



# THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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## ***Correction***

### **Commission's bayfront design vote was 4-1**

City commissioners Monday approved a bayfront design plan by a 4-1 vote, not 3-2 as reported earlier today. Commissioner Leanna Freeman said she was prepared to vote no until being assured commissioners will have additional opportunities to consider the project.

The *Report* apologizes for its reporting error.

## **Bayfront plan approved**

### ***Questions remain as grant process begins***

Twelve alternative plans and months of study and public outreach later, a Bayfront design modification fashioned within 48 hours of the City Commission meeting Monday won approval by a 4-1 vote.

While a majority approved action on Reconnecting the Castillo & the Bayfront, commissioners had lingering questions and were assured they'll have more opportunities to discuss the plan's elements.

In other action Monday, commissioners discussed plans for the February 26 Noche de Gala and ceremonies for visiting Spanish dignitaries, approved a granite marker in the southwest Plaza pathway to recognize civil rights leader Andrew Young, approved Dr. Robert Hayling to be given the deAviles Award, and passed a resolution urging state legislative action to increase penalties for graffiti damage to properties on the National Register of Historic Places.



***Pavilion  
on the bay***

### ***Costs, lane changes are among concerns***

A pavilion over Matanzas bay is a bonus addition to the recent restoration of the Bridge of Lions.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) followed original plans for the bridge, completed in 1927, including surrounding entry parks.

An FDOT spokesperson says, "An events platform of similar design had existed prior to the widening of Avenida Menendez (though) instead of being located off the park, it was located halfway between the fort and the bridge."

The pavilion joins a River House pavilion now under construction. That was urged by Council on Aging Director Cathy Brown, who noted the lack of pavilions to enjoy the river's beauty.

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Costs, lane changes, and business disruptions were among concerns with the bayfront traffic plan designed by [Halback Design Group](#) through a Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks grant.

Commissioner Bill Leary voted against the plan, which would reduce two northbound lanes to one near the Castillo, with a dedicated right turn lane into the Castillo parking lot.

Planning and Building Director Mark Knight said commissioners will have an opportunity to reconsider the plan when cost estimates and a grant application are brought back at the March 28 and April 11 meetings.

The program was originally estimated at \$9 million, anticipating three grant applications of \$3 million. The first application opportunity is mid-April.

### Does it need fixing?

"I have to wonder if this needs fixing, if it's not broken," Freeman said. "I hear businesses saying they've had enough construction along the bay."

Leary questioned an understanding that no local fund match is required in the relatively new federal program, designed to improve traffic flow around national parks and monuments.

"I spoke to a federal official involved in road programs and he believes a 20 percent match is required. That could be nearly \$2 million (in the estimated \$9 million project)."

He also noted there are no improvement in the design on changing lanes from four to two to three along Anastasia Boulevard and the bayfront.

City Manager John Regan said the Sarbanes program "will allow us to seek monies for various elements" of bayfront traffic design. "I don't think anything could be started until 2012," he added, "and it's not realistic to begin realigning roads until after 2015."



# Galimore pool to be city's responsibility

Saying "We're getting out of the pool business," County Commission Chairman Ken Bryan told city commissioners Monday the county will modify an interlocal agreement in September to turn the Galimore pool over to the city.

"We have 225 interlocal agreements with municipalities," Bryan said. "Forty are with St. Augustine. We are subsidizing these agreements, and we can no longer do it."

City officials had hoped the \$292,000 budgeted for West Augustine's Solomon Calhoun pool might be stretched to include the Galimore pool, but that idea was rejected.

The county has offered to repair the pool and turn it over to the city. Bids for repairs will be opened in mid-March. City Manager John Regan recommended the city take a cash settlement rather than repaired pool, "so our options are open."

## ***Marina dredging planned***

City commissioners Monday approved plans to dredge shallow areas of the Municipal Marina, seeking \$200,000, half the estimated \$400,000 cost, from the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND).

General Services Director Jim Piggott told commissioners the marina "is in dire need of dredging to remove accumulated sand and silt which pose a serious hazard to vessels moored in the marina at low tide."

Piggott said the balance of funding could be drawn from the marina's reserve account.



High and dry - marina area at low tide

## ***Marker, award for Civil Rights leaders***

Dr. Robert B. Hayling led the local Civil Rights movement, while Andrew Young was a leader in the national effort.

Both were attacked and beaten, and both will be honored for their sacrifices.

Following City Commission approval Monday, Hayling will be given the deAviles Award, and Young, whose "Crossing in St. Augustine" documentary will receive an Emmy later this month, will have a marker at King and St. George streets, where he was attacked in June, 1964.

## ***\$20,001 for St. Francis House***

Mayor Joe Boles Monday presented a check for \$20,001 to St. Francis House Director Renee Morris, proceeds of the mayor's annual Nights of Lights Gala.

## ***Planning for commemorations***

A delegation of Spanish leaders, including the director of Spain's Constitutional Bicentennial in 2012, will be here for the Noche de Gala February 26, with ceremonies possibly including a document signing placing St. Augustine in the international consortium commemorating Spain's 1812 Constitution.

