Welcome to the Neighborhood

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IN THIS ISSUE

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Tabitha, with her dog Alikai, lives, works and plays in the Urban Core
Contents

4 Welcome to the Neighborhood
Meet the newly formed Neighborhood Services Office

5 SHARE YOUR SQUARE

6 Around Town: Urban Core
Home to historic neighborhoods, major entertainment and cultural venues, and Jacksonville’s most distinctive natural resource, the St. Johns River

9 Neighborhood Improvements
Money available to support needs

9 City of Jacksonville Calendar Available
A free resource for great parks, people and places you’ll find only here in Jacksonville

10 Keeping Jacksonville Clean

Our Jax Magazine
Dear Citizens,

The highest priority of government at any level - and my top priority as mayor - is the public safety of citizens. We must equip our law enforcement officials with the tools and resources they need to safeguard and protect neighborhoods and families throughout our city.

In recent years, these resources have been drastically cut, resulting in rising levels of violent crime. Since taking office, I have worked closely with Sheriff Mike Williams and local law enforcement to reinvest in public safety. My first two budgets added 80 new police officers and 80 new community officers. We relaunched and doubled our investment in Jax Journey, a crime prevention and intervention initiative focused on youth and ex-offenders. And we provided additional police overtime dollars to provide greater manpower in high-need areas, which officials indicate resulted in a 40 percent reduction in non-domestic shootings.

Restoring these cuts will not dig us out of this hole overnight. I will remain vigilant on this issue, and will continue to invest in programs and partnerships that protect and serve.

Both Sheriff Williams and I are aware that it takes more than enforcement to solve this crime problem. It takes building stronger communities in every ZIP code, for every citizen. Everyone plays a role in improving the safety of our community. You can encourage an at-risk youth by mentoring, coaching or volunteering. You can join a Sheriff’s Watch for your neighborhood. You can support programs and organizations that work with at-risk youth or ex-offenders. You can help fight neighborhood blight by hosting a cleanup in your area. And you can invite me to visit your neighborhood to learn more about your interests.

Together, we must sound the alarm on this city-wide issue and take comprehensive actions to solve it. Let’s commit to our children and to our city’s future.

Sincerely,

Mayor Lenny Curry
Welcome to the Neighborhood

...or the Neighborhood Services Office that is! No one knows what a community wants or needs better than the people who live there. For this reason, communication between citizens and government is essential to a thriving neighborhood. In a city as large as Jacksonville, one of the most important resources is the Neighborhood Services Office.

In February 2016, Ordinance 2016 - 0140 reorganized the Neighborhoods Department forming the Neighborhood Services Office to serve as the City of Jacksonville’s intermediary between the Neighborhoods Department, citizens and community organizations. The office manages town center initiatives, neighborhood action plans, neighborhood outreach and engagement, education, neighborhood association coordination and Citizens Planning Advisory Committees (CPAC).

What is a CPAC? CPACs were created by former Mayor Ed Austin in 1993 as a way to maintain open and effective lines of communication between community stakeholders including residents, businesses, neighborhoods, community organizations, educational institutions and government. The Neighborhood Services Office oversees six CPAC districts which correspond to the city’s six planning districts. They include: Urban Core (Planning District No.1), Greater Arlington/Beaches (Planning District No.2), Southeast (Planning District No.3), Southwest (Planning District No.4), Northwest (Planning District No.5) and North (Planning District No.6). Members of each CPAC represent a diverse population of residents within that planning district. CPAC meetings are held monthly at various locations throughout the districts. Neighborhood Coordinators representing the Neighborhood Services Office provide administrative support to the CPACs.

The Neighborhood Services Office also manages the Strategy Three programs funded by the Foreclosure Property Registry Fund for community development, outreach and educational programming. Programs include: Matching Grants - for neighborhood improvement projects throughout the community; CommUniVerCity - training for new community leaders; and Our Jax Magazine - a publication highlighting CPACs and other programs designed to empower local communities.

MEET THE TEAM

STEPHANIE BURCH
Director of Neighborhoods
stephanieb@coj.net

LISA RANSOM
Neighborhood Services Manager
lransom@coj.net

DAN DURBEC
Environmental Programs Coordinator
ddurbec@coj.net

MICHELLE GODWIN-WARE
Neighborhood Coordinator for Districts 4 and 6
michellegw@coj.net

AMY HAYS HOLLIMAN
Neighborhood Coordinator for Districts 1 and 5
aholliman@coj.net

SHAUN RYRCROFT
City Planner
srycroft@coj.net

ROSEMARY WESOLOWSKI
Neighborhood Coordinator for Districts 2 and 3
rosemary@coj.net

To learn more about joining a CPAC, please call (904) 255-8250, or visit http://www.coj.net/departments/neighborhoods/neighborhood-services-office.
Jacksonville is BIG. It’s the largest city in the continental U.S., covering 840 square miles, which means there are many hidden gems like the ones you see here. Can you identify these locations? Better yet, share your own! Tell us what you love most about where you live, work, or play by posting your photos on social media with the hashtag #ShareYourSquare.

