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**JACKSONVILLE
WATERWAYS
COMMISSION**

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June 3, 2004

9:00 a.m.

The monthly meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, June 3, 2004 in the City Council Chambers, by the Chair, Council Member Lynette Self.

The minutes of the May 6, 2004 meeting of the Commissioner were approved and the Chair directed that the minutes be posted on the City's website.

Waterways Coordinator/Dockmaster Steve Nichols provided the Commission with an update on port security. Port cities are mandated by the Security Act to make ports more secure. A facilities/vessels security plan has to be approved by June. The new security measures components of the Facilities Security Plan have impacted commercial ports greatly. Jacksonville applied for Public Access Facility status.

Elizabeth Kohler, Administrator, Preservation Project Jacksonville, made a presentation on the Mayor's Preservation Projects in Ordinance 2004-478. The administration sees a new phase in the Preservation Project. Earlier, we acquired lands. The goal now is to make those parks accessible to the public and to move from having the biggest park system to the best park system.

The St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Fish & Wildlife and the federal government are all working together, linking the various parcels acquired to create a network of hiking, biking, trails and the life. The whole area of the Timucuan Trail is viewed as one big park. Ms. Kohler remarked, in her PowerPoint presentation

on Jacksonville's forests and parks, particularly the Jax-Baldwin Rails to Trails; the Southside's Beach & Peach Preserve; the Julington-Durbin Creek Preserve in

Mandarin; and the Thomas Creek Preserve on the Northside bordering Nassau County.

Commissioner Bailey urged the administration to undertake an extensive marketing campaign to let the public know about these projects and how the public can access and enjoy them. The Chair recommended that the administration involve Council Members Alvarez and Davis, in whose districts the projects are located, in the brainstorming for future use of the projects.

Commissioner Grey raised the issue of Jaxport's plans on berthing vessels adjacent to the Timucuan Preserve. On a vote of 7-0, Ordinance 2004-478 was recommended for approval.

Barbara Goodman, National Park Service, made a presentation on White Shell Bay. The remarks and observations that she provided were in written form, as well, in a June 3, 2004 letter to the Chair. Copies of the letter were distributed and available to the public. Ms. Goodman observed that re-establishing tidal flow is the key concern, that there were negative aspects in opening creeks. The Park Service's recommendation, based on research provided by tidal-hydraulic experts in the National Parks Service is to maintain the current hydraulic position and *not* open the culverts as had been proposed. If the culverts were open, pollutants would come in from the St. Johns River. The Timucuan Preserve gets fresh, clean water from the Fort George River. She suggested that there were a number of reasons not to dredge. That the training wall contributes to the siltation of the bay. In response to Commissioner Lowe, Ms. Goodman said that the Park Service had no position on the possible removal of the weir. Commissioner Bryan raised the question how can the federal government have a say on White Shell Bay when National Parks Service does not own it or abut it?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' representative stated that the National Park Service cited only *one* reason why Corps does not support dredging White Shell Bay. The reasons as to why the Corps recommends discontinuing work at White Shell Bay are from an environmental, eco-restoration standpoint and concerns about navigational issues.

It was suggested that a meeting be called for all parties concerned to ascertain what questions should be addressed concerning White Shell Bay issues. The Chair said that she would set this meeting up.

Bob Baughman, Director, Parks, Recreation and Entertainment Department, provided the Commission with an update on the Southbank & Arlington River Dredge projects. The original bids came back too high and were rejected. The projects were re-bid a second time. These are the two FIND grant projects. Phase I was financed two years ago, \$32,000 for each project. The second bids were too high and the bids were sent out for the third time. The bids that came back, from the same bidder on previous bids, were too high. Director Baughman is proposing new legislation. Proposing that \$54,400 come from the Florida Boating Improvement Fund carryover, \$39,000 from the Park Amenities account and \$73,000 from another accounting source that would total the \$166,000 needed to fund the Southbank River dredge project. On a motion to support this legislation conceptually, the vote was unanimous. On the Arlington River dredge project, the initial bids came back too high. Legislation is proposed to acquire \$55,000 from the Florida Boater Improvement Fund and \$431,721 from the Florida Boater Improvement Fund boater registration fees. The vote to support his legislation conceptually was unanimous.

