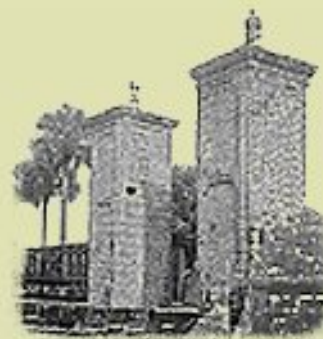




THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Proctor would support modifying UF legislation

City Manager-designate John Regan told city commissioners Monday that State Rep. Bill Proctor will sponsor modifications to state legislation authorizing a University of Florida (UF) takeover of the city's heritage program "if the university and city can work out our differences."

That would include the city retaining management of our heritage program, the core of which is 34 state-owned historic properties including our Spanish Quarter.

Regan said that, in discussions with Proctor and UF Vice President Ed Poppell, he noted the heritage program needs \$960,000 a year, which the university doesn't have but our city can support, through revenue-producing entities like the city-owned Casa del Hidalgo (\$65,000 annually) and Visitor Center parking facility (\$378,000 annually), and reduced service costs through other city departments.

The UF takeover legislation was successfully sponsored by Proctor several years ago as the city sought funding to repair the properties. The legislation gave UF management of not only the properties but the heritage program as well. The city has since developed its own business plan to make our heritage program self-sustaining.

Regan said every city department is part of that effort. Our city will also be developing a Historic Preservation Institute patterned after the successful [Nantucket](#) model (developed by the University of Florida), drawing together our city, the University of Florida, Flagler College, and the National Park Service.

Heritage solvency plan working

Heritage Director Dana Ste. Claire told commissioners Monday that the city's business plan to get our heritage program into the black is working.

"The model is working after just five months since the City Commission approved the budget addendum and just two months after restructuring our staff," he said. Spanish Quarter visitation is up 10% over last year, April Taberna del Gallo (tavern) sales are up 100% over last year, and the Spanish Quarter store just set an all-time record for monthly sales.

"And of course we had the tourism employee of the year!" he added, acknowledging the recent Visitors and Convention Bureau award to Visitor Center information host Caroline Craig.

Style ordinance rejected

Alternate measure to be prepared



Floridanos to set marker

"Enduring the Florida elements, diseases, fires, and attacks by pirates, French, English, and Native Americans, their efforts established St. Augustine as the first continuously occupied European city in the United States."

Our Los Floridanos Society will dedicate a city Historical Marker Saturday at our Visitor Information Center to those hardy pioneers who arrived in St. Augustine during the First Spanish Period, 1565-1763.

In ceremonies at 10:30 a.m., descendants of those early pioneers will dedicate the marker, another in the continuing series of city historic markers.

The \$1,244 marker was funded by the Society, and features our city coat of arms and full color graphics of the coats of arms of the Sanchez and Solano families and a depiction of Founder Pedro Menendez' landing.

City commissioners Monday rejected a proposed ordinance which would have given them more local control on historic district architectural style changes, in favor of developing an alternate proposal that reaches that same goal through different means.

At issue are Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP) which allow only colonial style in new or modified construction in the areas north and south of the Plaza, Historic Preservation (HP) Districts 1, 2, and 3.

They're in our city's Comprehensive Plan, the guiding document for our city codes. City commissioners want to allow alternate styles in HP-1 south of the Plaza de la Constitución, but the change requires a Comprehensive Plan amendment with state review.

City staff proposed moving the AGHP to our city codes to bypass state review of changes.

Commissioner Nancy Sikes Kline, who supports careful review of any style changes, Monday proposed a six-word amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, acknowledging the AGHP "as amended from time to time."

This would allow changes at the local level, but Sikes-Kline added, "There should be extensive review of any changes, including hearings before our Planning and Zoning and Historic Architectural Review Board and three public hearings before the commission."

Commissioner Don Crichlow, who favors style changes representing different eras in our history, endorsed the proposal to remove "state control over who we are. I don't want anybody telling us what we should do in our city," he said.

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A new city manager, with evaluations

City Commissioners unanimously approved a contract Monday making Chief Operations Officer John Regan our new city manager, and he and City Attorney Ron Brown and City Clerk Karen Rogers - the three city positions appointed by our City Commission - all agreed to annual performance evaluations.

The evaluation concept has not been a part of previous city managers' contracts, but was invited by Regan during contract negotiations. Commission discussion led to extending evaluations to all three principal city officers, and Brown and Rogers said they would be happy to undergo the annual reviews.

Regan will take office July 1.

Carriage owners to review proposal

Carriage business owners will review with city staff a proposed horse carriage ordinance before any action is taken, city commissioners decided before a standing room only audience packing the Alcazar Room at City Hall Monday afternoon.

"I don't think anyone (on city staff) has been working with the businesses," Mayor Joe Boles said in opening comments at a public workshop. "We need to send this ordinance to the industry and get their input - get the facts, figures, and details."

