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**JACKSONVILLE
WATERWAYS
COMMISSION**

JACKSONVILLE WATERWAYS COMMISSION
September 1, 2005

The monthly meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was called to order Thursday, September 1, 2005, at 9:00 a.m. in Committee Room A (Ground Floor, City Hall) by the Chair, Council Member Lynette Self.

The minutes for the August 4, 2005 meeting were approved.

Alan Mosely, Director of Public Works and Janice Eggleston Davis, Director, Environmental Resource Management Department, provided the Commission with an update on inspectors' cross training in Public Works. Cross training inspectors was a recommendation of the Water Quality Subcommittee a year or so ago. The two departments are now working in tandem, having Public Works staff working with Environmental Resource Management in efforts to stem the flow of construction materials and contaminants from construction sites that find their way into creeks and other waterways (and ultimately, the river). Director Davis explained the proactive undertaking and initiatives to identify violations at construction sites throughout the County (roadways included) and the process of enforcement and the issuance of citations and fines. Questions were raised as to what to do when violators turn their pumps on over the weekend when inspectors or other staffers are not available to answer complaint calls.

Ebenezer S. Gujjarlapudi, Division Chief, Environmental Quality Division, Environmental Resource Management Department, made a presentation on sediment control & the CPAC Presentation that his division is taking on the road. Mr. Gujjarlapudi cited the effects of sedimentation (soil washing into rivers and creeks and turbidity (the muddying) on creeks, wetlands and storm drains that result in the destruction of plants, the loss of wildlife, and the degradation of aesthetic and recreational value of the environment for humans. The Environmental Quality Division is engaged in efforts for sediment and erosion control, to prevent sediment and

turbidity of creeks, tributaries and storm drainage systems that drain into surface water bodies. His Division makes routine inspections and investigates citizen complaints. Various methods of sediment, erosion and turbidity control such as the use of hay bales, silt fences and soil berm were explained. In their CPAC presentation, the Division discusses who they are and what they do, an organization chart of the department and its various divisions, the Environmental Protection Board, its make-up and charge, and how citizens have input in raising complaints and reporting violations of regulations that adversely affect our environment and quality of life.

Dana Morton, Aquatic Biologist, the City's Environmental Resources Department, made a presentation on Algae issues, the recent bacterial bloom phenomena on the river, in particular. The problem, causes and preventive measures were discussed. The green algae bloom so visible this summer on the river is the result of high temperatures of the water, the considerable sunlight on the river in our region where the river is expansive and the river's nutrient content. The algae releases a toxin that is harmful to people and animals. As such, concern was raised as to what degree was the public being made aware of the nature and danger of the algae. It was reported that out-of-towners were seen putting their watercraft in water where the algae was prevalent, seemingly oblivious to the danger. The River Keeper, Neil Armigeon, felt that we were not doing enough to publicize the danger of the algae, that we needed to post warnings and information.

Dr. Aaron Hilliard, Duval County Health Department, noted that information was being distributed to schools that were located near waterways where there were significant algae. Commissioners observed that more information needed to be disseminated to those areas where there were recreational boating and other water-related activities, starting with boat ramps. A main cause of the algae bloom is the result of nutrients pour into the river, whether from storm treatment plants, industrial sites (Georgia-Pacific in Palatka was cited as an example) or housing along the river. The costs of removing nutrients to a level beneficial to the river's health would be exorbitant, with costs soaring to hundreds of millions of dollars, according to Jim Maher of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Such an undertaking would entail the use of TMDLs (total maximum daily load) as a tool to determine how to reach an acceptable level of nutrient run-offs at various segments of the river.

Steve Nichols, Waterways Coordinator, Parks, Recreation & Entertainment Department, made a presentation on the Docking Fees in the Mayor's Budget for Metro Park & proposed Ordinance 2005-475 - Prohibiting fishing from Posted City-Owned Property. Paul Crawford, Acting Director of Parks & Recreation joined in the presentation and Q & A on the proposed docking fee issue. The Commission and public were provided copies of the Mayor's proposed docking fees and a proposal that the Commission's Chair, Council Member Self, came up with that entailed a \$1.00 fee per foot docking fee. Using the Mayor's budget model criteria, the Council Auditor's Office calculated the revenues that would be generated by the Self proposed docking fees and it resulted in revenue of \$52,005. The Commissioners discussed the issue at length. Commissioner Grey suggested that the City delay instituting the docking fees. Commissioner Bryan proposed that a new subcommittee be formed to study the matter, with Commissioner Grandin voicing agreement. A motion was offered recommending that the Commission not support the docking fees, deferring the matter for a year to allow a study of the issues in committee. The motion carried by a unanimous vote. Greg Radlinski of Office of General Counsel was asked to draft a resolution to the City Council expressing the Commission's position. A sub-committee was named to study the matter (Grandin, Grey & Pitman).

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A new Sub-committee on boater fees was announced. The sub-committee consists of Commissioners Grandin, Bailey, Lamb and Pitman.

A public hearing was held to provide the public with an opportunity to weigh in on the proposed docking fees for Metro Park. There were numerous speakers. Those in opposition to the docking fees cited the lack of amenities at Metro Park such as restroom facilities and access to electricity and water. Some speakers indicated that they could be supportive of reasonable docking fees if there were some of the amenities like electricity and restrooms that other area marinas provided.

Skip Cramer (JCCI Executive Director) and Ted Pappas made a presentation on the Jacksonville Community Council Inc.'s study, River Dance: Putting the River in River City. (Summer 2005). The report focused on the environmental, economic and recreational impacts on the river, public access issues, balancing competing issues, oversight of the river, engaging the community and the efforts needed/required to protect the St. Johns River. Among the recommendations of the study proposed strengthening the role and presence of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission.

Mike Hartman, head of the Urban Core's CEPAC, made a presentation on Hogan's Creek & the Development of Urban Park that entailed Urban Core's vision of a sprawling urban park centered around a revitalized, healthy Hogan's Creek. The Urban Core CEPAC seeks the Waterways Commission's recognition and support for their vision for Hogan Creek and the efforts needed for the Creek's environmental cleanup. The Urban Core CEPAC would like to have a financial commitment for Hogan's Creek placed into a study underway by JEA. Commissioner Bailey indicated his willingness to work with Mr. Hartman on this issue before the Waterways Commission makes any recommendations. Commissioner Bailey stated that there are already several entities working on this issue.

In his monthly update on manatees, Dr. Quinton White of Jacksonville University reported that on an aerial flight on August 10th, 61 manatees were sighted in the St. Johns River and on August 24th, 42 were seen. Visibility is a factor; if the manatees are not on the surface, they are not seen and counted. Four manatee fatalities were reported in the last month, though the causes are still uncertain.

On pending legislation, the Commission voted to recommend **deferral** on ORD 2003-1132, amending Ordinance Code to change Manatee Protection Motorboat Speed Zones from Year-Round to Seasonal. The Commission voted to recommend **deferral** on ORD 2005-475, amending the Ordinance Code to Prohibit Fishing from Posted City-Owned Property.

A subcommittee to study water re-use will be announced later.

The Chair announced that the signs in the Ortega River that the Commission found hazardous to boating had been removed by Florida Fish & Wildlife at the request of the Commission.

The next scheduled meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission is October 6,

2005.

John J. Jackson
Council Research Division