Visit http://www.coj.net/departments/neighborhoods/neighborhood-services-office/publications for the locations of the Share Your Square photos.
Compact but abundant would be one way to describe Urban Core Planning District 1. Geographically, District 1 is the city’s most compact district, but within its boundaries, which encompass Downtown Jacksonville, are a wealth of distinguishing features including historic neighborhoods, major entertainment and cultural venues like Everbank Field and the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, and Jacksonville’s most distinctive natural resource, the St. Johns River. The task of preserving this district’s rich history while advocating for its promising future falls to its Urban Core Citizens Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC).

“My goal is for our CPAC to be more proactive with our City leaders and neighborhood organizations,” said Urban Core CPAC Chair Michelle Tappouni. “We advocate for our neighborhoods, and serve as the resource providing the connection to communicate with Mayor Curry and other elected representatives and city departments.”

“I love the passion and diversity of our Urban Core communities,” Tappouni said. “And I love the opportunity to help others in our city have success with the neighborhood issues that are important to them whether they are my Springfield neighbors or they live or work anywhere in the central core, including Eastside, Durkeeville, Brooklyn and downtown Jacksonville.

The importance of that connectivity between neighborhood advocates and City leaders and planners is something Tappouni understands well. Elected chair last November, Tappouni is new to the leadership role but her engagement with the CPAC dates back several years. CPAC meetings are always open to the public, and even before becoming a CPAC member in 2015, she attended regularly to keep up-to-date on developments within her historic Springfield neighborhood and throughout the district.

For more information, please visit www.coj.net/cpacs, call the Neighborhood Services Office at (904) 255-8250, or email Urban Core CPAC Chair Michelle Tappouni at mishtap@earthlink.net or Neighborhood Coordinator Amy Holliman at aholliman@coj.net.
EATS
Waafa N Mike Cafe on Main Street. It is a family-owned Mediterranean restaurant, where you can also pick up a good burger. The food is simply prepared, homemade and delicious. The staff is exceedingly friendly. I always run into friends and neighbors when I am in there.

PARKS
Klutho Park on the 4th of July. Springfield holds an annual Fourth of July Throwback Baseball Game. The players are neighbors and friends. They wear old fashion baseball uniforms. Everyone brings food to share. The children sit on benches underneath a wooden scoreboard and keep the score. It’s like you are living in the 1920’s.

MY ONE THING
People will tell you The Landing or Everbank Field are quintessential landmarks of the Urban Core and I wouldn’t disagree, but my favorite is the St. Johns River. It is our special natural resource and we should protect it. Jacksonville wouldn’t be Jacksonville without it.

WHAT MAKES SPRINGFIELD UNIQUE? Springfield turns out. We turn out when there is a party. We turn out when our neighbors need help. We turn out to support, improve and protect the neighborhood. It is a diverse blend of white, black, old, young, rich, poor, gay, straight, republicans and democrats. You name it, we’ve got it. Homogenized we are not. We embrace each other’s differences and quirks, and we still get along swimmingly.

ARTS & CULTURE
Wisdom, the owl on the outside of the Main Public Library on Laura Street. He is smart, whimsical, friendly and reminds us of everything Jacksonville is and will be.

ENTERTAINMENT
Elvis Costello at the Florida Theater. It is a beautiful venue with gorgeous acoustics. The music sounds beautiful and every seat is a good one.

SHOPPING
Wolf and Cub on Laura Street, Downtown. Emily, the owner, has a great mix of old and new treasures. She sells the softest t-shirts around, and she is local. Tell Emily that I sent you.
The City of Jacksonville has earned the Citizen-Engaged Community designation from the Public Technology Institute (PTI) for 2016 - 2018. This honor recognizes that Jacksonville is a national leader in providing a centralized contact center through 630-CITY that effectively utilizes new technology for fast, friendly and responsive services for citizens.

The purpose of PTI’s Citizen-Engaged Communities Designation Program is to challenge local government to achieve high standards in citizen participation, seamless service delivery and democratic accountability. Criteria require that service centers must engage citizens through multiple channels, empower citizens by enabling direct interaction, and demonstrate accountability through performance reporting.