Vice Mayor Errol Jones, while agreeing, countered, "All these people are here now; we should give them the opportunity to speak."

That public comment consumed the final 45 minutes of the hour and a half workshop preceding the regular commission meeting. Speakers picked out elements of concern in the proposed ordinance, particularly a proposed \$5,000 annual carriage permit fee.

Commissioners assured the gathering that there's no intent to ban the carriage industry, and that there would be an extensive public hearing procedure on the proposed ordinance. Heritage Director Dana Ste. Claire noted, "Our business plan is about improving the visitor experience, and one visitor expectation is our horses and carriages."

Welcome Center for Flagler College



A vacant lot adjacent to Thompson Baker Insurance Agency on Cordova Street is planned for a Flagler College Welcome Center, and commissioners Monday advanced an ordinance to make it happen.

The ordinance, to establish a Planned Unit Development (PUD), will face a public hearing and final action at the June 8 commission meeting.

The college's original building plan lacked a colonial feel, our Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) said during lower board hearings. A modified plan won HARB's approval and recommendation of our Planning and Zoning Board.

Recognizing our graduates

Ten graduating high school seniors were recognized by our City Commission Monday for their leadership and service to school, to community and to other students. A graduating senior from each of St. Johns County's high schools is selected annually by school organizations and administration for the honor, and presented with a commemorative plaque, city lapel pin, and \$100 scholarship award.

The 2010 recipients and their high schools: Jefferson Deken, Allen D. Nease, Kati Schumm, Bartram Trail, Kelly

Dueker, Creekside, Hannah Elizabeth McArdle, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind - Blind Department, Ian Griffith Keith, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind - Deaf Department, William J. Lee Owen, Pedro Menendez, Ansley Vanover, Ponte Vedra, Yannick Trapman O'Brien, St. Augustine, Jeanette Jones, St. Johns Technical, and Daniel Timothy Donofrio, St. Joseph Academy.

Plaza concerts begin Memorial Day

The 20th season of Concerts in the Plaza opens Memorial afternoon Monday with the St. Augustine Jazz Society providing the jump start.

The concerts will continue all summer long on Thursdays at 7 p.m. and conclude on Labor Day with another afternoon performance. All concerts are free and attendees should bring lounge chairs for seating. Picnic dinners are popular, but alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the Plaza.

Details and concert schedule are on our city [website](#).

Workshop June 3 on Lighthouse Park traffic study

Consultants will present their findings on a traffic study in the Lighthouse Park neighborhood Thursday, June 3. The public workshop is at 6 p.m. in the Alcazar room at City Hall.

City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline, who represents the city on the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO), gained NFTPO approval for the study, to sort out traffic flow and parking in the areas of R.B. Hunt School, the Lighthouse, Hamilton Upchurch Park, the boat ramp, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Among the elements under study by PBS&J of Jacksonville for the past four months: student drop-offs and pick-ups at R.B. Hunt; traffic counts on side streets along Anastasia Boulevard; the boulevard's intersections with Old Quarry Road and Magnolia Drive; signage adequacy, and potential for a traffic signal at the Old Quarry, Red Cox Drive, and Anastasia Boulevard intersection.



History's Highlights

The Spanish horse helped build a nation

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

5 years, 3 months, and 15 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary

It's a certainty that among the horses pulling our carriages, there is a bloodline to the original Spanish horses brought here by Spain's early explorers.

They were aboard Ponce De Leon's ships on his second voyage to the New World in 1521. Along with a small herd of cattle, they were the first to ever land on what is now the continental United States.

In 1565 St. Augustine Founder Pedro Menendez had cattle and horses shipped from Spain to begin producing beef for the garrison. However his effort to bring horses on his founding voyage was tragic. From the memoir of Father Francisco Grajales, principal priest on that voyage:

"In the port of St. John's of Porto Rico, the general purchased twenty-four horses and a ship to transport fifty men, whom the King had commanded to be taken from this island. The very day we set sail, this ship sprung a leak, and the



danger of foundering was so imminent that, in order to save the men, it became necessary to lighten her by throwing overboard a large quantity of merchandise.

"Seeing that this produced but little effect, it became necessary also to throw over the horses. Twenty-three were either lost in this way or died during the voyage, so that but one arrived in Florida."



Spanish horses did the heavy pulling in our earliest days, were prizes for British raids in the 1700s, and were the most common type of horse throughout the Southeast and all of the regions west of the Mississippi.

The leading breed in 1750 and 1850, the pure Spanish horse in North America was almost extinct by 1950, the [American Livestock Breeds Conservancy](#) tells us. Almost all Spanish stocks were crossbred with or replaced by horses of larger size, including thoroughbreds, other riding horse breeds, and draft horses.

Only in recent years has attention been paid to preserving the pure Spanish horse, with numerous associations formed beginning in the late 1950s, today registering more than 200 horses annually with a breed population of over 2,000.

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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