



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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LED lights for parking facility?

Proposal can save \$103,000 a year on electric bill

Our City Commission Monday will consider applying for an energy efficiency grant for LED lighting in our Visitor Center parking facility - a change City Chief Operations Officer John Regan says can save \$103,102 a year in energy costs.

The resolution is on an agenda that also includes new ordinances restricting parking of certain types of commercial vehicles and trailers on residential streets and establishment of a floodplain management code. But public hearings on vending bans are expected to dominate the commission's time.



Why those lengthy public hearings?

Expect lengthy public hearings Monday on ordinances to ban vending and solicitation in the west garden of Government House, Anderson and Ponce de Leon circles, and at King and Malaga streets.

It won't necessarily be public comments extending the hearings, but rather city staff testimony supporting the ordinances.

"The findings required for most ordinances need not rise to this level," City Attorney Ron Brown says. "But these ordinances are restricting - by time, place and manner - the right to

Vending bans face hearing

Ordinances to ban vending and performer activity in the west garden of Government House and Anderson and Ponce de Leon circles and at King and Malaga streets will go to public hearing and final action Monday.

City Attorney Ron Brown forewarned commissioners as they advanced the ordinances that the ordinances include "substantial findings of fact which will require testimony and evidence" during the hearings. That translates into necessarily longer hearings.

Also facing public hearings: an extension of alcohol service hours at 2 a.m. - the ordinance would expire July 12 unless extended at that time by commissioners, and elimination of use criteria for existing non-residential structures in floodplain management.

Parking facility lighting

Chief Operation Officer John Regan says a plan to convert sodium lighting in our parking facility to Light Emitting Diode (LED) panels "would provide an annual energy cost savings of \$103,102."

The cost to convert that lighting in the 1,200 parking space facility - operating 24 hours a day - is estimated at \$300,000, but our city would contribute only \$50,000 with the \$250,000 grant.

Regan said technology with the LED system will also allow lighting to be turned off in unused zones. The grant would come through the Florida Energy and Climate Commission as a federal stimulus Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.

If you look closely when stopped at a traffic signal, you'll likely see LEDs, a conversion in our traffic light system several years ago.

free expressive activities protected by the first amendment. The courts reviewing such ordinances usually require extensive findings."

Police, fire, and public works staff will put testimony on the record supporting reasons for the ordinances, such as impeding traffic flow and emergency access, creating visual clutter/blight, and impacting the historic character in the Plaza area.

These public hearings will be longer, but can save hours of court hearings and legal expenses to our city, Brown says.

Echo House, noise code reports from city attorney

City Attorney Ron Brown will update commissioners Monday on Lincolnville's historic Echo House, which is being upgraded under an unsafe structure citation and may be converted into a private school, and on our city's noise ordinance.

Commissioners asked that he determine whether the noise code protects hotels as well as residences from late night revelers.

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Parking bans proposed in residential areas

Commissioners will consider advancing to later public hearing an ordinance "to prohibit the parking of heavy commercial vehicles, recreational vehicles, boats, and trailers" in residential areas. The proposed ordinance cites a list of vehicle types in Florida's statutes.

Weeding out, seeding in a better community

Weed & Seed, another of our community organizations quietly strengthening West Augustine, is weeding out crime and seeding positive community assets. Target of a recent steering committee meeting: a West King Street food mart and anticipated cyber café, aggravating problems with loitering, parking, and the like.

The concern, Community Redevelopment Agency Chair Greg White notes: "cyber cafés ... in reality are on line gambling, having a negative effect on the residents as they are frequenting more and most are 25 and under and include single moms on public assistance."

Greatest power of Weed & Seed in attacking crime: it's a federal program, with stiffer penalties. County attorney Pat McCormick notes, "There is big difference in the amount of time served on a sentence with the feds compared to the state."

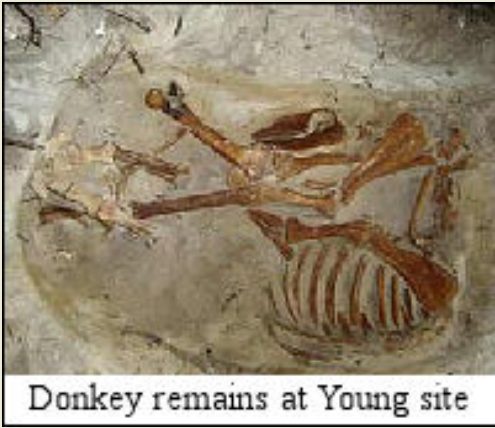
Seeding includes a Kids Safe Zone Afterschool Tutorial Program with 23 youngsters 5 to 10 years old, under the tutelage of mentors funded by a Weed & Seed grant. And St. Paul Pastor Ron Rawls has expanded a Young Men and Women of Excellence program from middle schools to St. Augustine High - "at the kids' request."

"You would be amazed at the things that are happening in their lives that aren't normal," Rawls says. "Of the 30 in one group, 18 wanted to tell their story about issues such as abuse in the home." Rawls' character-building sessions include some fun outings, and a mandatory dinner parents have to attend.



Oldest history found at Young (Avenue) Site

The name may be Young, but its history goes back more than 3,500 years, based on investigations by City Archaeologist Carl Halbirt and his volunteer team.



"Three distinct periods of occupation are represented, each era associated with Native American group," Halbirt says. "The periods are: Late Archaic (circa 3,500 years ago), Woodland (500 B.C. to A.D. 900), and 17th century First Spanish."

Investigation of the 15-acre "Young Avenue Site," immediately west of the Alligator Farm along Old Quarry Road (originally Young Avenue), was triggered by remodeling plans for three properties on the site. Any land disturbances in our city's archaeological zones prompt such studies, with property owners paying a nominal fee based on an estimate of their construction costs.

Beyond the earliest periods of Native American occupation, Halbirt found artifacts verifying First Spanish Period activity (1565-1763), including ceremonial burying of a donkey, carbon-dated to the 1670s when coquina quarrying was under way to build the Castillo de San Marcos.

The complete story is in the archives <http://digstaug.org/archives.cfm?mode=details&id=4> of the city's new archaeological website, www.digstaug.org.

History's Highlights

Admiral Menendez' greatest victory on land

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our commemorations, drawn from research by George Gardner

Spain's Pedro Menendez and France's Jean Ribault were both accomplished seamen - the best their countries could send to secure a foothold in this new land of La Florida. But in the third week of September, 1565, it was Menendez' judgement that won the day.

Ribault, sent to reinforce France's struggling Fort Caroline near today's Jacksonville, and Menendez, charged with establishing a presidio and " ... if there be settlers or corsairs of other nations not subject to us, drive them out," were well aware of each other's presence that early fall.

Each set about planning an attack as storm clouds darkened the sky. Ribault saw it as an opportunity to sail 40 miles south and trap Menendez' fleet in the St. Augustine harbor. Menendez, perhaps sensing how severe this storm would be, established this land's first militia to protect the settlement while leading his troops overland, through swamps and marsh in driving rain, to a virtually defenseless Fort Caroline.

Ribault's fleet of eight ships and 350 men was storm-driven past St. Augustine and shattered along the shoreline some 15 miles south of the settlement.



Father Grajales' memoir was published in *Old South Leaflets* Volume IV, Boston, by the Directors of the Old South Meeting House, and can be found at [Early Americas Digital Archive](#)

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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