Keep Jacksonville Beautiful Commission
Joint Committees Meeting
Wednesday, November 25, 2020
11 a.m.
In-Person and via Zoom

Summary

Present
In-Person: Katie Blandford, Chair
Via Zoom: Chris Buckley, Lauren Christiansen, Von Fuller, Jenna Kobishen, Harry Reagan, Melody Shacter, Caleena Shirley, unidentified I Phone caller

Absent (Excused): Aleizha Batson, Susan Carew, James Cook, Anna Dooley, John Drayton, Jim Love, Margaret Meier, Joyce Morgan, James Richardson, Juanita Senior, Michelle Thomas

Staff
In-Person: Lisa Ransom, Dan Durbec

Call to Order
Chair Blandford called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m. She thanked members for attending.

2021 Meeting Dates/Times
Chair Blandford inquired whether the group wanted to continue the current schedule for monthly meetings in 2021—11 a.m., the fourth Wednesday of every month, except the month of December.

Commissioner Buckley said scheduling the meeting the day before Thanksgiving should be reconsidered.

There was no objection from the group to keeping the current monthly meeting schedule. Meetings will be held 11 a.m., the fourth Wednesday of every month, except December when the date will be determined. The meeting location will be announced.

2021 Florida Department of Transportation Grant Application
Chair Blandford reported that staff is working on submitting a grant application for the annual FDOT Litter Control grant. This year's amount will be $15,000. She noted that one project that could be funded from the grant discussed at last month's meeting included providing trees for a Habitat For Humanity project.

Commissioner Buckley recommended another project—a vegetable garden at a local nursing home. She suggested adding it to the list of projects to be funded by the grant.

2021 Florida Inland Navigation District Grant
Chair Blandford reported that the annual Florida Inland Navigation District grant of $5,000 may be available in the new year and that staff will apply for it.

Commissioner Buckley noted that the grant is the easiest grant to secure because it has less intense deadlines and requirements.

St. Johns River Celebration Cleanup
Chair Blandford reported that the annual event, which is held at more than 25 sites every year, is scheduled for March 20 next year.

Commissioners are encouraged to get involved by volunteering as site captains.

In 2020, the event was cancelled by Covid-19, but there were still cleanups conducted at a few locations that were eligible to be counted as part of Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup that satisfied FDOT grant requirements.

KJB Awards
Chair Blandford asked whether the annual KJB Awards should be scheduled in light of reduced activity due to Covid-19. The event would recognize individuals, organizations, businesses and schools that conducted litter abatement or beautification projects in 2020.

Commissioner Buckley noted that so many large events were shut down by the pandemic and there weren't many corporate cleanups and it would be difficult to find schools that conducted cleanups since they were closed.

Note: There were 177 cleanups in Jacksonville from January 1, 2020 to November 25, 2020. These included individual, organizational, business, church, neighborhood and KJB organized events, including the St. Johns River Celebration, July 5th Beaches Cleanup, International Coastal Cleanup, Right Whale Beach Cleanup and the America Recycles Day Shred/Tree Givewaway event.

Chair Blandford said the consensus of the group was maybe to forgo the awards, but the issue will be further discussed in the December or January meeting.

Committee Chair Appointments
Chair Blandford noted that there wasn't enough time today to discuss committees and committee appointments, but recommended revisiting it in December or January.

Commissioner Shacter suggest a list of committees and scope of duties be produced.

Chair Blandford noted that currently there are three committees: Public Relations & Education, Partnership & Fundraising and Projects. She said the three committees may be reduced to two.

America Recycles Day--Report
Chair Blandford reported the event, which for the first time in its history combined a shred event and tree giveaway with partner Greenscape of Jacksonville, was overwhelmingly good in a way and terrifying with the unexpected amount of material that was collected—more than 23 tons--and the number of participants—an estimated 2,500.

Vehicles were lined up at 6:30 a.m. at the Prime Osborn Convention Center, where the event was held in the west parking lot, and shredding started at 7:30 a.m., an hour and a half earlier than the advertised 9 a.m. start time. Almost all of the trees were given away by 12:30 p.m. and vehicles were still lined up at 1 p.m. when the event closed. Several vehicles had to be turned away.

She said that there was a lot of material that should not have been accepted, but in light of the overwhelming number of vehicles in line, it was more expedient to just accept them. However, she said that discussion is needed to set restrictions on the number of boxes of paper than can be accepted.

Chair Blandford said that the amount of paper also overwhelmed partner Republic Services. The sole shred truck at the event had to be taken off line because it leaked hydraulic fluid and another non-shred truck with dozens of bins filled up quickly and at the end of the event, Republic had to send two additional trucks to collect all of the material.

She noted that Republic employees did a stellar job and praised them for their patience and hard work. She said that she and KJB staff worked until 6 p.m. with Republic employees to ensure that everything was collected, and the parking lot was clean.

Chair Blandford said that the excessive number of participants may have been the result of delaying the event a week because of threats of a tropical storm; people cleaning out their files during COVID-19 and increased awareness with about the event and free trees.

Ms. Ransom noted that the event was also held on a Saturday, when normally it is scheduled for a weekday, so more people participated. She said that because there was no mention of limiting the amount of paper that would be accepted, people abused it, bringing large amounts of materials, some dating back to 2008.

Moreover, it may have been the only free shred event in 2020.

Chair Blandford said that despite the issues, it was a good event and suggested it be held again next November with Greenscape. A post-event meeting will be scheduled.

Right Whale Litter Cleanup—Nov. 7
The Right Whale Beach Cleanup, held Saturday, Nov. 7, drew about 200 volunteers who donated 400 hours to pick up 180 bags of litter along Jacksonville Beach.

Watergoat Offer (Update0
Chair Blandford reported that there has been small movement on the Watergoat issue. Environmental Quality Division Chief Melissa Long provided Commissioner Smith with a list of potential locations along McCoy Creek and Hogan Creek where the equipment, which would be purchased by Surfing's Evolution and Preservation Foundation (SEPF), could be placed.

Once the location is determined, discussion will continue on who will maintain the equipment (volunteers from Groundwork Jacksonville or Riverkeeper) whether Groundwork Jacksonville would sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SEFP since KJB is not authorized to sign contracts, and whether it could be installed on McCoy Creek since there has been talk about opening the creek to kayaking. The Watergroat would impede that activity.

The issue will be discussed at the December meeting.

Other issues
Commissioner Buckley said that the City has placed constraints on Commission meeting activity since it requires in-person meetings now.

Ms. Ransom noted that the requirement of in-person public meetings is mandated by the state of Florida, and not the City of Jacksonville.

Chair Blandford said that KJB will comply, but if members don't feel safe attending in-person meeting they can do so by Zoom. However, for matters, such as the FDOT grant that require a vote, a majority of voting members (7) must be present to vote.

She said the Commission could meet outdoors in an area that would provide adequate space for social distancing.

Commissioner Buckley said perhaps the Commission could meet at a park that has a covered area.

Chair Blandford that there is still some time to set up at a location that allows social distancing. She recommended scheduling the February meeting outdoors.

Ms. Ransom noted that if the meeting is outside, there has to be a hot spot in order to use Zoom.

Adjournment
With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

The next KJB Regular Meeting will be 11 a.m., Wednesday, December 16 in Conference Room 854 of the Edward Ball Building, 214 N. Hogan Street and via Zoom.