Dr. Quinton White provided the Commission with the monthly manatee update.

There has been a concern about the recent lack of rain, which impacts aquatic vegetation.

The lack of aquatic vegetation causes the manatees to move around more in search of food and this results in more accidents. In the last month, there were two (2) manatee deaths reported, the cause of both deaths undetermined. There were a record number of manatees sighted in the May 20th aerial. A map on the May 20th survey was distributed and made available to the public.

On proposed legislation before the Council, the Commission took the following actions:

Ordinance 2003-1132, changing Manatee Protection Motorboat Speed Zone from Year-Round to Seasonal, the Commission voted to recommend deferring the legislation.

Ordinance 2004-478, Preservation Projects, voted to recommend approval.

Resolution 2004-490, Establishing Downtown Jax Large Vessel Docking Riverwalk Rules & Regs, repealing Reso 92-1708-255, voted to recommend approval.

Resolution 2004-496, Amendment #3 w/ JPA re Dredge & Dredge Material Disposal Use, voted to recommend approval.

Ordinance 2004-583, Approp for Preliminary Dredge Surveys for Williamson Creek & Ribault River/Clyde Drive Projs, voted to recommend approval.

Commissioner Anderson provided the Commission with an update on SAIL Jax.

Commissioner Lowe proposed a resolution proposing that Council funding be made available for a new outboard motor for the Riverkeeper's boat, the Kingfisher. Jacksonville Marine Association would donate \$1,000, if the City appropriated funds. Commissioner Pitman said that Jacksonville Marine Charities was prepared to donate \$1,000, as well. A resolution was proposed to have Greg Radlinks, Office of General Counsel, draft a resolution to recommend that the Council appropriate funds for a new motor for the Kingfisher and to accept the \$2,000 contribution. The Chair suggested that the legislation should be in the form of an ordinance and that the funding source could be the Florida Boater Improvement Fund in an amount not to exceed \$20,000, and that any funds not spend revert back to the fund. Commissioner Bryan felt that having the Council appropriate funds for the Kingfisher's new motor would set a bad precedent, that private funds should be raised for the cause. The Riverkeeper said that he would move forward to start a private fundraising campaign. Commissioner Lowe withdrew his resolution.

Waterways Coordinator/Dock Master Nichols reported that the issues regarding the water taxis complying with new regulations had been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. In the aftermath of the incident in Baltimore's inner harbor that resulted in fatalities, the Coast Guard had announced the need for new requirements for the certification and inspection of water taxis.

The next meeting of the Waterways Commission is scheduled for August 11, 2004.

A special meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was held on Thursday, July 8, 2004, in the Renaissance Room, City Hall to address the issue of the demolition of the old Fuller Warren Bridge. The City Council had approved (June 22,

2004) a resolution, sponsored by Council Member/Waterways Chair Self, that urged the Florida Department of Transportation to cease and desist plans to dispose of the dismantled bridge's debris into the St. Johns River and urging FDOT to remove the debris to a landfill.

A copy of the Florida Department of Transportation's June 21, 2004 letter to the St. Johns River Water Management District was distributed. The FDOT letter provided a synopsis of FDOT's proposed demolition plan. The letter indicated the department's intention of placing concrete into the river. Jim Knight and Terry Zinn discussed FDOT's proposed demolition plan in a PowerPoint presentation. David Miracle of the St. Johns River Water Management District told the Commission that SJRWMD was comfortable with FDOT's plans, application and extension of the department's permit (the permit originally issued in 1995 to demolish the bridge). Explosives would be used only during cold weather when manatees are not expected to be in the vicinity. John Hall, representing the United States Army Corps of Engineers said that FDOT's contractor violated its permit by disposing concrete debris/dischARGE into the river, that this action violated the Clean Water Act. Lt. Cdr. Runnells of the United States Coast Guard indicated that the Coast Guard approved the demolition of the bridge but opposes discharging the debris into river.

Public comments were offered by Andy Johnson, Jerry Bass, Wes Plimpton and Leslie Goeller.

Commissioner Lowe moved that the Jacksonville Waterways Commission endorse Resolution 2004-712-A. The Commission voted unanimously in endorsing the measure.

Dr. White observed that the sediment being dumped into the river has found its way into the river's many tributaries.

John J. Jackson
Council Research Division