

The Better Jacksonville Plan
Citizens Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2002

Ron Salem called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. After thanking Mayor Delaney for his vision of The Better Jacksonville Plan (BJP), Mr. Salem turned the meeting over to the Mayor.

Mayor Delaney encouraged members to raise questions and committed to sending BJP Quarterly Report out in advance starting in January 2003. The Mayor also welcomed Matt Lackey as the Citizens Oversight Committee's newest member.

Mayor Delaney announced that all BJP projects are on or under budget with the exception of the County Courthouse Complex that is still too early in the process to predict.

Revenue is on target with the original cash model and 8% higher than this time last year.

Minority business opportunities at 26.4% are the highest in Jacksonville's history. Over 1500 minority vendors have received information through a combination of various outreach events.

The Sports and Entertainment Arena construction is 25% complete and on target for the dedication ceremony in Summer 2003 with substantial completion in Fall 2003. Demolition bids for the existing coliseum are in approximately 40% under budget.

The Baseball Park construction is 30% complete and is advancing nicely. Negotiations are on going with the Jacksonville Suns.

The groundbreaking ceremony will be held for the Main Library on December 16, 2002 with special guest Robert AM Stern, lead architect for the new facility. The Library Foundation is currently attempting to raise \$16 million for further enhancements of the Main Library.

Design is under way on all branch and regional libraries with the exception of the San Marco Branch that is under construction and anticipated to be reopened in Spring 2003.

Negotiations are complete with Cannon Design, the architect for the County Courthouse Complex. We are currently working with the federal government to take over the old Federal Courthouse and renovate it as part of the new facility. The project is on target to open the entire Courthouse Complex in 2005.

Neighborhood street resurfacing is going well with approximately 900 miles of streets resurfaced to date. The project continues to be well under budget. Over 34 miles of sidewalks have been completed to date.

As part of The Preservation Project, the city's Park system has grown to almost 70,000 acres and we are continuing to build the biggest and best city park system in the nation.

There are currently over 139 park improvements funded by The Better Jacksonville Plan. Recently, the ribbon was cut at Cuba Hunter Park off Emerson Street that was partially funded with BJP money.

The Pernecia/Johnny Circle Septic Tank Phase Out Project is now complete and work in Murray Hill is under way. Next summer, JEA will have the last four of the six projects under way.

Of the \$25 million set aside in The Better Jacksonville Plan for clean up of contaminated sites, approximately \$1.28 million has been expended.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has investigated potential contamination at Lonnie C. Miller, Sr. Regional Park at great length and determined there are no health concerns in areas of the park that are open to the public. The City's environmental consultant has also completed testing in the surrounding neighborhoods. Upon receipt of the Human Health Base Line Risk Assessment from the EPA, which is expected by the end of the year, the City will develop the Feasibility Study to outline options for addressing contamination in the portion of the park that is fenced off and the surrounding neighborhood.

The City of Jacksonville has recently completed a second round of sampling around the old Bethune Elementary School and has submitted Revision 1 of the Remedial Investigation Report to the EPA. The City expects to receive the Base Line Human Health Risk Assessment from the EPA soon, allowing the City to develop the Feasibility Study. The Feasibility Study will outline the options available for addressing the contamination. The City is continuing efforts to gain access to private properties for the purpose of collecting soil samples.

The City is also working with the EPA on the area around 5th and Cleveland, also known as Emmett Reed Park. The City of Jacksonville is currently completing a second round of sampling and will be submitting Revision 1 of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study in the upcoming months.

The area around Forest Street and McCoy's Creek is another former ash site. The City is completing a second round of sampling and will be submitting Revision 1 of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study in the upcoming months.

The City is working with the DEP on the area around Clydo Road on the Southside. We're collecting soil samples, and we think we will know the limits and characteristics of the contamination by the end of the year.

The area around Pope Place and Gold Merit is also under the direction of the state.

The City submitted a Contamination Assessment Plan to the FDEP, proposing sampling locations to determine the character and extent of contamination at the sites. A public information session was held last month to solicit public comments on the proposed sampling plan. The City anticipates receiving FDEP approval of the plan anytime now, and then we will begin requesting access to the affected private properties and begin sampling. After the nature and extent of contamination have been determined, the City will propose a clean-up plan.

The City's Environmental Consultant is currently responding to a request for additional information from the FDEP regarding the proposed sampling plan submitted this past summer for the area around Burke Street, also known as the Air Liquide property. Once we get FDEP approval of the sampling plan, the City will begin requesting access to the affected private properties and begin sampling.

Through the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund, there is work in progress at Hope Plaza and Moncrief Plaza; construction is underway for the new Harmony Dental in LaVilla; United Optical has finished its move to LaVilla; One Metro North is being rehabbed; and more than 100 façade grant applications have been approved to date, 15 of which are under construction.

Construction is under way on the Range of the Jaguar project at the Jacksonville Zoological Gardens and on target for completion in the spring of 2004.

Mayor Delaney turned the meeting over to Taye Brown, BJP project manager for the Cecil Equestrian Center and Recreation Complex, for an in-depth presentation on the project and a video of the groundbreaking ceremony that was held on November 6, 2002.

Following Mr. Brown's presentation, the committee presented the following questions.

Q. Will there be facilities for residents to board horses at the new facility?

A. No, the barns will be reserved for horses participating in special events.

Q. Who will run the new facility?

A. SMG will be paid a management fee to run the complex.

Q. Will Jacksonville residents have the opportunity to bring their horse and ride at the facility?

A. Not in the Equestrian Center, but there are plans to include trail heads near the new facility for trail riding.

Q. How will hunting impact the new facility?

A. Cecil Field is approximately 27,000 square miles and hunting is limited to a small, secluded area.

Q. Is there an option for more benefits for area residents like horse rental?

A. Currently, the center is not planned to be used as a stable, however, ideas for more widespread use are always welcomed.

Q. Is the center open all year?

A. Yes

Q. Will the Jacksonville Fair move to Cecil Commerce Center?

A. Mayor Delaney expressed his opinion that it is best for the Fair to stay in downtown Jacksonville due to its central location and the infrastructure that is in place.

The next Citizens Oversight Committee quarterly meeting will feature The Preservation Project and will have a representative from the Environmental Clean Up of Contaminated Sites project to answer questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.