St. Augustine's Constitution Monument is believed to be the only one surviving in the Americas after King Ferdinand, returning to power in 1814, ordered all such monuments destroyed.

## ***Gannon to encore Civil War talk***

Dr. Michael Gannon, whose talk on *St. Augustine Catholics, Slavery, and Secession* during the Civil War attracted a turn-away crowd a month ago, will offer it once again tonight - this time in the spacious Flagler College auditorium.

His talk will begin at 7 p.m. He opened a four-part series of talks on the Civil War in January in the college's Flagler Room. The series, presented by the Historic St. Augustine Research Institute, commemorates the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War.

## UF support team launches effort

Secret shoppers assessing the St. Augustine experience, space for exhibiting some of the 2 ½ million artifacts, a million dollar renovation of the Government House museum area, and development of a community-based interpretive experience.

Elements in the works or contemplated as the University of Florida (UF) Direct Support Organization (DSO) gets to work supporting the university's management of 34 state-owned historic properties here.

The elements were described during the DSO's first session last week. The group includes heavy hitters in fundraising and heritage management, including a director with the National Historic Trust, a former National Park Service Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, and directors of the \$1.5 billion UF Foundation.

Those secret shoppers came from Disney World and Universal Studios, Florida's premier tourist oriented businesses, and a major conclusion of their visit: St. Augustine lacks a story for visitors - where to begin, what to see, a summary of the heritage experience.

UF Vice President Ed Poppell said a key to the heritage experience will be the proposed National Park Service Visitor Orientation Center in the Colonial Spanish Quarter.

"The park service designs its centers based on traffic, and plans a 9,600 square foot center for the Castillo, with a 3,000 square foot exhibit area,"

he said. "But we want a 10,000 square foot area to properly display both military history and the many artifacts stored at the university."

University planners are working with the park service and Congressman John Mica for the expanded plan.

Poppell said in addition to annual \$650,000 PO&M (Property Operation and Maintenance) funding from the state, the university is lobbying for \$1 million to renovate the museum area in Government House, \$1 million to develop a community-based interpretive experience, and recurring funding for all historic buildings.

"Above all, we have to understand that we are working with a living city," Poppell said. "It's not like Jamestown or Williamsburg. We have to be very sensitive."

Visit the [website](#) dedicated to the St. Augustine effort.



## *History's Highlight*

# **Letters of Menendez - Invasion Force?**

**4 years, 6 months, 25 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary**

*From the translation of seven letters from Pedro Menendez to King Phillip II of Spain, August 13, 1565 to January 30, 1566.*

*In the fourth of seven letters to King Phillip, written from Matanzas on December 5, 1565, Menendez reports on disrupting French survivors' efforts to build a fort at Cape Canaveral, plans to pursue French, English, and Portuguese corsairs, and a dispute with the governor of Havana over imprisonment of a Spanish captain on charges "so trivial" as "that he did not dip his colors to the Governor at Cape St. Antonio."*

*Menendez wrote as respectfully as possible of his concern that he was not notified of plans to send 1,800 troops to Florida, and wondering if it meant the French were preparing an invasion force.*

**At Havana I received certain information that many French and English corsairs were going about at Porto Rico and Hispaniola and**

at this island of Cuba to plunder . . . and that many Portuguese ships were doing the same thing.



I fitted up the flag ship and the three pataches with three hundred and fifty seamen in these four vessels at my own cost and sailed out of the port of Havana in the last of November to find, pursue and chastise them.

The day that I left Havana we discovered a sail, and I ordered the tenders to give chase but she took to flight up the Bahama Channel. . . . The next day in the morning we saw her (near) this port of Matanzas and we came up with her within the harbor, where her crew abandoned the vessel and fled in the boats to the shore.

I found her to be Your Majesty's despatch ship. The master of the ship told us that by Your Majesty's orders the officers of the Casa

de la Contratacion had despatched him to St Domingo and to Havana with Your Majesty's instructions that they should get ready immediately beef and fish for eighteen hundred men for nine months, for that many men were coming to Florida, but gave no letter to me from Your Majesty.

Considering that Your Majesty sends me 1800 men to Florida, troops and seamen, I suspect that the King of France or his vassals are about to send out some great fleet, and if this is the case, Your Majesty should understand that although I may resist them in Florida in the parts where I may be, they hold many other ports to which they may go and I cannot prevent them with the force I have.

They may be able to turn back upon some of the fleets from the Indies, for this is their whole design, and then fall upon these islands of Porto Rico, San Domingo, and Cuba, and will be able to take and plunder the

settlements in them and burn them and commit cruelties upon the inhabitants.

It might be that Our Lord would be pleased to give me victory over them and in order that I may certainly know it, I despatch this tender express to Your Majesty that you may be pleased to advise me concerning the whole matter.

***Philip II Declaring his Faith, oil painting by Domingo Valdivieso, 1871***

**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](mailto:gardner@aug.com)