630-CITY services are available at the main customer service center located in the Ed Ball Building (214 N. Hogan St., 32202) and at the information desk in City Hall (117 W. Duval St., 32202). Residents can contact customer service by phone at (904) 630-CITY (2489), by email at 630CITY@coj.net, or online at 630CITY.coj.net.
A successful city is characterized by its robust and vibrant neighborhoods - neighborhoods where citizens feel safe, have access to quality infrastructure, are supported by a thriving economy, and take pride in their surroundings. Some local neighborhoods, adversely impacted by the mortgage foreclosure crisis years ago, have struggled to recover. The Neighborhood Matching Grants Program seeks to reenergize and strengthen these neighborhoods by supporting efforts to fight blight, prevent further deterioration of vacant foreclosed properties, and improve the quality of life for residents.

As part of the city’s continued efforts to strengthen neighborhoods, the City of Jacksonville appropriated $250,000 from its Foreclosure Property Registry Fund last year for community development. A portion of these funds support the Matching Grants Program ($100,000) which is designed to provide assistance to specific neighborhood projects that help build relationships, enhance communities and promote healthier neighborhoods.

A 501(c)3 neighborhood association, civic organization or community group that is located within Duval County and has been in existence for at least six months (prior to the application date) may apply for a grant up to $5,000. Matching funds must equal or exceed the amount of the funds requested through the program. Qualifying match donations include sweat equity, volunteer labor hours and in-kind donations such as building supplies and materials. Priority is given to projects in communities with high foreclosure rates and blighted areas.

To learn more about the Matching Grants Program, or to apply, please call (904) 255-8250. Application workshops will be scheduled and are strongly recommended.

Only here in Jacksonville will you find some of the nation’s most incredible parks, people and places. To highlight this, we have captured a few of them in a colorful calendar, reminding us of the many wonderful offerings available throughout our city. This FREE calendar will help you keep track of all the important holidays and CPAC meetings in 2017. It is available for download online at www.coj.net/departments/neighborhoods/neighborhood-services-office/publications. Printed copies are available at monthly CPAC meetings (visit www.coj.net/cpacs to determine your CPAC district). Limited copies are available at the info desk at City Hall (St. James Building, 117 W. Duval St., 32202).
As the Environmental Programs Coordinator for the Neighborhood Services Office, Dan Durbec manages environmentally-focused citywide initiatives that include Clean It Up, Green It Up (CIU, GIU) and the Keep Jacksonville Beautiful Commission. Both platforms offer opportunities for community members to contribute to Jacksonville’s ecological well-being.

The CIU, GIU office assists neighborhood groups, civic organizations, churches and businesses with litter abatement activities in their communities. Trash bags and gloves are provided at no cost, and the office coordinates debris pickup with the City’s Solid Waste Division. In addition to this and other programs, CIU, GIU hosts one of Jacksonville’s most well-known cleanup efforts, the annual St. Johns River Celebration Cleanup, which will be held this year at 41 sites on March 25th. If you are interested in being a site captain, call Dan at (904) 255-8276.

Among various projects, Keep Jacksonville Beautiful organizes beautification and community garden projects around the city - most recently the JS Johnson Community Center in the Brooklyn community and Oceanway Community Center on the Northside. The commission also worked with the City’s Public Works and JaxParks divisions to install dozens of ash receptacles around Duval County in an effort to reduce cigarette litter.

From grants awarded by government entities like the Florida Inland Navigation District, and Keep America Beautiful, to charitable donations from businesses like Citi, Lowe’s, Henry Schein, and Anheuser-Busch, Durbec
Volunteer support is the heart of Clean It Up, Green It Up and Keep Jacksonville Beautiful.

credits collaborators and sponsors as the key to providing services. “Our partners are our lifeblood,” Durbec said. One such partner is the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) whose $15,000 grants through its Drive It Home, Keep Our Paradise Litter Free campaign enables CIU, GIU to offer free Adopt-A-Road signage to non-profit organizations participating in the program. Last year’s beneficiaries included several local Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) groups.

While the support of funders is crucial to program success, Durbec described volunteer support as “the heart of CIU, GIU and Keep Jacksonville Beautiful.” Over the past five years, 37,099 volunteers donated 78,070 hours of their time to pick up 450 tons of trash around Duval County. The hourly dollar value of those hours amounted to $567,356.

To learn about volunteer opportunities, and for more information on programs and activities, log onto coj.net/KJB or call CIU, GIU at (904) 255-8276.
STAND WITH JAXCAN to FIGHT BLIGHT

The City of Jacksonville is counting on every citizen to help make our neighborhoods safer, cleaner and healthier.

- Know your disposal days for trash, yard waste and recycling.
- Keep your yard maintained with grass no higher than 15 inches.
- Report litter, illegal dumping, overgrown grass or abandoned properties.
- Host a neighborhood community clean-up and invite JaxCan to make an appearance.

WWW.COJ.NET/BLIGHT

City of Jacksonville
One City. One Jacksonville.

117 W. Duval St.
Jacksonville, FL 32202
904.630.CITY | 630CITY.coj.net