



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Mooring fields approved

Action follows four-hour presentation, public hearing

City commissioners Monday adopted a Harbor Management Plan that will place 178 boat moorings in our waters, including mooring fields of 80 in Salt Run, 28 north of the Bridge of Lions and 70 south.

The four-hour presentation and public hearing was part of a seven-hour session, which included advancement to public hearing of an ordinance for sidewalk café tables on Aviles Street, debates on regulation of vendors setting up outside the now-banned Plaza, panhandlers near our police station at King and Malaga streets, and weekend youth gatherings at the north end of St. George Street.

Commissioners also denied the appeal of an applicant to establish a hot air balloon ride business on the former Bozard Ford lot on North Ponce de Leon Boulevard, and approved \$197,433 for Heritage Department improvements and \$107,987 for 450th commemoration development.



Help Wanted

The Census Bureau has jobs, but we're told the word's not getting out that "temporary Census jobs will pay between \$11.00 to \$18.00 per hour, plus a stipend for mileage and training."

Several thousand temporary employees will be needed as clerks, door-to-door enumerators, and other jobs in our region during the Census season beginning in January.

So far, only about 400 people in St. Johns County have applied.

Details on the US Census [website](#)
or 1-866-861-2010.

Mooring - 'solving national health care might be easier'

Attorney Patrick Canan, a waterfront resident in Salt Run, summed up the marathon public hearing and discussion on the Harbor Management Plan: "It might be easier for you to solve national health care."

Included in the discussion: the unique sensitivity of Salt Run as a water recreation area, definition of residents and non-residents for discounted mooring fees, live-aboards and non-live-aboards, and a state pilot program for greater regulation of boating.

Commissioners approved \$588,500 from city reserve funds for mooring field development, a pump-out boat and water taxi.

City General Services Director Jim Piggott recommended mooring rates ranging from \$20 a week to \$3,960 a year, with discounts of 40% for residents - plus another 30% for "wet storage" of boats not in regular use. His figures are based on study of six other cities' mooring fees that ranged from \$2,880 to \$4,135 a year.

Piggott projected that the city's investment can be repaid in seven years, based on mooring field use increases in those other cities.

Aviles sidewalk cafes plan advances

An ordinance to allow café tables on an expanded sidewalk in the first block of Aviles Street will go to public hearing in January, in a plan that includes \$10 a square foot in permit fees for use of the sidewalk.

City Operations Officer John Regan said the plan fits well with an

overall \$225,000 redesign of the street to draw more pedestrian traffic.

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Vendor wars - farmers market possible?

Vendors in the west garden of Government House, the Ponce Circle, and Visitor Center (VIC) grounds came under fire, along with debate on creating a separate market area, possibly at the miniature golf course adjacent to the Bridge of Lions or on the VIC grounds.

The discussion was spurred by Vice Mayor Errol Jones, who moved unsuccessfully for an immediate moratorium on the west garden and Ponce Circle vendors. City staff promised a report on alternatives in January.

Commissioner Leanna Freeman urged that the entire city be studied. "We've been doing this piecemeal," she said. "We have failed to get a First Amendment attorney to look at the entire city."

In the meantime, City Attorney Ron Brown promised an ordinance in January on current vending around the Plaza, and commissioners approved a resolution giving City Manager Bill Harriss control over uses on the Visitor Center grounds.

City concerns on County agenda

City Attorney Ron Brown told commissioners four items on today's County Commission agenda will impact our city: a one-cent increase in our county tourism bed tax, a 99-year property lease for an expanded St. Francis House, extension of liquor serving hours in the county to 2 a.m., and an increase in tax exemption from five to ten years for improvements to historic properties.

Brown said property in the area of Old Moultrie Road and South Dixie Highway is proposed for a new St. Francis House, nearly tripling the current 28-bed location. "If we can get some beds reserved for the city, we can enforce regulation of sleeping in public areas, because we will have an alternate venue," he said.

The liquor service extension to 2 a.m. in the county should be studied for its impact on city hours, now limited to 1 a.m., Brown said. And the historic properties tax exemption increase would follow earlier city action to reward preservation and restoration efforts.



Crews are completing installation of more prominent highway signage - this one on US 1 south at West Castillo Drive, part of our city's Heritage Signage Program which will include pedestrian wayfinding signage in the historic district.

Davis Shores - a history of style

North Davis Shores is a microcosm of 20th Century Florida architectural history.

That according to graduate and PhD students in the historic preservation program at the University of Florida's College of Design, Construction and Planning. They reported the results of a semester of field study to the public Sunday at Government House.



The study is one of several from universities using our city as a living laboratory over the years, including UF studies of the Abbott Tract and Lincolnville, and the University of Notre Dame's whole city study.

What began as developer D. P. Davis' "City Beautiful" project for David Shores in the late 1920s evolved into representations of his original Mediterranean style, colonial revival of the 1930s, bungalows of the post war era and ranch style of the 1950s and '60s.

The student team's conclusion: "Its unique heritage should be recognized." Among their suggestions: signage, pocket parks, waterfront walkways, a kayak ramp, and a commuter water taxi.

North Davis Shores Neighborhood Association President Jeanette Burk and members were on hand to absorb "the exercise (that) gives the students experience and the neighborhood something to consider." Details on the university's [website](#).

History's Highlights

Our founder faced diplomatic challenges

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

Pedro Menendez: admiral, explorer, settler, and diplomat - sometimes with unexpected results.

The Florida natives Pedro Menendez met in 1565 were as strange to him as he must have been to them.

"They seem to be a noble race," Menendez remarked in notes to his king, Philip of Spain, after this first encounter. "They possess human physical characteristics, but were clothed only in loincloths of animal skins, their hair done in topknots, and their flesh covered with tattoos."

He learned that the tattoo colors and arrangement indicated rank within the tribe.

As Menendez explored the vast peninsula of La Florida, to establish colonies and search for castaways of less fortunate ships swept along the Gulf Stream currents, he met this "noble race" in many ways.

He prided himself on learning new languages to impress leaders of new peoples. His interpreter provided him a list of kind words, and at one point he used them to flatter the chief's wife. He was then told that he had just flattered the chief's sister, and she was now his wife! In the protocol of the day, his only choice was to take her, settling her with a Spanish entourage in Havana.

In southeast Georgia he met the Guale - in the midst of a drought. He used the situation to preach faith in his Catholic God, finally convincing the chief to kneel and kiss the cross before his people. The skies began to cloud, and a torrential rain followed - only in the Guale area.

Word of this miracle spread throughout the peninsula, and missionaries following Menendez were welcomed in the many villages.



Engraving based on French settler Jacques le Moyne drawing

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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