



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Foundation for 450th goes to City Commission

Management of our city's 450th anniversary will be shifted to a community-based non-profit foundation with expected approval by our City Commission Monday. The regular session begins at 5 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall.

"The code of silence will be lifted," Mayor Joe Boles told a steering committee appointed last year by the commission, as he won its approval to disband in favor of a foundation. As a government-appointed body, the group of regional leaders was unable to discuss commemoration plans outside of periodic meetings.

City Manager John Regan told the group the shift "moves us from the conceptual to the developmental and implementation phases." He said that, with commission approval, the steering committee will be formally disbanded, an agreement executed between the city and foundation, and the city will provide \$275,000 to the foundation as "seed money." Jamie Alvarez, 450 program coordinator, will be shifted to the foundation.

Attorney and former St. Johns County Chamber Chairman Don Wallis and Jacksonville businessman and city resident Colin Bingham developed the foundation plan, similar to that of the Jamestown 2007 commemoration. Regan said with City Commission action at its regular meeting Monday, "the foundation will begin its work Tuesday, reaching out to governments, the community, and businesses."



Tall ship may winter here

The 78-foot schooner [Lynx](#), 2008 American Sail Training Program winner, may be wintering in St. Augustine's bay.

Vice Mayor Errol Jones will present the possibility to fellow commissioners Monday. If arrangements are worked out, the tall ship would be here from November through February.

The heritage of the Lynx dates back to the War of 1812, when the original was commissioned in the opening days of the conflict. Because of their swiftness and maneuverability, schooners were effective as blockade runners and offensive weapons.



Constitution 1st commemoration

"St. Augustine will be the official American center for the 200th anniversary of the Spanish Constitution of 1812," Mayor Joe Boles said at Wednesday's meeting of the 450 steering committee.

"We have the only known constitution monument that survived orders that they all be destroyed with the return of monarchy in 1814."

Boles said a Spanish delegation is expected to join in this first commemoration phase March 19, 2012, little under two years away.

A year later comes the 500th anniversary of Ponce de Leon's discovery of Florida, followed in two years by St. Augustine's 450th.

Photo: Constitution Monument

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Riberia landfill project estimated at \$850,000

City commissioners Monday will consider an \$850,000 request from reserve funds for a six to nine month project to complete riprapping and capping a former landfill at the end of Riberia Street.

The project was required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection after portions of the landfill were disturbed during efforts to develop a maritime park.

City Manager John Regan estimates \$600,000 to \$1 million was saved on the project through agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation to use rubble from the temporary Bridge of Lions for the riprapping.

Panhandling, rentals on Monday's agenda

A wide-ranging agenda for Monday's City Commission meeting includes a public hearing on an ordinance to regulate short term rentals, a strategy to reduce aggressive panhandling, the process for selecting a new city clerk, and a new residential parking zone - three spaces along Shenandoah Street.

Police Chief Loran Lueders will brief commissioners on ideas to deal with aggressive panhandling.

City Manager John Regan will report that four internal (city staff) applications and numerous external applications have been received to succeed City Clerk Karen Rogers, who retired in July.

The proposal on short term rentals is for registration with the city and a limit of less than 20 at a gathering.

Support for Castillo center, in-town post office

Commissioners Monday will consider resolutions supporting direct transfer of state land to the National Park Service for a Castillo orientation center - without a city obligation, and for downtown postal service - without the distribution center.

The Castillo center resolution is an effort to persuade the state Internal Improvement Trust Fund (governor and cabinet) to transfer a quarter acre of state land in the Colonial Spanish Quarter without requiring the city to repay the state for the land, which may be recommended by a state advisory panel. That panel will meet to shape its recommendation August 13.

A long-standing plan has been to couple the state land with city-owned land for a Castillo orientation center site.

The resolution supporting a downtown post office responds to concerns that the entire facility might be moved to the Ponce de Leon Mall on US 1, while officials envision only the regional distribution center and its trucks being relocated.

Mission seeks city artifacts

The Mission of Nombre de Dios hopes to add a dozen city artifacts to the exhibits in its new museum, opening September 4 during Founder's Day ceremonies.

