

# Dane Eagle selected next DEO executive director

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[Photo: Jax Daily Record]

JAX

# JEA HQ developers lobby up, hire Lenny Curry political advisor

Lobbying has only begun for JEA HQ developers.



By [A.G. Gancarski](#) on April 4, 2019

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In a surprise to cynics citywide, JEA on Tuesday bucked **Shad Khan** and his proposal to build the new headquarters at the stadium's Lot J. Instead, they went with a proposal to build on Adams Street in the heart of downtown with the Ryan Companies.

JEA will lease the property for 15 years, per the accord reached by the board Tuesday. One major condition remains: Ryan Companies has to get the property from the city.

To that end, Ryan enlisted two well-connected lobbyists.

**Tim Baker**, the political consultant for Mayor **Lenny Curry** and his political allies, may be the most interesting name for a statewide audience.

Also now on board: **Steve Diebenow**, one of the most proven land-use lawyers in Jacksonville's City Hall.



These hires should help to close the deal, which some worry could be derailed by Khan's Cordish Companies and their representative, **Paul Harden**.

Ryan reached out to Diebenow within minutes of the JEA Board decision, and Diebenow brought Baker in. Less than 24 hours after the vote, both were on board, informed sources say.

Baker, who is part of Curry's inner circle, is uniquely well-positioned to make the case. Paul Harden and the Jaguars are as close as almost anyone to City Hall. But Baker is Curry's political operation personified.

Baker and Diebenow will join **T.R. Hainline** and **Cynthia Trimmer** on the account,

These hires should help to close the deal, which some worry could be derailed by Khan's Cordish Companies and their representative, **Paul Harden**.

Many assumed that the Khan proposal was the default favorite. However, the scoring

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matrix (both with and without votes from members of the board) put Ryan ahead of the competition.

One suspects that, despite Curry and Khan being aligned on most key issues, Baker's presence will ensure the project stays on track.

The Ryan project will be nine stories tall. A parking garage will be part of the build.

JEA will be on the hook for \$6.4 million in rent at first, with prices going up every year from there. The project should be done by summer in 2021 if all proceeds as expected.



Written By

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