification, and mission of the taskforce. Key points to include are the role/value of historic assets, defining demolition by neglect, its negative impact on property values, quality of life, safety, historic status, and available housing stock, and the positive economic ROI of historic renovations (cite DuPont Fund, GBX Group and other studies).

Findings -

- Demolition by Neglect is a pressing issue that municipalities around the country struggle with to varying degrees and is not a unique concern for Jacksonville's locally designated historic properties.
- Financial penalties such as fines/liens on historic properties are often not effective in addressing Demolition by Neglect, both locally and elsewhere. Fines/liens are often ignored and eventually reduced.
- Elements of successful strategies in other municipalities to address Demolition by Neglect include regular meetings between city departments relevant to the issue, criteria to determine when a property is threatened by Demolition by Neglect, strategic use of foreclosure by the municipality to prevent and/or deter Demolition by Neglect, utilization of a non-profit entity to receive a previously foreclosed upon historic property as an alternative to Demolition by Neglect, community engagement to educate and support the value of historic preservation.
- The City of Jacksonville has existing ordinances that, if utilized, would significantly reduce the prevalence and negative impact of Demolition by Neglect. (Ex) 307.110

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Five Priority Recommendations -

- COJ Municipal Code Compliance Division (MCCD) and Historic Preservation Section will create and maintain a list of properties which have fines/liens related to maintenance deficiencies, safety, and blight, and which are located within a locally designated historic district and/or a locally designated historic landmark. The list should include the real estate number, address, type of historic designation, description of violation, length of time of the property has been in violation, total fines/liens, and the status of the violation being resolved. This will be an important tool to help proactively identify properties at higher risk for Demolition by Neglect and coordinate an appropriate response.
- COJ Historic Preservation Section, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and MCCD will create objective criteria to determine when a property within a locally designated historic district and/or a locally designated historic landmark meets the threshold for being in danger of Demolition by Neglect, and a process to engage the property owner. A scored matrix will be used to assist with this process.
- MCCD, Historic Preservation Section, Building Inspection Division, and a HPC commissioner as determined by the HPC Chair, will meet regularly to review the list of properties within locally designated historic districts and/or locally designated landmarks which have fines/liens to coordinate an appropriate plan to address properties most at-risk to Demolition by Neglect. Meetings will occur monthly for the first three months, then at least quarterly moving forward. Outcomes of these meetings will be shared at the subsequent HPC meeting.
- COJ will use their existing ability to foreclose on properties that have outstanding liens to strategically foreclose on properties within locally designated historic districts, and locally designated landmarks, which meet the criteria of being endangered by Demolition by Neglect, to prevent their demolition and/or facilitate their renovation/redevelopment.
- COJ will partner with the Jacksonville Community Land Trust (JCLT) to dispose of foreclosed upon properties with locally designated historic districts, and locally designated landmarks, which are not sold at auction. The JCLT would take ownership of these properties with the intention to renovate or hold until an appropriate redevelopment partner is identified.

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Short term recommendations (< 1 year)

- COJ Historic Preservation Section and HPC will provide guidance to community organizations/members of the community on how they may assist with preventing Demolition by Neglect through engagement and education. Information will include subjects such as proactive maintenance, economic hardship resources, etc.
- COJ Historic Preservation Section and HPC will coordinate with community organizations to proactively identify historic assets and candidates for locally designated historic landmarks. By identifying historic assets prior to deterioration, these assets can be better protected against Demolition by Neglect.
- COJ will send an annual notification to property owners of properties within locally designated historic districts and locally designated landmarks, explaining the unique status of their property, the responsibility of the owners to maintain, the role of the Historic Preservation Section and HPC, and other related resources. A frequent justification by applicants who seek demolition of historic properties is a lack of awareness that leads to the deterioration of the property, and this would address that issue.
- COJ will eliminate the requirement for FACE certification within MCCD, which has little practical value for COJ Code Officers, and use the cost savings to create an internal training program for MCCD. The new internal training program will include specialized training for historic properties and Demolition by Neglect.
- MCCD will improve the PICS database to: identify locally designated historic districts and locally designated historic landmarks, have the ability to export reports efficiently, and deliver citation payments to the appropriate accounts.
- Clarify the language in 307.111 (h) to list the appropriate historic funding (see 111.900) - same trust fund currently used in Downtown, or different?
- Improve software and processes to allocate fines for all specialized funding accounts properly, which would improve the current inefficient communication process with the Tax Collector's office.
- Create a clear process for adding unpaid liens and/or fines assigned by magistrate to non-ad valorem tax assessment rolls, which would bring more effective enforcement to neglectful property owners and provide an alternative to foreclosure when a property is abandoned and taxes or liens remain unpaid. Statute allows this, but there is currently no process for it.
- COJ Planning Department will not approve permits for properties deemed in danger of Demolition by Neglect, except for those permits that are for the correction of the identified violations.
- COJ will fund the Restore Endangered Historic Adaptable Buildings (REHAB) program on an annual basis of at least \$500,000. This program provides vital financial assistance to income producing and/or non-profit historic properties which have significant deterioration and are highly vulnerable to further decline and/or Demolition by Neglect.
- A Certification of Appropriateness (COA) for demolition of a contributing property within a locally designated historic district, or locally designated historic landmark, will require a report from a structural engineer with a demonstrated knowledge and expertise in remediation of historic resources, presenting both the identified problems and possible solutions in detail, including visual evidence.

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Medium term (< 2 years)

- COJ will fund neighborhood historic surveys on an annual basis, as it has done previously, to proactively identify historic assets and candidates for locally designated historic landmarks. By identifying historic assets prior to deterioration, these assets can be better protected against Demolition by Neglect.
- Historic Preservation Section to coordinate with NEFAR and RealMLS and other professional real estate organizations to educate real estate professionals and their clients about responsibilities and resources associated with owning locally designated historic properties.
- COJ will fund additional personnel in the Historic Preservation Section and MCCD to fulfill their roles in preventing Demolition by Neglect, addressing blight conditions, and supporting historic preservation.

Long term (< 3 years)

- COJ will establish a revolving loan fund to assist with historic preservation of properties with locally designated historic districts and locally designated landmarks, modeled on existing COJ revolving loan renovation programs. The fund would require time to accumulate and would be accessible in limited cases.
- COJ Property Appraiser will apply fines originated from MCCD and/or Historic Preservation Section code enforcement on to the annual property tax bills of properties within the locally designated historic districts and locally designated historic landmarks. Fines applied to the annual property tax bill will be related to the structural integrity of the property and/or significant deterioration of the roof, siding, windows, doors, or other openings which allow water intrusion to endanger preservation of the structure. - duplicative of previous recommendation?

Brief summary and call to action.

Noticed public Taskforce meetings were held on 10/29/24, 11/12/24, 11/29/24, 12/09/24, 1/24/25, 1/28/25, 2/13/25, 2/27/25, 3/13/25.

Municipalities examined during the course of the Taskforce include Orlando, Gainesville, Homestead, St. Augustine, Delray Beach, Hillsborough County, Miami Beach, Miami-Dade County, Ocala, Oakland Park, Eatonville, New Smyrna Beach, St. Petersburg, San Antonio, Texas, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

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III.

Public Comments



JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

IV.

Action Steps



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V .

***Next
Meeting
Details***



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