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**JACKSONVILLE  
WATERWAYS  
COMMISSION**

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JACKSONVILLE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

August 11, 2004

9:00 a.m.

The monthly meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 11, 2004, in the City Council Chambers, by the Chair, Council Member Lynette Self.

Dave Kaufman, Rick Ferrin and Tony Orsini of the Jacksonville Port Authority updated the Commission on the proposed site of a new cruise line terminal. Rick Ferrin, the Port Authority's Executive Director, provided the Commission with background information on the Jacksonville cruise line business. The business started 20 years ago. Four years ago, the JPA was contacted by Carnival Lines expressing an interest in making Jacksonville a home port. Jacksonville is viewed by the industry as a good drive-to market city/port. Royal Caribbean expressed an interest in Jacksonville, as well. The initial cruises were very successful. Initially, the Port Authority only had the Ed Austin terminal at Dames Point. Jacksonville needs to be looking for vessels in the 2,000+ passenger range. There is the need for a permanent cruise line terminal east of Blount Island, to service the Carnival and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. Dave Kaufman addressed the issue of where we, as a port city, need to be in the future. The terminal currently used is at capacity. The Port Authority has been looking at sites from the mouth of the river to the Dames Point Bridge. The site currently proposed by JPA merits support because it is deep water, there is adequate access to it, security reasons, the site is uplands and the cruise lines are favorably disposed to the site. As the new, proposed site abuts the Timucuan Preserve, JPA is sensitive to the environment issues involved.

Barbara Goodman, National Park Service, voiced concerns that trouble her agency. The agency opposes the location for the new terminal. On the location issue, the site is within the national park preserve. The parcel of land is in the Timucuan Preserve Special Management area. There have not been any studies for other, alternative

sites. Ms. Goodman observed that according to Mr. Ferrin, the current terminal has been an extremely successful venture. Ms. Goodman further contended that the Port Authority has made its decision on a site without any input from the local community, the National Parks Service or the Jacksonville Waterways Commission.

It was noted that there are 46,000 acres in the Timucuan Preserve and that the Jacksonville Port Authority was seeking 100 acres for a terminal site.

Tony Schultz and Jim Herndon of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority updated the Commission on the Wonderwood Project Run-Off situation. In Wonderwood Phase 3, the JTA had sought to put a retention pond on the site. The Environmental Protection Agency did not approve of the JTA's proposed retention pond. C/M Self expressed concerns about run-off from the Wonderwood project going directly into Jones Creek untreated. JTA has proposed compensatory drainage as an alternative mechanism to treat run-off at other sites, off-site.

Commissioner Tullis reported that the Run-Off & Water Quality Subcommittee's work was moving along. References were made to the written, condensed report of the committee's chair, Commissioner Anderson.

Margo Moehring, Planning Department, briefed the Commission on a Comprehensive Plan Manatee Text Change. Ordinance 2004-515 required changes in the text of the Comprehensive Plan Manatee Text that is submitted to the Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee. Terminology has changed, language has changed and the language needed to be updated and clarified to reflect those changes. While the content of the original manatee plan is intact, terminology has changed.

In his monthly update on Manatees, Dr. Quinton White reported that there has been a rash of manatee deaths since May. A total of twelve deaths. 4 were water craft related deaths, 4 perinatal deaths, one watercraft related death was at Goodby's Creek, one water related death at Cummingham Creek near Julington Creek. The Goodby's Creek incident is troublesome because we are building a marina there. There have been 4 manatee deaths since May. If there is a fifth death, a Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission review is automatically triggered. Dr. White recommended increased enforcement in the Goodby's Creek, Julington Creek and Ortega River System. These are the areas of greatest concern. Commissioner Bailey shared his concerns and observations regarding boaters that ignoring the no wake and slow speed zones at Goodby's Creek in the vicinity of Hooter's on the weekends. Enforcement of the speed zones by the Marine Patrol and JSO is imperative. Commissioner Tullis proposed that the City Council pass a resolution that urges JSO and the Marine Patrol to look into the speeding problem, reducing the speed at Goodby's Creek to idle speed. The Chair indicated that she would write a letter addressing these concerns to the Sheriff. The Chair also announced that she would have a resolution drafted for the City Council thanking Officer Eminisor for his good work in marine patrol over the past ten years. Commissioner Bryan raised the question: do we need more Marine Patrol officers to enforce the laws that are already on the books? Are our officers diverted for Homeland Security work?

On pending legislation, the Commissioners voted again to recommend that Ordinance 2003-1132, changing manatee protection motorboat speed zones from year-round to seasonal, be deferred.

On old business, the Commission was advised that the administration (Public Works Department) felt that the proposed dredging of the Arlington was too expensive. The administration will proceed with the Southbank dredging project.

Commissioner Pitman appraised the Commission on the work of the Bluebelting subcommittee and announced that the next scheduled meeting would be August 24<sup>th</sup>.

The Chair announced that while she was in Halifax for the end of the tall ship race, a number of Sail Jax participants complimented Jacksonville as a host city for its hospitality and outstanding work.

In public remarks, Mr. Jeff Regan of Mandarin brought to the Commission's attention a siltation problem existing at Tacito Creek, a mile south of the Buckman Bridge in Mandarin. Residents are having problems getting their boats into the water (i.e., into the creek and then onto the river). The channel is silted up; grass beds have been destroyed; manatees no longer frequent the area. It was suggested that Mr. Regan meet with the ecosystem subcommittee and that he look into the possibility of a special assessment undertaking with his neighbors. Mr. Regan will put together material (with pictures) for a presentation at the next Waterways Commission meeting.

John J. Jackson  
Council Research Division