



## **Jacksonville Waterways Commission Lynette Self, Chair**

The monthly meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was called to order Thursday morning, January 12, 2006, in the City Council Chamber, by the Chair, Council Member Lynette Self.

The minutes for the November 10, 2005 meeting were approved.

John Pappas, Chief, Public Works Department's Engineering Division, addressed issues regarding the opening of Goodby's Creek Boat Ramp. The question was raised as to whether or not there was a tentative opening date? Mr. Pappas replied that we had come close to opening, that while most of the infrastructure work had been completed, there still was some work that needed to be done to the pedestrian ramps adjacent to the actual boat ramp. As the contractor was completing some of his work, the pedestrian ramps began to settle, a condition that is unacceptable. Mr. Pappas indicated that the City has gone back to the design architect and contractor. There is a new plan to reconstruct the two pedestrian ramps and that until that work is completed, the boat ramp should not be opened. When asked the cost of the work, Mr. Pappas replied: \$400,000. The entire project cost was in the neighborhood of \$1.7 million. Commissioner Lamb inquired whether or not borings had been done before the project started. Mr. Pappas replied that yes, borings were a part of the design package. A cofferdam had been built around the area. The contractor had driven the cofferdam down instead of cutting it and it is believed that the resulting vibrations and movement were the main reason for the settling. Commissioner Grey asked if there was any possibility of using floating docks for pedestrians instead of the fixed, permanent docks? Mr. Pappas replied that we are going for the fixed, permanent docks, that is what the original design called for, it was what we bid for. Commissioner Bailey indicated that he had not been eager to open the boat ramp facility since dredging was not scheduled until August or September 2007. There is still a problem with putting 45+ boats in the facility. At low tide, there will be problems with manatees. The buoys are out and they work. The boat ramp

looks really good; the problem is with the amount of traffic. Council Member Copeland shared Commissioner Bailey's views and concerns regarding traffic as a problem. Our task is to educate the boaters. Commissioner Lowe asked if we are looking at design changes for the boat ramp? Mr. Pappas replied that the plans that we have now are different than what we actually built. Commissioner Lowe indicated that the Director of the Public Works Department had advised him that there would be no need for additional funding to correct the problems at the facility. Mr. Pappas replied that the Director, Alan Mosely, is correct, that the contractor is responsible for completing the project in accordance with the plans. There had been finger pointing between the design people and contractor. Mr. Pappas indicated that the contractor was not interested in the same design that we had; the City went back to our consultant who came up with a modified design that the contractor felt comfortable with. We revised the design but the City's responsibility has been met. We are now waiting for the contractor to meet his responsibility. In answering Commissioner Lowe's question on whether or not we are obligated to put more money into the project, Mr. Pappas replied in the negative. Mr. Pappas indicated that the dredging aspect of the project notwithstanding, we were moving forward with the Goodby's Creek Boat Ramp project. Commissioner Lowe announced that at the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the FIND subcommittee, funds for the dredging project would be discussed.

Dr. Quinton White provided the Commission with the monthly Manatee Update. The new manatee brochure was distributed. The brochure had been mailed to County boaters. Dr. White announced that there are not many manatees around. On the last two aerial flights, no manatees were sighted. There was one reported manatee death in December, in Craig Creek, the result of cold stress.

Dan Cronrath, Recreational Planner, Recreation, Parks & Entertainment Department provided the Commission with a FIND report, mentioning the aforesaid January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission's FIND subcommittee. He noted that the deadline for application for FIND projects is March 31<sup>st</sup> (the date that the applications are due back to the Commission). In response to Council Member Mia Jones' inquiry on the status of the Charles Reece boat ramp project, Mr. Cronrath indicated that there were remediation issues with the Environmental Protection Agency that have to be resolved.

On pending legislation, **ORD 2003-1132**, amending the Ordinance Code to change the Manatee Protection Motorboat Speed Zones from Year-Round to Seasonal was **deferred**. On **ORD 2005-1511**, appropriating \$80,000 from proceeds of City's Excise Taxes Revenue Bonds auth by Ord 2004-998-E, Chuck Rogers Pk Drainage Proj Funds to fund completion of construction improvements to Mandarin Pk Boat Ramp, the Commissioners voted to recommend **approval**.

In New Business, Paul Crawford reminded the Commission that with Steve Nichols' departure, the position of Dock Master is open. The department has received several applications. Mr. Crawford explained the announcement and hiring process (civil service rules are the guidelines). The application has to go through Human Resources. The application deadline is January 20, 2006. Certified applicants will then be interviewed.

Commissioner Grey informed the Commission that the United States Coast Guard had a study of the St. Johns River underway and that the Commission should be on the distribution list to be kept abreast of the study's findings and receive the results of the study. Commissioner Grey further noted that Palm Valley has had a series of meetings of resident associations that recommended making that area of the Intracoastal a slow speed zone. Though outside of Duval County, Commissioner Grey noted that a number of Duval County boaters frequented the Palm Valley area and that Duval County boaters ought to have some comments or input at the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Chair, Council Member Self, noted the inclusion of the Mayor's Growth Management Task Force: General Government Committee *River & Water Quality Draft* in the Commissioners' packet of material. It was announced that the Subcommittee on the Metro Park Dock would forgo meeting until the Mayor's Task Force met and acted.

Commissioner Copeland reported that it had recently been reported in the news that a Right Whale calf had been found dead at the mouth of the river. Dr. Pinto indicated that he was unaware of the causes of this fatality.

The next scheduled meeting of the Waterways Commission is Thursday, February 2, 2006.

John J. Jackson

## Council Research Division