



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Mooring fields hearing Monday

A harbor management plan establishing mooring fields in our bay and Salt Run goes to public hearing and final action before our City Commission Monday night.

It tops the agenda for the commission's last meeting of 2009, an agenda that also includes a proposal for sidewalk café tables on Aviles Street, a residential development west of Holmes Boulevard that could speed utility services through West Augustine, a potential ban on vending around our Visitor Information Center, reports on recent staff trips to Aviles, Spain and to Colonial Williamsburg, and proposed budgets for our Heritage Tourism Department and 450th commemoration.

The commission meeting begins at 5 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall.



Davis Shores hotel vision
Photo from augustine.com

Davis Shores Design

Get ready for "some surprising observations into the history of Davis Shores," according to City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline, who previewed a public presentation to be given Sunday at 2 p.m. in the Sala de Montiano Room at Government House.

Graduate students in the Historic Preservation Program of the University of Florida's College of Design, Construction and Planning spent a semester developing strategies to protect this multi-layered historic neighborhood.

Harbor plan decision time

Three years of study with four public workshops culminate with Monday's public hearing. Over that time the number of moorings was reduced from 369 to 178, including 80 moorings in Salt Run, and 28 north and 70 south of the Bridge of Lions. Cost is estimated at \$2,500 per mooring.

If the measure is approved, city staff will request \$109,725 for initial work and anticipates \$460,000 for installation of the fields, the funds to be drawn from city reserves. General Services Director Jim Piggott said a design/build package would be bid to determine actual installation cost.

Café tables for Aviles Street

"WHEREAS, a need exists for outdoor eating establishments (Cafes) on Aviles Street in the City of Sty. Augustine to provide a unique environment for relaxation and food consumption ..." commissioners will consider an ordinance to lift the ban on outdoor dining for an area in the first block of Aviles Street.

While the ban exists citywide to avoid blocking pedestrian traffic, the selected area of Aviles Street would extend the sidewalk over an existing parking lane to create sufficient area for both dining and pedestrians. It's part of a public/private plan to make Aviles Street - one of our city's oldest - more inviting.

New hope for West Augustine utilities

City Chief Operations Officer John Regan hopes a proposed residential development on the north side of Holmes Boulevard will be "an anchor customer to facilitate transmission upgrades through West Augustine," a goal of a city/county agreement to develop utility services in the West

North Davis Shores is part of a larger "City Beautiful" project that developer D. P. Davis sought to create on the island in the 1920s soon after the success of Davis Island in Tampa.

"While the area of North Davis Shores presently thrives as a residential community, the students will present strategies to make it a better neighborhood with a stronger 'sense of place' by recalling its rich and layered past," Program Director Roy Graham says.

Augustine Redevelopment Area.

City commissioners will be asked to approve an agreement between our city and the developer to provide utility service.

"This proposed development gives our city the justification to invest in expanding our utility capacity and running utility lines the length of West King Street," Regan said.

The county will be asked to approve extension of St. Augustine's utility service area to the development, and the developer will handle on-site infrastructure.

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Control of Visitor Center grounds

Arguing "The promenade and grounds surrounding the St. Augustine / St. Johns County Visitor Information Center and the Historic Downtown Parking Facility, unlike the Plaza, the West Plaza and other public areas, have not been used as a public forum for First Amendment Expressive Activities and have never been designated as such," a resolution to make that area "proprietary city facilities" will be considered by commissioners Monday.

Under the resolution, the city manager would be empowered to regulate activities in the area which, like the west garden of Government House, has seen development of vending activities.

City Attorney Ron Brown says the resolution will establish that the area is not a public forum, and "as such, the city will exercise management and control over all activities occurring in these areas, including first amendment expressive activities protected in a public forum and any other use of the premises."

Budgets for Heritage and 450th

City Heritage and 450th Director Dana Ste. Claire, after developing plans to strengthen our Heritage Tourism Department and continue preparations for our upcoming commemorations, will seek initial financial support Monday, with requests for nearly \$200,000 for the Heritage Tourism Department and a little less than \$108,000 for the commemorations.

The Heritage Tourism Department funds are for Colonial Spanish Quarter Museum improvements in the gift shop and Taberna, and for marketing, promotion, and signage for the museum. For the commemorations, the budget includes hiring a program coordinator, program and exhibit development, travel and the creation of a website.

Ste. Claire and city staff will also report to the commission on recent cultural exchange trips to Aviles, Spain, and data-gathering in Williamsburg.

History's Highlights

Menendez was prepared for permanence

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

Historian Michael Gannon concludes that Pedro Menendez was successful in establishing a permanent settlement because he was prepared to survive.

It began with selection of family, friends, and close associates for the expedition. One historian suggested the first MAFIA was *Menendez And Friends In America*. St. Augustine historian Eugene Lyons, in his *Enterprise of Florida*, published by University Press of Florida, documents Pedro Menendez' careful selection process for his voyage to establish a permanent Spanish foothold in today's America.

It was a complex asiento (contract) with King Phillip II, involving orders to "explore and colonize Florida; and if there be settlers or corsairs of other nations not subject to us, drive them out," in exchange for lucrative trade privileges. Only the most trusted would do for Menendez, both in challenging an enemy far from backup support and in sharing trade opportunities between the Spanish Indies (Caribbean) and Spain.

It was an age when soldiers were part-time rather than professional, and Menendez' force included soldiers equally skilled in carpentry, farming, smithing, and other skills needed to establish a settlement. Lyon's detailed account lists dozens of implements and materials filling the holds of his ships, from six tons of bulk iron, a half-ton of steel, 200 fishnets, and shoemaking supplies, to 12,000 sheets of paper for his Escribano Público - a Notary Public.

Beyond the major challenge of driving out the French, Pedro Menendez was determined to make the settlement San Agustin permanent.

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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