

File #250288 creates “A substitute ordinance relating to the creation of a City Hall campus emergency preparedness committee.” This file designates a committee that is redundant and unnecessary, replicating the work underway through MCO 340-21. Additionally, this new file addresses serious employee safety issues both ineffectively and slowly. Notwithstanding my concerns, I am returning this file unsigned because it creates a public forum to highlight the great work our City departments have been doing, work which already includes representation from the City Clerk’s Office.

Ever since the police response on May 15, 2025, my administration has been working steadily to address employee safety risks, identifying opportunities to improve and implementing solutions. This work group includes the Fire Chief, multiple members of the Police Department, the City Clerk, The Director of Employee Management, the Commissioner of Public Works, the Director of Employee Relations, the Mayor’s Chief of Staff and numerous managers in city departments with responsibilities to address employee safety. It is puzzling that a very similar membership was identified as the participants for this file.

As discussed at the committee hearing, these individuals have and will continue to work actively on the same issues the “city hall campus emergency preparedness committee” (CHCEPC) is expected to address. Pursuant to open meeting laws, this means a majority of these individuals cannot be a member of the CHCEPC as their communications would create a “walking quorum.” Accordingly, there will need to be designees who are not affiliated with the established work to participate in the CHCEPC.

In addition, the CHCEPC proposes to deliberate on “specific types of emergencies, including plans for evacuations or sheltering.” It is wholly inappropriate for any public discussions about evacuation strategies for emergencies, such as active shooter and suspicious package events. While closed session is an option, so many of the functions of the CHCEPC involve non-public discussions, that most of the meetings would not be public, which replicates the work already underway.

The existing workgroup has made considerable progress already. This includes soliciting and receiving employee feedback, developing a learning management system, refining the employee separation policy, improving communication among public safety entities during emergency incidents, streamlining how 911 calls relayed to City Hall security and boosting the Code Red System. The CHCEPC, by contrast, meets every two months with a final report in September of 2026. That is an illogical timeline for a critical issue. Further, our workgroup’s efforts involve all employees, including the thousands that do not work at the City Hall complex. The scope of the CHCEPC, for an unknown reason, is only limited to our employees at the City Hall complex.

Ultimately, it is important for these efforts to be communicated so that our employees, including our elected officials, have a forum to ask questions and discuss our collective progress. To that end, while the CHCEPC does not serve to demonstrably improve our offices’ public safety and it is redundant of another ordinance, I am leaving this file unsigned in order to allow for another public forum for our departments’ thoughtful and productive efforts.