



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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Hearings Monday on city vending, parades

City Commissioners Monday night will tend to public hearings and final action on four ordinances, and introduction of a fifth, all readjusting to court rulings on the city's regulations on visual arts, vending, and parades.

Also on the agenda for the regular meeting, beginning at 5 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall: recognition of Frank and Betty Usina as La Florida Award honorees, a resolution supporting an Amtrak passenger rail station here, an update on noise abatement at the Hamilton Upchurch skate park, two appointments to our Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), and agreements with our police and firefighter unions through September, 2010.

Adjusting codes to courts

City Attorney Ron Brown hopes the current raft of ordinance adjustments will meet the standards of recent court rulings on activities in public areas.

Commissioners will conduct public hearings on ordinances: 1) to establish a lottery system and restrict vending to twelve spaces in the Plaza market building; 2) to prohibit vending along St. George Street and remove a previously added provision for parades on that street; 3) to rescind the so-called Plaza vending ordinance which had two conflicting court rulings, and 4) to prohibit food and beverage sales on public ways throughout the city.

A new ordinance, subject to public hearing later if advanced by commissioners, would reinstate elsewhere in the code the St. George Street parade provision removed by one of the four ordinances.

Living history reenactment groups were particularly concerned about the parade provision, as several annual events, including British Night Watch, Spanish Night Watch, and Drake's and Searle's raids, are played out along St. George Street.

Another step toward Amtrak

Our city will take another step toward establishing an Amtrak passenger train station here if commissioners adopt a resolution of support Monday.

City Planning and Building Director Mark Knight says, "The standard protocol for Amtrak when locating a station in a city or town is to have the local government maintain the facility - building repairs and maintenance, grass cutting, and the like - but not service the operation of the station."

Two sites west of US 1 are under consideration: an area off King Street and US 1, and the former Florida East Coast station at San Marco and US 1.

Amtrak and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) plan to apply for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the restoration of intercity passenger service on the FEC Corridor from Jacksonville to Miami.



a-Dressing history

The Children's Museum of St. Johns (CMSJ) will debut its newest hands-on, interactive exhibit for children Saturday during the 2009 Florida Heritage Book Festival.

CMSJ team members were busy this week putting the final touches on *St. Augustine Sleuths*, an interactive, educational exhibit based on what it was like to be a child during different periods in St. Augustine's history.

The exhibit will be in the Children's section at Ringhaver Center in the second of two days of

author workshops and marketplace activities. Festival details [here](#).

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Previous Issues

For skate park, a 12-foot wall

A bid request has gone out for a design/build contract for a 12-foot-high pre-stressed concrete wall to buffer skateboard noise from neighbors of the Hamilton Upchurch Park off Anastasia Boulevard.

City Chief Operations Officer John Regan will report to commissioners Monday that engineers scrapped an earlier plan for an eight foot landscape berm in favor of what they believe will be a more effective noise barrier. Anticipated are bids for preformed six-inch-thick slabs.

Regan says the city will include wood privacy fences for homes that don't have them along neighboring Flamingo Drive, to soften the view of the concrete wall. "But I think at this point they prefer noise abatement over vista," Regan said.

He's hoping the project can fit into the \$75,000 budget the City Commission has authorized.

Usinas to be honored with La Florida Award



Frank and Betty Usina

Frank and Betty Usina will be inducted into the elite corps of St. Augustine La Florida Awardees by our City Commission Monday night, recognizing their years of leadership in local and state tourism.

The honor is added to their recent induction into the Florida Tourism Hall of Fame. Among their credits: founding partners of Visit Florida, and charter members of the Florida Attractions Association, the St. Augustine Attractions Association, the St. Johns County chapter of the Florida Hotel and Motel Association, the Florida Association of Recreation Vehicle Campgrounds, the St. Augustine Heritage Council, and the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and Beaches Visitors Convention Bureau.

Joyner to receive Gus Craig Award

School Superintendent Joseph Joyner will receive the Gus Craig Award September 17 as the Salvation Army of St. Augustine hosts the 12th Annual Gus Craig Award Dinner. Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett, adjutant general of the Florida National Guard and director of the Department of Military Affairs, will be special guest and keynote speaker.

The event begins with a 6:30 p.m. social at the Casa Monica Hotel. Dinner is at 7. Tickets are \$75 per person. Details and tickets, 824-6880, ext. 204.

Lincolville Festival moves to Francis Field

The Annual Lincolville Festival moves to the Francis Event Field this year with three days of activities November 6-8. Festival hours: Friday 5 to 10 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday 1p.m. to 5 p.m. For details, contact [Greg White](#) 904.377.4159 or [Septimus Connor](#) 904.825.7719.

Projects for 450 and beyond

Two projects spurred by anticipation for our upcoming 450th anniversary are moving forward, confident they'll fit into the commemoration but more so stand as legacies for years ahead.

A 16th century replica ship and a music and arts festival, styled after Charleston's Spoleto, have solid volunteer committees and structures for success, following 450 Director Dana Ste. Claire's caution that, "While all of these projects (and there are literally dozens more) have merit, they cannot all be developed haphazardly without some sort of structure, otherwise we end up chasing our tails and stage a poor end product."

The Ship Committee's mission: To construct a working replica 16th century Spanish ship that will advance education and promote the pre-eminence of St Augustine and the historic harbor as the earliest center for colonial development in the nation.

And for Romanza (the adopted festival name): To showcase the many unique cultural assets of St Augustine and St John's County with a comprehensive and innovative music and arts festival that focuses on the multicultural heritage of Florida's First Coast.

Ship Committee Chair Maury Keiser anticipates project approval, fundraising, fund allocation, design, staffing, and site development next year, construction and outfitting in 2011 and 2012, launch, sea trial, and public events in early 2013, and participation in events, good will and marketing tours, and public display in St Augustine through 2015.

Romanza's Albert Syeles is focused on a potential festival start in May, 2012, the bicentennial of Spain's constitution, symbolized here with what may be the world's only remaining monument to it, in our Plaza de la Constitución.

For both organizations, before the goal will come plenty of research, networking, and organization for success.

Dana says the next formal step for the commemoration period will be a 450 Steering Committee meeting to discuss a strategic plan, leading to an event master plan for the commemorations.

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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