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**JACKSONVILLE  
WATERWAYS  
COMMISSION**

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JACKSONVILLE WATERWAYS COMMISSION  
August 4, 2005

The monthly meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was called to order Thursday, August 4, 2005, at 9:00 in the Council Chamber by the Chair, Council Member Lynette Self.

The minutes for the June 2, 2005 Waterways Commission meeting were approved.

Bob Swett, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Fisheries & Aquatic Science, the University of Florida, made a PowerPoint presentation on the Florida Sea Grant Boating and Waterways Program. Dr. Swett discussed how the Florida Sea Grant program was established in 1988 as a result of federal legislation, that the federal government provides 50% of the program's budget, that the program was a partnership with the Florida Department of Education, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Florida citizens. There is a Florida Sea Grant coordinator at all Florida public universities. The program's mission is to enhance the state's resources and management issues such as habitat impacts, boating safety and education. The program's goals and objectives entail creating a balance between conservation management systems. Management systems (design and implementation), policy initiatives and project elements were described and discussed. Creating a Recreational Boating GIS was a joint project between Florida Sea Grant and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission to ascertain who boaters are, the demographics.

On Pending Legislation, the Commission **deferred** any action on **Ord 2003-1132**, Amending Ordinance Code to Change Manatee Protection Motorboat Speed Zone from year-round to Seasonal. The Commission **deferred** any

action on **Ord 2005-475**, amending the Ordinance Code to prohibit fishing from posted City-owned property. The Commission heard from Lisa Rowe of the Mayor's Office and Fidelity National's Vice President for Construction, Harvey, on

**Ord. 2005-503**, authorizing a Land Swap Agreement between Fidelity & the City for the "Gefen Riverwalk Park, and proceeded to recommend **approval**. The Commission recommended **approval of Ord 2005-705**, Authorizing the execution of a Sovereignty Submerged Lands Lease Renewal with the Fla Dept of Environmental Protection for Submerged Land at Metropolitan Park for 03/13/05 thru 03/13/2010 and recommended **approval for Ord 2005-741**, Amending Ord Code to clarify the Commission's authority over tidal waters in Duval County. The Commission recommended **approval** (with Commissioner Grandin abstaining) of **Ord 2005-784**, authorizing Agreement for Sale & Purchase with the Trust for Public Land and appropriating \$3,555,000 to acquire land for "Jax Zoo Improvements" project. After hearing remarks from JEDC Deputy Director Jeanne Miller, the Commission recommended **approval of Ord 2005-788**, authorizing a Development Agreement between the City, JEDC and South Shore Group Partners to support construction of a riverwalk at 841 Prudential Drive. The Commission recommended **approval of Ord 2005-789**, waiving dockage fees for SS Christopher Columbus for 24-hour Port Visit in November, 2005.

Commissioner Bailey remarked that the Commission is seeing bills *after* the fact. He further opined that there needs to be a greater role for and presence of the Waterways Commission in the deliberations of JCCI (cited as an example) and that body's recent study: River Dance.

Paul Crawford, Acting Director and Steve Nichols, Waterways Coordinator, Parks, Recreation & Entertainment Department briefed the Commission on Docking Fees in the Mayor's Budget for Metro Park. A discussion followed. Mr. Crawford underscored the point that Metro Park is *not* a marina, that dockage at Metro was driven by events such as the Jazz Festival, football games and baseball games. Metro is not regularly staffed. A handout was provided detailing the proposed fees in the Mayor's budget measure. The proposed fees would generate \$176,775 that would not have to be taken out of the General Fund, as we currently do.

Waterways Coordinator Steve Nichols opened the discussion on River Signage, with Dave Hankla, Florida Fish and Wildlife, fielding Commissioners' questions. Problems cited were that signs are incorrect, signs are in the wrong places. Numerous examples were given. There is considerable confusion surrounding the signs in the waterways (e.g., Ortega River, the mouth of the Arlington River, around Exchange Island). Of particular concern were the signs placed at the Ortega River at the bridge and the piling that was left above the water line. This is a potential hazard to boating and the Commission strongly urged Florida Fish & Wildlife to remove these signs as soon as possible. The City is willing to use our contractor to do the job and have Florida Fish & Wildlife reimburse the City. The main goal is to remove these hazards. A lot of erroneous and misleading information is being disseminated to boaters regarding signage and manatee zones.

In his monthly Manatee Update, Dr. Quinton White reported on the most recent aerial inspections that showed 128 manatees in the St. Johns River

and 10 in the Introcoastal. There had been 2 watercraft-related fatalities in July, one on the 22nd north of Blount Island near Sisters Creek, another where cause was undetermined. IN 2004, there were 15 fatalities, 5 of which were watercraft-related.

Margo Moehring, Strategic Planning, Division Chief, Planning & Development Dept., reported on Minor Revisions to Manatee Protection Plan & the Manatee Forum. The June (Forum) meeting was a stakeholders forum that addressed boaters & manatees.

A handout was distributed providing the status of FIND Funding of Dredging Projects. The Commissioners were provided with a copy of a July 15, 2005 e-mail from Dan Cronrath of Parks & Recreation Department to Council Member Self. Council Member Self feels that because we are losing funding for Ortega, we should ask FIND for 75% funding for other projects.

Commissioner Grey announced that LandMar is interested in a transient dock facility downtown and will discuss the matter further with Commissioner Grey's subcommittee once LandMar's consultant is in place.

Commissioner Lowe proposed that a resolution be approved by the Commission commending JSO Marine Unit for their great coverage during the July 4th holiday. The Commission approved the proposal and directed Greg Radlinski, Assistant General Counsel, to draft the resolution.

Since the City is concerned about the loss of fueling places (like the one lost in Mayport), Commissioner wondered why the City discontinued the fuel operation at Sisters Creek when the City took over Sisters Creek?

The issue of parking for the Commissioners was raised in view of the fact that the Commissioners can no longer park in the JEA parking facility across the street from City Hall.

During public comments, the Riverkeeper raised the issue of 3 inspector positions that focus on the run-off problem are being slated for elimination owing to the budget. Urged the Commission to protest this by contacting the Mayor's Office. The issue of live-in boating was raised because of the concern about waste and refuse being deposited into river and its tributaries.

The next scheduled meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission is Thursday, September 1, 2005, Committee Room A, Ground Floor, City Hall, 9:00 a.m. The meeting has been moved from the Council Chamber because of the Council Finance Committee's budget hearings and deliberations.

John J. Jackson  
Council Research Division