



## **Task Force on Consolidated Government**

Jacksonville City Council  
Council Member Lori Boyer, Chair

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING TWO**

#### **Forms of Municipal Governance**

##### **Governance Structure**

We have a Strong Mayor/Council form that relies on separation of powers and a system of checks and balances and assigns executive and administrative powers to the Mayor as well as ceremonial functions and legislative (policy-setting) and budgetary powers to the Council. Our structure is typical of many large cities, and most consolidated governments. A form growing in popularity is the City manager form which may or may not include a Mayor as well. In the City manager form, a professional manager is responsible for operation and takes direction from the Council and Mayor. The system is designed to provide greater continuity and more professional management of day to day operations, as well as reducing political influence on personnel decisions. Opponents contend that the system merely shifts the opportunities for cronyism to the manager.

#### **Jacksonville Then and Now**

##### **Supervisor of Elections Jerry Holland**

- Population of Jacksonville's core city (the pre-consolidation City of Jacksonville) has fallen from 201,000 in 1960 to about 100,000 now
- Overall city population has doubled since consolidation
- Number of voters has tripled because of
  - changing voter eligibility standards (18 year olds now eligible) and
  - registration methods (i.e. motor voter registration when applying for driver's license)
- Jacksonville's minority population has greatly dispersed since the 1960s, from being heavily concentrated in the core city to more evenly distributed throughout the county
- The white population has always been more suburban, and is even less concentrated in the core city now than in the 1960s

##### **Dr. Christopher Johnson, Department of Economics and Geography at UNF,**

- Total employment has increased 2.5 times from 1969 to 2011, almost all in the private sector (governmental employment remained unchanged during the same time period)
- Duval County added jobs faster than the country as a whole during the period, but trailed the growth rate of the rest of the state of Florida.

- Duval County's unemployment rate has tended to be better than both the U.S. and Florida over the past several decades, although unemployment in Jacksonville's old core city area has traditionally been higher than in the rest of the city over that time
  - Since 2008, Jacksonville unemployment has been worse than both the U.S. and FL
- Jacksonville's per capita income has always trailed the national and Florida averages, but that is somewhat offset by Jacksonville's lower cost of living
- Jacksonville's poverty and income inequality tend to be concentrated in the core of the city
- Jacksonville's service and finance/insurance/real estate sectors are the areas of biggest growth since consolidation, while manufacturing has fallen
  - Construction employment, an important factor in Jacksonville's economy, is very cyclical
- Consolidation does have the effect of capturing that wealth flight from downtown to the suburbs, since the suburbs are still part of the city unlike in non-consolidated governments

### Quality of Life in Jacksonville

#### **Ben Warner, President and CEO of Jacksonville Community Council Inc.**

- Jacksonville, as a community, is better off now than it was in 1968, but the results vary substantially by specific measurement and by location within the community
- The school system is now accredited and the graduation rate is improving, even with more rigorous graduation standards
- Most students still attend racially identifiable schools, although the school system is no longer under federal court supervision for desegregation
- Race is still a big issue in Jacksonville, with large disparities on many factors
- Mr. Warner said the 1960s was a time of turmoil and struggle, but visionary leadership saw the prospects for improvement and progress

### Previous Charter Revision Commission Actions

#### **Charter Revision Commissions (CRC) Prior to 2010**

- CRC was a continuously meeting body from the 1980s through the 2000s
- CRCs issued formal reports in 1984 and 1991 and then occasional one-time recommendations over the next 10 years
- Most common issues dealt with by the CRCs
  - City Council size, structure, and method and timing of elections
    - very little change being made in response to those recommendations other than the institution of residence areas for at-large council members
  - Civil Service Board was a big issue in the early years, and has gone from being an elected to an appointed body
    - at one time developed the city's employment rules and then heard appeals of employees about the application of those rules, and was elected primarily by city employees and their families, who were the only voters who knew anything about what the board was or did

#### **2010 Charter Revision Commission**

Task Force member Wyman Duggan, Chair of the Charter Revision Commission 2009-10

- The CRC learned the history of consolidation and took testimony from various stakeholders
- The CRC made many recommendations including
  - Changes to the governance of the School Board
  - Ethics code revisions
  - Requirement to change pension benefits
  - Overriding a mayoral line item veto
  - The timing of elections
  - Mayoral transition accountability
- The CRC also recommended
  - Future CRCs meet for one year
  - JEA should not contribute more to the city
- Some commissioners felt the City Council was at a disadvantage because it could not hire and fire its own attorney, but was subject to whomever the General Counsel (hired by the mayor) would appoint.
  - The Charter does provide that the City Council may appoint a legislative counsel
- Ms. Boyer feels that the Task Force's charge is in some ways broader and in some ways narrower than the charge of the Charter Revision Commission.