

Mayor Castor's Advisory Teams
Carole Post, Consultant
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

Mayor's Consultant Carole Post introduced herself as the Chief Administrative Officer for USF Health and explained that she leading these advisory teams that will position the City of Tampa to launch itself for a number of great initiatives that Mayor Castor will carry us through in the coming months and years.

Mayor Castor thanked everyone and appreciates that everyone took the time and effort to be here. This particular issue and this group here today is critical to moving our City forward. We are at a critical juncture right here in writing the next chapter for the City of Tampa and we have to make sure that we get this right.

Mayor Castor-thanked both the transition team co-chairs, former City Council member the **Honorable Harry Cohen** and City of Tampa **C.F.O. Sonya Little** for overseeing the many different groups.

Castor recognized **Julia Mandell as Chair**, and that she brings a great deal of experience with this particular subject, from the city's perspective and from a developers perspective.

The Mayor said that we are looking for efficiencies in the processes that we currently have, using technology. We also have staff openings and shortages in our Development area.

Chair Julia Mandell asked each team member present to give a brief self-introduction. (See sign-in sheet for list of attendees.) To begin that discussion she 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

If any team member is not sure or has a question about the Sunshine laws or Public Records laws, please contact **Assistant City Attorney III Marcella Hamilton** or **Chief Assistant City Attorney Ernest Mueller**.

Forward public records requests in a timely manner to our **Marketing and Communications Director Ashley Bauman**.

Marketing and Communications Director Ashley Bauman – “One Voice” – Media Requests

Media Requests

Team Members should forward all media requests to Marketing and Communications

Director **Ashley Bauman** at (813) 390-7455 or via email to Ashley.Bauman@tampagov.net.

Transforming Tampa's Tomorrow

Ms. Bauman advised that the City of Tampa has launched the Mayor's Advisory Team web page, online at 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. City staff is planning Town Hall meetings in each of the districts during this process to allow additional input.

Chair Mandell introduced Planning, Design and Development Coordination Manager **Catherine Coyle**, Professional Plans Review Supervisor **Dave Jennings**, and Chief Construction Inspector **Troy Chavez**, and Chief Technology Officer **Russell Hauptert**, for our current state presentations.

Development Services

Manager **Catherine Coyle** began her presentation by describing the departments it includes and that Supervisor Dave Jennings is over the building permit processing area, and that Chief Inspector Troy Chavez oversees the inspecting of those permits.

This Ms. Coyle made a power point presentation (see attached) to provide is a snapshot of, Development Services and illustrate some of the challenges they are facing, and some of the previous initiatives they went through.

Current initiatives include 40th Street Planning Area, Transit Oriented Development, Contract and Temporary Employees, Co-op Program & Internships, as well as a digital plan room for Accela, and a Design Review & Certified Commercial Site Plan.

Immediate challenges for staffing are a high vacancy count, impending retirements, recruitment and hiring process, and limited availability of talent/specialists due to current market conditions.

Also, need improvements or replacement of inspector application (Accela) and need additional scripting (coding) to improve automation (Accela). Need to update stormwater and transportation code.

Currently have active contracts for contracting staff and have been able to stay afloat because of them. The hiring process takes several weeks to get a list from HR. Losing applicants to other cities.

Transition Team Co-Chair Sonya Little reminded team members that this process is 90 days for this team. Goals may not go into budget, but based on what comes out of this, can project for long-term plan course of action. Need to use today's information as the budget comes out August 1, 2019.

Technology

Chair Mandell introduced Chief Technology Officer **Russell Hauptert**. Hauptert began his presentation introducing team members to the Accela program, a tier 1 provider with 2,000 customers in many municipalities. This popular program provides automation and citizen access. (See power point attached).

Development Services Advisory Team Discussions:

Chair Mandell suggested looking at organizational chart and challenges with staff retiring to begin where are we going to go from here. It is important that we have this discussion of what is not working for customers and give citizens a voice. Need to review and identify regulations.

Advisory Team Member Mike Loomis of Design Build Outdoor Living stated that they pull 50 to 60 permits. Things have changed greatly with needing 10 inspections in a week and 10 to 15 permits at a time. Could use some design flow changes. One of the things that changed with Accela is that communication is lacking. The biggest choke to this department 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. There used to be more walk-throughs and now they have even taken that away. It would be nice to streamline the review process. It is hard to get answers. Same day review permits now go to reviewers. No direct access to a plan reviewer just to ask a question. 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 explained that the initial 3-day is to review submittals and see if you turned in the documents required – a sufficiency review. Some information is insufficient or bad information and then we get a call from the applicant saying they have been in review for three weeks. Plan review is the same cycle

Troy Chavez addressed the issues about the inspectors. He stated that most do not take vacations as much as they deserve. Inspectors do not drive and answer calls. They respond every two hours, to call back every four hours.

There are 28 inspectors completing up to 500 inspections a day. Comprehensive rough-ins, finals, can include 4 to 5 inspections. Chavez advised that the standard is 14 to 15 a day and 15 a day would be comfortable. If working downtown and you have to inspect a high-rise, it will show up as one inspection and there may be 20 units being inspected.

Dave Jennings stated the department was backed up with 40 to 50 new applications coming in in a day. Initially is now one to two days to get in to planning. The call center is handling 950 to 1000 phone calls. Staff cannot answer. Staff consists of 17 to 18 retirees with specialties, years of experience and skill set and we have four openings.

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 needs to look at two sides of this process. Look at processes in other jurisdictions. As for technology, **Russell Hauptert** is to look in to the app that Saint Petersburg has.

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. Construction is booming. This is not a normal everyday average flow. It is extreme. So how do we pull people to come and work for the city, is probably key to solving this problem. If we are able to do that then maybe it is just needs minor tweaks.

Some City customers need to training with Accela. Implement this retraining to know how to submit properly.

Thom Snelling stated that in 2005 staff was 106. We now have staff of 63. The pool is shallow. Kimberly Crum at HR has never not approved hiring at a higher rate. Pay base is competitive. Competing with Pinellas, Saint Petersburg and Clearwater and resources is a piece of it.

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

Bob McDonough stated that after the last downturn of the economy people said they were not going through this again. Now, ten years later, and everybody is scrambling not enough qualified employees. Deal with trade schools takes several years before they are fully functional.

Development Services Advisory Team Tasks

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 09:00 A.M.

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Minutes prepared by City Clerk Support Technician Karencia Ciagala