

Call to Order: Rescheduled A & P Commission Meeting - City Hall - #1 Municipal Drive

The Jacksonville Advertising and Promotion Commission met at their regular meeting place on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Chairman Sundermeier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Council Member Ray delivered the invocation and led a standing audience in the "Pledge of Allegiance."

Roll Call: Commissioners Sandra Patel, Jai Patel, Kayla Hawkins, and Council Member Reddie Ray answered roll call. Chairman Roger Sundermeier also answered roll call and declared a quorum. (5) Present (1) Absent (1) Vacant

Others present for the meeting include: City Attorney Stephanie Friedman via Zoom, Recording Secretary Emilia Vazquez, Finance Director Cheryl Erkel, Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Kathy Perez, Director of Economic Development Robert Birch, and Daniel Gray.

Approval and/or correction of minutes: Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins to *approve* the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of February 20, 2024, as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Financial Report: Director Erkel presented the financial report for the period ending March 31st, 2024. She stated Assets of \$1,758,123.00, clarifying that under Liabilities, Accounts Payable should be \$83,536.54, which is the Hotel/Motel and Prepared Foods taxes due to Parks & Rec, plus the \$150.00 in Accounts Payable. She read from the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures showing Total Revenues at \$174,778.00, Total Expenditures at \$107,526.00, and Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures at \$67,252.00. She noted the next two pages are backup documentation to support the aforementioned figures in the report. She explained for comparisons, Hotel/Motel Gross Revenue for February was \$214,118.00, which was a decrease of 30% year-to-date and a decrease of 30% compared to February 2023. She related that Prepared Foods Gross Revenue was \$4,088,298.00, which was a decrease of 9% year-to-date and an increase of 4% compared to February 2023. She concluded that Overall Revenue was \$4,302,416.00, which was a decrease of 11% year-to-date and a decrease of 6% compared to February 2023.

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Commissioner Jai Patel to *approve* the financial report for March, as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Old Business:

New Business: a. Funding request: \$99,999.00 Herk Legacy Award @ LRAFB Heritage Park LRAFB Community Council President Daniel Gray

Mr. Gray stated the Little Rock Air Force Base (LRAFB) has a \$1.8 billion impact on Central Arkansas with a lot of people who come through making a significant impact on our Country. He explained that General Schwartz is the first honoree, who went on to be a four star General and Chief of Staff, noting there are numerous individuals who will be honored in the future who came through LRAFB. They would like to recognize them and the impact the LRAFB has on Central Arkansas, along with the history of Jacksonville supporting the LRAFB. He related it will bring in a lot of people from around the Country for the ceremony itself, but it is also like a historic landmark that will serve as promoting LRAFB and Jacksonville. He believes it goes along with the A & P Commission's mission. He confirmed if it is under \$100,000.00, the Commander of the LRAFB can make the decision, but if it goes above, it has to go to the Air Force, which could take some time. He told how they are working through the budget now, hopefully keeping it under \$100,000.00. He mentioned possibly doing a phased approach, noting August 16th is the date for the first award winner, so he would like to have it constructed and ready to go by then.

Attorney Friedman inquired if it would be accessible to the public and if Heritage Park is on the LRAFB.

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Mr. Gray confirmed yes to both inquiries.

Chairman Sundermeier related that it would be accessible during air shows and public events when the gates are open.

Mr. Gray explained that Heritage Park is the center hub if visitors come onto the LRAFB. He pointed out that civilians would have to get a pass and go through the proper protocol, depending on the DEFCON level at the time. He mentioned that Heritage Park is designed for visitors to come on Base.

Chairman Sundermeier inquired about the branding the A & P Commission gets, noting we cannot put our stuff on the Base, but there is a lot of ancillary pieces to go along with it.

Mr. Gray told how the LRAFB Community Council cannot put their branding on the installation, but during the ceremony and advertisements for the event, the A & P Commission will be recognized; nothing being permanent on the monument/memorial, as an Air Force rule.

Chairman Sundermeier supported the request, mentioning quality of life, quality of place, and things we can own. He explained the A & P Commission and Jacksonville can own this; we are not going to have to share the spotlight with neighboring communities, even though they are impacted by the Base. He reiterated it is a chance to own something, and in the spirit of the digital boards we just purchased going a long way for the City, this would go a long way. He related there are a couple of other things they have they want to do that will be bigger impact projects.

Commissioner Hawkins and Council Member Ray showed their support for the project.

When Attorney Friedman inquired, Mr. Gray clarified that it would be an interactive memorial that you can walk through to see displays and plaques on the walls, with the current honoree in the center. He explained on the back wall, it will have the history of the LRAFB and the Herk. He told how there will be benches and lighting, and it will be part of Heritage Park; providing a place to congregate. When Attorney Friedman asked if the A & P Commission would own the entire memorial, he replied that the LRAFB would; there would be no name on it, but it would be the Herk Legacy Award for the LRAFB. He reiterated they cannot put Jacksonville A & P Commission on the memorial itself, but the LRAFB was created by Jacksonville citizens who bought and donated the land to the Air Force Base. He brought up that the LRAFB is in Jacksonville, and the men and women who come here make an impact on the world through their influence in Jacksonville.

Chairman Sundermeier brought up that the A & P Commission logo can be on press releases, etc., but not on the property.

Mr. Gray concurred, saying it is the same way with the air show; whenever they sponsor it, you cannot have your signage on the air show, but it is on the documents and pamphlets that go out. When Attorney Friedman inquired, he reiterated that the A & P Commission will not own the land.

Attorney Friedman referenced ACA §27-75-606, saying when funds are used for public recreation facilities, or for advertising and promotion, the City has to have an ownership interest in the property that it is on; that is why we had issues with the Military Museum and could not help them with their capital improvements.

