

January 23, 2014

The Subcommittee finds that:

Though living in a governmentally consolidated city, many Jacksonville residents think of themselves first as members of a neighborhood.

Through neighborhoods, many residents find cultural and familial affinity, social and economic opportunities, historical connections, and their primary interest in and reason for civic engagement.

Neighborhoods are often self-defined by the residents, only sometimes conforming to specific geographic or legal definitions.

Regardless of whether a neighborhood is self-defined, formally recognized, or legally defined, its residents require a clear path to initiate connection to consolidated government for purposes of affecting policy and planning issues.

In order to more firmly connect its citizens to meaningful governance post-consolidation we make the following recommendations to the Jacksonville city government and the Independent Authorities:

1. That a Neighborhood Advocate be annually (appointed? Elected by the CPACs? Funded but appointed by an independent commission? Identified by a commission and given specific powers but not funded?)

The Advocate would:

Be the central hub for information from the City and Independent Authorities affecting neighborhoods, as well as the central place for referral and tracking of neighborhood issues brought to the COJ/IA's attention.

2. That the COJ /Independent Authorities jointly purchase and deploy a community platform (e.g. Mind Mixer) in order to proactively engage citizens and neighborhoods in planning and proactive decision-making. A half-time position is recommended.
3. That CPACs be reformed into smaller, more meaningful entities with specific purpose, and with power to make recommendations to COJ/IA
4. That the CIP process seek and take into account neighborhood input.