



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Architectural style on city agenda

A proposed amendment to our city's comprehensive plan would open the door to different architectural styles in our historic preservation districts, but also give our City Commission power to decide what styles and where.

A public hearing on the proposed amendment tops an agenda for Monday's regular commission meeting, which includes requests for new equipment - an aerial fire engine and vacuum street sweeper, funding for a sightseeing vehicle pullout on the bayfront at our Colonial Spanish Quarter, a five-year lease with Greyhound Bus Lines at our Visitor Center parking facility, and a briefing on discussions with the National Park Service.

Monday's City Commission meeting begins at 5 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall with a special session, in which commissioners - as our Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) will consider a resolution supporting proposed Amtrak passenger rail service along the east coast and identifying US 1 at Carrera Street as preferred location for a rail station here.



'Proper standard for review' on historic architectural style

The proposed amendment to our city's comprehensive plan ordinance, scheduled for first reading and public hearing before commissioners Monday night, was recommended by both our Planning and Zoning and Historic Architectural Review boards.

It removes language that dictates colonial architecture in all historic preservation districts, proposing instead, "that the proper standard for review when considering architectural styles for the historic preservation districts should include reference to the styles actually found in those districts ..."

City Attorney Ron Brown describes it as "establishing a process to define and change codes." The comprehensive plan, which must be approved by the state Department of Community Affairs, is the guiding document for city codes.

Seven years ago our City Commission passed a resolution allowing more compatible styles in HP-1, the area south of the Plaza. But it somehow went into the code allowing alternate styles in HP-2 and HP-3 as well, the areas north of the Plaza.

That led to a proposal for a late 1800s-style commercial building at St. George Street and Cathedral Place. That plan was shot down, as well as the resolution. City Attorney Ron Brown said actions affecting our comprehensive plan should only be made by ordinance.

Try your hand at cabbage bowling

Where else but at the annual Hastings Potato and Cabbage Festival Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hastings Recreation Field and City Hall.

Farmers Market, live music, food, children's activities, art and history exhibits, and more. Free parking and free admission to experience the creative side of the Potato Capital of Florida.

[Image Stockton Alliance](#)

Passage of the comprehensive plan amendment - it will undergo a second public hearing May 24 and, if approved, faces several months of state review - can open the door to further debate on what architectural styles best fit which historic preservation districts.

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Previous Issues

City equipment running out of deferrals

Budget-cutting brought with it deferral of equipment purchases, but two department heads will tell commissioners Monday that time is running out.

Fire Chief Mike Arnold wants to replace our aerial fire truck - 30 years old in an age where most departments make replacements every 15 years or less, and Public Works Director Martha Graham says increasing downtime and maintenance on the city's street sweeper makes replacement of the seven-year-old sweeper unit a move "in the best interests of the city."

Chief Arnold expects a new aerial unit to cost \$525,000, while Graham says a more efficient vacuum street sweeper will cost \$179,000. Both, however, are not asking commissioners for those amounts.

The sweeper was budgeted for replacement two years ago at \$110,000, and those funds have been carried forward on the books in cost-cutting efforts. Graham will seek authorization to transfer \$70,000 from Solid Waste Department reserves to make up the balance.

Arnold says his department failed to get a grant last year for 95 percent of the cost of a new aerial truck. "If the commission can authorize more than the five percent required match, maybe it will be enough to show that we're serious about our need for the new unit," he says.



City's aerial truck - still sleek, but hurting inside

New gateway to Spanish Quarter

City Heritage Director Dana Ste. Claire will ask commissioners Monday for \$15,000 to convert a bayfront area adjacent to the White Lion Restaurant into a sightseeing vehicle pull-off, "an element of the long-range plan for improved visitor access to expanded programs for the Spanish Quarter."

Ste. Claire notes that the element was not included in his capital plan approved earlier because a lease agreement for the land had not been executed.