The request for temporary loan of early Spanish period artifacts will be presented to commissioners Monday.

In his letter to City Archaeologist Carl Halbirt, Mission Director Eric Johnson said the museum "will consist of exhibits which tell the story of the founding of St. Augustine and the eventual missionary effort that followed. The artifacts identified . . . will assist in enhancing that story."

City attacking Davis Shores 'red water'

Plans to replace a main water line along Flagler Boulevard - described as a backbone of the area's water system - were outlined Thursday in an open house for Davis Shores residents - many dealing with discolored water caused by rusting pipes.

Public Works Director Martha Graham said the Flagler Boulevard project, estimated at \$300,000, will begin in September, with completion by Thanksgiving at the latest.

"We're dealing with 100-year-old cast iron and galvanized pipes," Graham said before the gathering in an Alcazar Room lined with displays of target areas. "We have the \$300,000 for the Flagler Boulevard project, a backbone of the system, but a total upgrade would cost \$1 million. We just have to keep doing what we can as funds become available."

Graham noted that many homes have galvanized water lines, and recommended homeowners consider replacing them.

History's Highlights

San Mateo joins Florida mutinies

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our 450th, researched by George Gardner

5 years, 1 month, and 3 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary

Word of preparations for mutiny at St. Augustine, within months of Pedro Menendez' founding in 1565, spread to San Mateo, the French Fort Caroline earlier seized by Menendez.

There the plan was to launch a sizeable galley left by the French. The rebels "would finish the ship, burn the fort, and kill any who oppose us." Since their superiors in St. Augustine had yielded to the spirit of mutiny, what could *they* do?

Late one afternoon in the first week of March, 1566, the fregata *La Concepcion* arrived in St. Augustine with a cargo of corn, meat and wine, and a message from Pedro Menendez: he would return within three weeks with more supplies. This precipitated the crisis. Now the rebels had to act quickly; another ship with supplies had been put into their hands, the better to support their escape.

When Pedro Menendez' letter was read at San Mateo, mutiny leader Gutierre de Valverde declared, "To the Devil with (future) supplies! We want to leave this land!" Then he and Juan de San Vicente, two leading spirits of the mutiny, went to St. Augustine to be in on the final act there.

First, the rebels seized the fregata and imprisoned the loyalist leaders. Next, they began to load the fregata with arms from the fort. San Vicente vowed that he would put everyone aboard: "sick, well, or crippled, dogs or cats." Now they awaited the coming of the vessel from San Mateo.

At that northern outpost, 128 persons were loaded aboard the galley. The vessel dropped downriver toward the St. Augustine bar, but remained anchored there. It was later reported that some of their sails had accidentally burned, and repairs held up their departure.



At St. Augustine, as the rebels puzzled over the delay, Fort Commander Pedro de Valdes managed to work free of his bonds and free and arm the other prisoners. They seized the small boat in which the remaining mutineers were about to embark. These, including Sebastian de Lezcano, then surrendered.

Valdes was quick to work justice. As soon as Lezcano confessed his guilt, Valdes issued an order for his execution. That same night, Lezcano was taken out of the fort jail with a rope around his neck, and led with it to the public gallows. There he was hanged with placards at his head and feet proclaiming his twin crimes of mutiny and treason.

At first light the next day, Valdes had a fort gun trained on the fregata. The mutineers' ship moved closer to the bar, so Valdes put a twelve-hundred pound artillery piece in a boat and went after the rebels. Coming near the ship, Valdes requested the mutineers in the name of God and King to put back into port, and not leave the city without supplies, lest those in St. Augustine die from hunger. The rebels' response was to cut their anchor line and sail away.

Second of three accounts from Eugene Lyon's

[The Florida Mutineers, 1566-67](#)

Next: Menendez' martial law

Image: Fort Caroline 1564

The St. Augustine Report is published by the Department of Public Affairs of the City of St. Augustine each Tuesday and on Fridays previewing City Commission meetings. The Report is written and distributed by George Gardner, former St. Augustine Mayor (2002-2006) and Commissioner (2006-2008) and a longtime newspaper reporter and editor. Contact The Report at gardner@aug.com

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