

Mayor Castor's Advisory Teams  
**Development Services Advisory Team – Chair Julia Mandell**  
**Monday, June 24, 2019 at 09:00 A.M.**  
Visit Tampa Bay - Conference Room Suite 2900  
201 N. Franklin Street  
Tampa, Florida 33602

**Transition Lead Carole Post** introduced herself and welcomed the group. Post is Chief Administrative Officer for USF Health and has been tapped to lead Mayor Castor's transition, including facilitating the stakeholder advisory teams who will provide insight and direction for the Mayor's highest priority areas.

**Mayor Castor** welcomed everyone and thanked them for taking the time and effort to be here. She expressed that this issue is critical to moving the City forward and that we are at a critical juncture in writing the next chapter for the City of Tampa and have to make sure that we get it right.

Mayor Castor thanked the transition team co-chairs, former City Council member the **Honorable Harry Cohen** and City of Tampa **CFO Sonya Little**, for helping to direct the Advisory teams.

Mayor Castor recognized **Julia Mandell as Chair** and for bringing a great deal of experience on the topic at hand, both from the city's perspective and from a developer's perspective.

The Mayor emphasized that we are looking for efficiencies in the processes, and to better use technology and the talented staff resources that we have. She indicated that there are staff openings and vacancies in several of the departments.

**Chair Julia Mandell** asked each team member to give a brief self-introduction. Following that, Mandell introduced Chief Assistant City Attorney Ernest Mueller to discuss public record and sunshine laws.

**Chief Assistant City Attorney Ernest Mueller** presented an **overview of Public Records and Sunshine Laws** and explained how each was applicable to this group. He indicated that if any team member has a question about the Sunshine laws or Public Records laws they can contact **Assistant City Attorney III Marcella Hamilton** or **Chief Assistant City Attorney Ernest Mueller**.

Mandell then introduced **Marketing and Communications Director Ashley Bauman** who spoke briefly about the City's '**One Voice**' policy and reminded the group to forward all media requests to her office at (813) 390-7455 or via email to [Ashley.Bauman@tampagov.net](mailto:Ashley.Bauman@tampagov.net).

Bauman alerted the group to the Mayor's Advisory Team web page online at [tampagov.net/t3](http://tampagov.net/t3). The community may now participate by completing an input form online. Carole Post will be providing follow up and a summary to the teams.

**Chair Mandell** introduced City Staff members who were present: Planning, Design and Development Coordination Manager **Catherine Coyle**, Professional Plans Review Supervisor **Dave**

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**Jennings**, Chief Construction Inspector **Troy Chavez**, and Chief Technology Officer **Russell Hauptert**.

**Development Services Current State**

Manager **Catherine Coyle** provided a presentation of the current state of the Development Services Department starting with the organizational structure, a summary of key current vacancies, and a short discussion on the need to maintain staff to meet increasing demand.

Coyle highlighted several ongoing initiatives including 40<sup>th</sup> Street Planning, Transit Oriented Development, use of contract and temporary staff, co-op program & internships, as well as a new digital plan room from Accela.

She also highlighted several immediate challenges including a high vacancy rate, impending retirements, the City's recruitment and hiring process, and limited availability of talent/specialists due to current market conditions. In addition, certain technology challenges existed including the need to improve the inspector application tool and other Accela related modules.

Transition Team Co-Chair Sonya Little reminded the team members that this Advisory process was only for 90 days and the group would need to advise for immediate needs consistent with the upcoming budget process, as well as longer-term planning.

**Technology**

**Chair Mandell** introduced Chief Technology Officer **Russell Hauptert**. Hauptert provided an overview of the Accela software tool, a tier 1 provider with 2,000 customers in many municipalities. This tool provides automation and electronic citizen access.

**Development Services Advisory Team Discussions**

Following the staff presentations, Chair Mandell suggested looking at the organizational charts to better understand the resource challenges and identify where things are not working for customers.

**Advisory Team Member Mike Loomis** of Design Build Outdoor Living stated that they are a frequent user, often needing 10 inspections in a week for 10 to 15 permits at a time. He observed that there could be design flow changes to make things more streamlined. He also observed the need to improve personal/direct communications (not always rely on the software tool).

Another big issue is resubmittals. When going through the approval process if one thing does not get an approval, you have to go back through the whole process. Additionally, there used to be more 'walk-throughs' and now there do not seem to be as many available. It was recommended to streamline the review process and enable touchpoints to get more specific answers to

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questions, including having more direct access to plan reviewers. He sees these as bottlenecks and it comes back to communication. An app would be helpful for inspectors to notify applicants prior to arrival for inspections.

**Cathy Coyle** clarified some details of the process, including the initial 3-day review for submittals to see if you turned in the documents required – a sufficiency review. Some applicants have insufficient filings or incorrect information which slows the process.

**Troy Chavez** spoke about some of the inspection-related feedback. Inspectors cannot take calls while driving so that slows response time; however, they are expected to return calls within two hours.

Chavez indicated that there are 28 inspectors completing up to 500 inspections a day. Comprehensive rough-ins, finals, can include 4 to 5 inspections each. Chavez advised that the industry standard is 14 to 15 a day. He noted that some high rise building appear to be one inspection, however, there may be 20 units being inspected which is obviously more time-consuming.

**Dave Jennings** stated the department was backed up with 40 to 50 new applications coming in a day. Target turnaround time is one to two days to get applications into planning review process. The call center is handling 950 to 1000 phone calls, would like to expand this workforce to be more responsive.

**Advisory Team Member John Diaz** asked if we know of someone that has a good process, and what does that look like? **Chair Mandell** responded the team should look into processes in other jurisdictions and **Russell Hauptert** will look in to the inspection tool that Saint Petersburg uses.

Advisory Team Member **Mary Freeman** (Construction lawyer) stated that it is not clear that we are looking at a process problem, or completely a shortage of people problem. Seems like a bigger challenge of how we are going to fill these positions. This is not a normal everyday average flow. So how do we recruit people to come and work for the City?

Some City customers need training with the Accela tool; should implement regular retrainings to know how to submit properly.

**Thom Snelling** stated that in 2005 staff was 106, now have staff of 63. The pool is shallow. Pay base is generally competitive across other cities, but not against the private industry.

**Advisory Team Member Caroline Bennett** asked why we are having so much trouble hiring.

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**Bob McDonough** stated that after the last downturn of the economy people said they were not going through this again. Now, ten years later there's not enough qualified employees.

**Chair Mandell** asked the team to look at other jurisdictions, what do they do or do not do. Talk to colleagues and bring back stories. Where is Development Services good/weak?

**Next Meeting:**  
**Monday, July 15, 2019 at 09:30 A.M.**  
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Minutes prepared by City Clerk Support Technician Karencia Ciagala