Chairman Sundermeier mentioned putting it out near the Education Center and C-130.

Mr. Gray confirmed that is not owned by the City either.

When Mr. Gray brought up donating to the air show in the past, Attorney Friedman responded that we were not building a facility or a permanent fixture.

Mr. Gray related they are giving out an award and part of the award is having a place to recognize it. He confirmed they are pouring concrete, signage placed, and an actual award given to the honoree who will travel from wherever they live. He stated there will be a ceremony and people will come to town, etc. He believes we have done things in the past, such as donating to the LRAFB for their events, and this is an event that is going to be on Base, hosted and owned by the Community Council.

Chairman Sundermeier suggested providing the financial resources for the award itself, not necessarily the construction, etc., but give money for the creation of this award and event.

Attorney Friedman concurred, saying if we are not building a structure, paying for, or providing a general subsidy for this structure to be built, but are paying for the award itself, it is justifiable. She pointed out that what he is proposing and what she is picturing in her head may be completely different. She confirmed if they are just pouring concrete, doing an award, and having a memorial, that is different than building a convention center. She noted the statute is more for a facility, but this is not.

Chairman Sundermeier requested clarification that they are funding the creation of the award itself.

Attorney Friedman stated that pouring concrete is different from what she was picturing in her head, because she was thinking of an actual structure; if it is not a structure, but just a slab of concrete and a little memorial, that is different.

Mr. Gray noted it will be a concrete wall on top of the sidewalk where the awards will be displayed and signage about the LRAFB will be hung. He confirmed it would not be a building, but would be a decorated concrete walkway with a wall the awards will be hung on.

Director Erkel suggested funding the actual ceremony and the publications for it, etc. She believes it would go more smoothly since the A & P Commission is for events to bring people into Jacksonville.

Chairman Sundermeier believes the event is going to be the main draw of it anyway, and the award itself. He noted they did not sponsor an event when they approved the digital boards, but they thought it was a good idea to help promote Jacksonville, and this is in the same spirit.

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins to *approve* an expenditure up to \$99,999.00 for the creation of the Little Rock Air Force Base Legacy Award and event. *Motion carried* unanimously.

b. Discussion/approval: \$25,000 annually for Placer.ai contract

Director Birch stated when you are dealing with economic development, or any kind of regional recruitment, one key aspect is data. He explained with Jacksonville, Census data is not conducive to growth, telling how it is antiquated in how it is gathered, so they need to look at newer forms of data. He related that Placer.ai can pull data three days old and can produce heat maps of where people are coming and going. He recalled the first time he looked at it, they did a heat map study of the Argenta Downtown area in North Little Rock where it was incredible to see where people were coming and going. He mentioned they were able to start target marketing growth for downtown and learned most people were coming from West Little Rock, Jacksonville, Cabot, and Searcy to their restaurants, therefore, they found out where to market. He said sometimes you do not know who your audience is until you have data. He brought up retail recruitment and attraction and event analysis where when we have events, we can tell where people are coming from so next time we have a similar event, we can market to those people.

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Chairman Sundermeier related it would be better than counting cars and multiplying them by four to assume how many people attended.

Director Birch explained it can give accurate forecasting for next year of how to plan events, what to put into it, the staffing you need, or help get hotels prepared. He mentioned sales tax estimation and analyzing public investments. He confirmed they do not have to buy separate licenses, so whoever they want to have access to it can. He then brought up marketing, workforce analysis and business attraction, and supporting local businesses by targeting retail gaps. He recalled in a demo that Jacksonville is losing \$55 million a year in grocery sales outside of the City, with 90% of it going to Kroger in Sherwood, according to the heat map. He pointed out that they can also see how much of your citizens are going out of your city to work and how many people are coming into work from other areas, noting one of our local big businesses has very few Jacksonville residents working for them. He told how this will help us target workforce development training if they are unable to fill the jobs here, then we need to do better training our people. He added that it also judges what your city is fit for and Jacksonville was a 95% match for a Steak n' Shake. He related that we are having a lot of leakage with people going to North Little Rock and Little Rock restaurants and this would give us the ability to look at certain ones. He shared that they are attending the International Council of Shopping Centers event in May and they cannot go in with Census data showing a \$43,000.00 median income in this population, because some will not even consider those under a 50,000 population. He surmised the data could show 30,000 people a month going to North Little Rock to eat at restaurants similar to theirs, and if they had one here, it would be packed. He mentioned working on a project for the City's 220 acres south of town where he needs to be able to pull data from something in West Little Rock to see where their people are coming from, and if they are from Searcy, Cabot, Jacksonville, and North Little Rock going that far, then it makes sense for them to locate here. He confirmed they have the ability to do it with the data and it could help Parks, the City, the A & P Commission, and himself, since he is involved in all. He brought up that when you look at everything you can pull out of this that almost every department can use, the \$25,000.00 fee is nothing.

Chairman Sundermeier noted that if one big business relocates here, it pays for itself many times over.

Director Birch confirmed the \$25,000.00 is paid once a year. He added that Census data pulls Jacksonville, but what we really should be pulling is zip code data, because that takes us to almost 40,000 people in the 72076 zip code. He brought up working on three grants currently, with a \$20 million infrastructure grant being the main one, where he needs as much data and information as possible to help the process. He concluded that this would be like having a separate staff and it adds so much to what we can do as a city.

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Commissioner Jai Patel to *approve* the expenditure of \$25,000.00 for an annual contract with Placer.ai. *Motion carried* unanimously.

Chairman Sundermeier pointed out that the Commissioners have a list of businesses delinquent on A & P taxes provided by the Finance Department.

Announcements:

- a. May 4: Market Madness
- b. May-August: Food Truck Fridays

Adjournment: With no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:36 p.m.