



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Mica confident of Amtrak funding Assurances at area officials' joint session

Congressman John Mica said Monday he is "almost positive" that \$268 million for Amtrak commuter rail service along our east coast will be included in the next round of federal stimulus funding.

He made the comment as area officials gathered in a joint session to outline their needs. Everything from State Road 9B in the northeast to land acquisition in St. Augustine Beach and Main Street in Hastings was covered - Mica noting that the deadline for filing requests is less than three weeks away, February 26.

On the Amtrak plan, which would use FEC rails and create stations in eight cities including St. Augustine, Mica said "they picked the biggest numbers" in the first round.

Meanwhile, the Florida Department of Transportation is looking at an alternative source, \$2.5 billion in the U.S. Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act. Nazih K. Hadda, FDOT passenger rail development manager, said these funds will be available this year.

Multimodal transportation was high on Mayor Joe Boles' list, as he pointed out both Greyhound and Sunshine Bus systems now have stops at our Visitor Center, "and a train station a short distance away can make a strong multimodal network."



County Administrator Michael Wanchick (left) and Darrell Locklear listen to Mica report.



Cycles welcome at Visitor Center

The sign is up and the southernmost entry narrowed to accommodate motorcycles in our Visitor Center (VIC) parking facility.

Among those thrilled at the adjustment: employees of the facility.

"Four of our six employees ride motorcycles," VIC Manager Sharon Langford says.

Under the plan, bikers pay a flat \$4 to

City explains Salt Run mooring ball removals

City commissioners Monday night called for public notices ahead of mooring ball removals, following complaints that 15 to 20 of the balls were removed in Salt Run last weekend.

Jay Bliss, a Port and Waterway Authority commissioner and co-chair of the SPARS (Sailors, Paddlers And Rowers of St Augustine), said he contacted the city after learning the balls were being removed, and was told they are being held in storage. "But the ordinance states that the city shall attempt to give reasonable notice," he said.

City General Services Director Jim Piggott explained to commissioners that only balls without boats were removed, "and there was no way of identifying who owned them."

The removal is part of the city's program to develop mooring fields under the Harbor Management Plan approved in December.

Piggott said public notices and letters to registered owners will be provided before any further removals in Salt Run and our bayfront.

He said the mooring field timeline includes opening of a reservation period June 1 - beginning with waterfront property owners; completion of private mooring ball removal by July 1, and six to eight weeks of mooring field installation beginning July 5.

Under the plan, 178 moorings will be installed, including 80 in Salt Run,

park - \$2 for ParkNow card holders, and exit around a shortened gate at the manned exit station.

"There hasn't been a lot of activity with the lousy weather," Sharon says, "but we expect a lot more as it warms up, and of course during the bike weeks."

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and 28 north and 70 south of the Bridge of Lions.

Sunday stays sacred in alcohol code

Commissioners Monday advanced to public hearing a proposed ordinance to change the weekday opening hour from 7 to 6 a.m. but rejected any adjustment to the 1 p.m. Sunday opening time. Vice Mayor Errol Jones and

Commissioner Don Crichlow both spoke to the traditional values of Sunday worship.

Commissioners also passed a ban on parking heavy commercial and recreational vehicles and boats and trailers in residential areas.

Commission eases style in one HP district

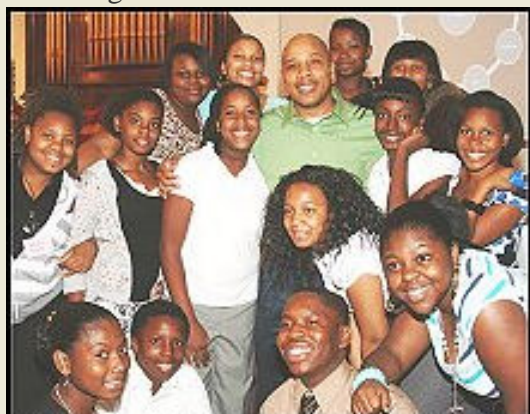
Commissioners Monday agreed to allow alternate building styles in Historic Preservation (HP) District 1, south of our Plaza, and that HP 3, north of Hypolita Street, remain Spanish colonial, but took no action on what City Attorney Ron Brown called the "battleground," HP 2, between Hypolita and Cathedral Place.

It was this district Commissioner Don Crichlow suggested should be loosened to allow new construction reflecting other documented eras in our city's history. Crichlow, an architect, had proposed a reprise of the 20th century Bishop's Building, a large commercial structure, in the Bank of America parking lot.

