Minutes of City Council Briefing
Monday, September 13, 2021 – 5:30 P.M.
Via Video Conference

The Council Briefing began at 5:30 P.M. The meeting was held via video conference using the Zoom platform.

The following City Council Members were in attendance:

Mayor:	Christine Hoffman		
Council Members:	Georgette Dumont	Sandy Golding	Dan Janson
	Fernando Meza	Cory Nichols	Chet Stokes

Also present were City Manager Mike Staffopoulos, Director of Planning and Development Heather Ireland, and Consultant Jim Gilmore.

Purpose of Briefing
The purpose of the Briefing was to update the Council members about ongoing items in the City.

City Manager
Construction Fencing Requirements
Director of Planning and Development Heather Ireland stated at the June 28, 2021, regular Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) meeting, some Board members expressed a desire to consider amendments to Section 34-406 of the Land Development Code (LDC) to include requirements and regulations for construction fencing in the downtown area.

Conversation ensued regarding OSHA requirements, current LDC language, and different types of fencing options. It was the consensus of the Council to include fencing wraps as part of a CRA Incentive Toolbox.

Downtown CRA Expansion
Ms. Ireland advised that during the July 29, 2021, Council Briefing, Mayor Hoffman asked the Council for their opinion on expanding the Downtown CRA District across 3rd Street. The Council requested this topic be presented at an upcoming briefing.

Conversation ensued regarding "Finding of Necessity" and expansion boundaries. The Council requested Ms. Ireland and Jim Gilmore with the Southern Group explore boundary options, "Finding of Necessity" reasons, cost estimates, and to present the information during a future briefing.

Outdoor Restaurant Areas
Ms. Ireland stated the Council previously indicated support for amendments to Section 34-407 of the Land Development Code (LDC) in regards to outdoor restaurants and bars, specifically as it pertained to the ratio of allowable outdoor seating and calculations to qualify for a special restaurant (SRX) alcoholic beverage license (4COP).

Ms. Ireland presented the Council with the following summary of proposed amendments to consider:

1. Amend the definition of outdoor restaurant to add language that mirrors Section 18. Noise that says "... and has, in place, tables and chairs set up to accommodate patrons for seating during all hours of operation."
2. Allow outdoor restaurant area, under 150 to 300 square feet at establishments where alcohol is not served, as a permitted use in certain commercial zoning districts where restaurants are permitted.
3. Remove the parking requirement for outdoor restaurant areas under 150-300 square feet.
4. Amend the outdoor restaurant area allowable ratio from 25% of the indoor restaurant space to 50% of the indoor restaurant seating area.
5. Allow outdoor restaurant seating areas to be used to compute the minimum seating or customer service area required to qualify for a 4COP (SRX) special restaurant alcoholic beverage license.
6. Require a hard and/or vegetative buffer around outdoor restaurant and bar areas that are immediately adjacent to existing residential uses.

The Council agreed to have staff proceed with an application to amend Section 34-407 of the Land Development Code.

Future Briefing Topics

Council Member Janson spoke about the empty lot on 6th Avenue North and Holly Drive. He stated the lot gets swampy and muddy and serves as a drainage basin for the area. Mr. Janson stated he would like to see the City better utilize the lot or possibly include it in the upcoming Urban Trails or park plan. Conversation ensued regarding the ownership and history of the lot, and Mr. Staffopoulos suggested staff gather information on the lot and revisit the topic at the beginning of 2022. The Council agreed.

Council Member Golding recommended the City become members of the American Flood Coalition. She stated a representative from the American Flood Coalition would be willing to speak with the Council to provide more information about membership and the organization. The Council agreed to allow for a five-minute presentation at an upcoming briefing.

Ms. Golding stated a resident sent her an email [on file] seeking permission to dredge the marsh behind his home to allow access to the Intracoastal waterway for a boat. A discussion concerning the request followed, and the Council agreed the email should be forwarded to all Council Members for review. Once reviewed, the Council would decide if they would like to add this topic as a future briefing item.

Council Member Dumont spoke about the recently approved fee-simple properties being built. Ms. Dumont stated according to the newly created Strategic Plan, Priority 1 (Quality of Life), Goal 2 (Sustain and improve community character and the diversity of neighborhoods), Objective 1 (Update the LDC references to support community desired character, intensity, and mixed-use), she proposed a moratorium on either townhouse and/or fee-simple properties resulting in making future properties non-conforming. After a discussion regarding the legality of placing a moratorium on new construction, it was decided by the Council to postpone any further discussion of the topic until the incoming City Attorney (Ms. Sandra Robinson) had a chance to review it.

Council Member Nichols thanked the City for utilizing the tree program offered by the City of Jacksonville. He also mentioned the desire for east and west mixed-used paths throughout neighborhoods. Mr. Staffopoulos stated the Urban Trail Master Plan would include mixed-use trails throughout the entire City. Mr. Staffopoulos stated a briefing would be after the first of the year regarding the Urban Trail development.

Mayor Hoffman requested an update on the Gantt chart previously presented by Mr. Staffopoulos.

Conversation ensued regarding being concise when bringing up future briefing topics. It was suggested by Mr. Staffopoulos to schedule a briefing between the new City Attorney and members of Council regarding future topics of interest.

Mayor Hoffman also provided an update on the recent Downtown Business Owner meeting.

Committee Assignment Report
Mr. Stokes and Ms. Golding stated they had committee assignment updates but deferred them until a future Council Briefing.

The Briefing adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Submitted by: Jodilynn Byrd
Administrative Assistant

Approved:

Christine H. Hoffman, MAYOR

Date: 10/4/21