City staff will also brief commissioners on discussions with Castillo Superintendent Gordie Wilson as efforts continue to realize a Castillo orientation center in the Spanish Quarter and potential package ticket sales for the Quarter and Castillo.

Amtrak effort is 'KimPossible'

She'll shun credit as the driving force, but Kim Delaney is praised by officials along our east coast for tirelessly keeping alive the dream of Amtrak passenger rail service.

Kim, Growth Management Coordinator with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council headquartered in Stuart, admits it's been a 16-year effort for her (ten years as city planner in Stuart and the past six with the council), beginning in 1994 with a failed attempt to get the state to buy the FEC line.

"I've had a few KimPossible accusations from my friends and colleagues on this project," Kim says. "That's been a nickname for a while, especially when I've gotten into a project like this one that's a bit overwhelming."

Today, there are more than 134 resolutions and letters of support from the coastal community between Jacksonville and Miami, and 32 public workshops & hearings are scheduled before the end of June in the eight cities proposed for Amtrak stops: St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Titusville, Cocoa, Melbourne, Vero Beach, Fort Pierce, and Stuart.



Workshops here include a public discussion at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the Alcazar Room at City Hall and agencies session Wednesday 9-noon to assess the public workshop and analyze potential station locations.

The coastal coalition hopes to tighten up its application in a second round for federal funds, the first rejected in February because it "did not demonstrate that the project was sufficiently developed to receive funding for the proposed activities..."

Details on the Amtrak effort [here](#).



History's Highlights

Spring was a season of buccaneers

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

Five years, four months, and two days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary.

Spring is a high season for visitors to our city, as it was four centuries ago - for pirates.

March 24, 1683, a band of 230 French and English buccaneers were routed by 30 Spanish musketeers.

April 30, 1686, the French corsairs Michel "Chevalier" de Grammont and Nicolas Brigaut threatened.

May 28, 1668, Captain Robert Searle sacked the settlement, leaving 60 dead.

June 7, 1586, Sir Francis Drake overwhelmed St. Augustine and burned it to the ground.

While marauders of the seas are popularly known as pirates, Davis Walker of [Florida Living History](#) notes that "historians generally refer to the maritime raiders of the 17th century as "buccaneers," while pirate as a generic term is usually used to refer to the sea-going brigands of the 18th century."

Here's Davis' summary of Brigaut's Raid of April 30, 1686.

Michel "Chevalier" de Grammont, commanding his 52-gun ship, the *Hardi* (French: "Audacious"), with a galliot under Nicolas Brigaut, and a sloop, threatens the Spanish presidio of San Agustin.

On April 30, Brigaut's galliot, flying Spanish colors, anchors at Matanzas Inlet south of the presidio to gather intelligence. Grammont remains concealed further south. Deceived by Brigaut's ruse, captives are taken and tortured for information. However, Spanish troops soon appear on the beach.

The following morning, the foes engage in a firefight, but worsening weather grounds the galliot on a sandbar. The next day Brigaut's men, "carrying their arms in their mouths, waded ashore, and dug holes in the beach from which they poured a heavy fire into the Spanish troops."

Brigaut sends word to Grammont that he will march 40 miles south to "Mosquitos Bar" (near modern Daytona Beach), and asks to be picked up in five days. Grammont never receives Brigaut's plea for help.

While Brigaut waits on a sandbar, one captive escapes and reports his location. Fifty soldiers sally in pursuit, first finding 19 who had "left the bar to swim ashore, carrying their muskets and powder in waterproof bags."

The Spaniards massacre them, then proceed to the sandbar and slaughter the rest.

Brigaut, a black named Diego, and a 9-year-old boy are taken prisoner. At San Agustin, the buccaneer captain and his shipmate are interrogated on May 30-31, and then garroted in the city's plaza. Meanwhile, Grammont is driven north by the same gale that wrecked the galliot. Later reports indicate that the *Hardi*, with Grammont and 180 of his men, went down in this same storm off the coast of Guale (modern SE Georgia).



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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