Our Comprehensive Plan, which underlies our city codes, calls for Spanish colonial style throughout these districts, but Brown said an earlier study identified more than a dozen different styles in the HP 1 District. Crichlow will work with city staff to better define building designs to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

Friday night venue for our youth

Reacting to recent concerns about youths gathering on St. George Street and restrictions set by the Ponce Mall and Epic Theaters, Pastor Ron Rawls' St. Paul AME Church is inaugurating a monthly "Street Light" program beginning next Friday at West Augustine's Solomon Calhoun Center.



**Rawls with Youth of Excellence
(photo: spotted.staugustine.com)**

"I've had enough of our children being pushed away from our local venues as they attempt to gather and socialize," Rawls says. "Instead of running them off, we have made arrangements with the Solomon Calhoun Center for a safe and positive environment to socialize every second and fourth Friday from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m."

Rawls, who developed a Youth of Excellence program with our school district, helped carry out a highly successful weekend evening program last year at the Ketterlinus gymnasium that attracted more than 100 middle and high school youths.

"We have about 50 volunteers to oversee the program," Rawls said. "Our biggest need now is sponsors for food and drinks each night. That cost will be about \$150-\$200 each night.

"The activity is free, safe and positive. We'll have music, basketball, games, socializing, and dancing. No drama allowed," he adds. School ID will be required.

Rawls' notice to the community ends with, *"If we fail to inform our children of their worth, I can assure you that they may never be informed."*

Cluster of Churches aids Trinity Methodist

This month it's offerings at Grace Methodist Church; in months past it's been Shores Methodist's Men's Club making some necessary repairs. It's all part of a "Cluster" of our community's United Methodist churches helping one of their own, historic Trinity Methodist, faced with deterioration.

"The cluster enables lay and clergy leadership from these congregations to share information and programs with one another, as well as lend support to each other for the calling that unites them," Grace Pastor Jim Reeher says. The Cluster also includes 1st United, a continuing supporter of our Homeless Coalition.

The United Methodist Cluster is not alone. The Unitarian Universalist congregation last year held fundraisers, and our city negotiated a lease of Trinity Methodist's parking lot to provide a revenue stream as our community responds to the needs of the historic Bridge Street church.

Andrew Young film showing tonight

Last fall, former ambassador Andrew Young retraced his steps as a lieutenant for the Rev. Martin Luther King, sent to St. Augustine in the summer of 1964 to assess the civil rights movement here. This visit, including conversations with local residents and officials, was filmed by his foundation.

"Crossing in St. Augustine," views on the impact of that movement, will be presented in a free public presentation tonight at 7 p. m. in the Flagler College auditorium. Doors will open at 6 and tickets will be handed out until the auditorium is full. Information at 819-6400.

History's Highlights

St. Augustine 1st environmentally planned city

A continuation of remarks by historian and author Buff Gordon to our Historical Society in 2005

In 1573, the colony was settling into the area south of today's Plaza. Royal ordinances for laying out new towns in the Americas were consolidated and published by the King of Spain, Philip II. The ordinances specified that the town should be near an abundance of wood for buildings, that the city planning should start with the main plaza, and that the Plaza should be at the landing place of the port.

The ordinances specified that the Plaza's four comers should face the four principal winds, so the main streets running out from the plaza would not be exposed to the four principle winds, thought to "cause much inconvenience."

In addition, the ordinances were very specific that in hot climates the streets were to be narrow. This tradition of shading pedestrians came out of Mesopotamia, Rome, Arabia, and their colonies.

Sixteenth century St. Augustine was an environmentally planned community, with links to more ancient communities and their climate-engineered streetscapes.

The ordinances specified that the plaza was to be in "Good proportion," a prolonged square, the length equal to 1½ times the width. It was a time in history when lengths and widths based on proportional ratios were believed to be imbued with harmony and spiritual meaning. It was a time when theology and mathematics were closely related.

The ordinances also specified that lots for the parish church and monastery be laid out first. The parish church was to be built not in or facing the principal plaza as is generally written, but near the entrance to the plaza at the waterfront, so that it was, "seen on leaving the sea." In addition, the church had to serve as a defensive structure for the town.

Next time you visit our Plaza, take a compass.

Elsbeth "Buff" Gordon's research can be found in [Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage](#) (University Press of Florida 2002). Historian Michael Gannon writes, "This first-ever book on Florida's colonial architecture will be an eye-opener to readers who identify American colonial buildings solely with the powdered-wig states of Virginia and New England." Buff is writing a companion book on St. Augustine's sacred sites.

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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