



NEWSLETTER

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IN RECOGNITION



Ms. Rachel Singleton, daughter of Ms. Margaret England, accepts plaque from Mayor O'Brien for Ms. England's service to the community on the City's Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board. Ms. England served as a regular member from November 2004 to October 2008. She had to resign because she moved to a new job in another state. Her comments about matters being discussed by the Board and her ability to succinctly state motions for the Board to vote on greatly helped the Board's members accomplish their work for the City.

Ms. Nancy Nevacoff, Chairman of the Tree Board/ Beautification Advisory Committee, presents to the Public Works Director, Mr. Marc Chatten, an award from the Committee to recognize the work the Public Works employees do to maintain and keep beautiful the City's parks and other public areas





Mayor O'Brien presents to Police Officer Frankie Hammonds a certificate in recognition of Officer Hammonds' five years of employment with the City. Officer Hammonds was hired by the City in October 2003 after graduating from the Basic Law Enforcement Academy. He has completed several specialized courses, such as Traffic Homicide Investigation, Advanced Traffic Crash Investigation, and emergency management courses. During his time with the City, he's been assigned to the patrol division. He considers traffic enforcement a

priority for the saving of lives and usually leads the Department in Driving Under the Influence arrests.

Officer Eudalio (Ed) Martinez receives the Law enforcement Medal from Mr. William Roberts of the Sons of the American Revolution. Officer Martinez had six years of law enforcement experience with the New York City Police Department; then six years experience with the Clay County Florida Sheriff's Office. He was hired by the City in January 2007 and is assigned to the Police Department's patrol division. He's a certified Breath Test Operator and Field Training Officer, and after completing certain courses, he's a Florida Crime Prevention Practitioner. Police Chief Richard Hedges recommended him for the Law Enforcement Medal because of his alertness. He captured a person burglarizing cars, which resulted in the solving of several vehicle burglaries and the return of stolen property worth hundreds of dollars to the victims.





Mr. Tom Large, Public Works Grounds Foreman (left) receives plaque from Mayor O'Brien. Mr. Large was hired by the City as a maintenance worker in November 1993. He later developed an interest in landscaping and grounds maintenance. Because of his excellent work record, he was promoted to the position of Grounds Foreman in October 2006. He continues to be a very conscientious employee who takes pride in keeping the City's property well maintained.

Civic Association president Bob Samuels presents a check for \$1,000 to Mayor Rich O'Brien for the purchase of LED lights for the Christmas season. LEDs, or light-emitting diodes, generate little heat compared to the old-fashioned filament lights, are directional and vibration-resistant. Though they cost more than filament electric light bulbs, LEDs can give up to 30,000 hours of use and pay for themselves during that time by using much less electrical energy. The City has put LEDs around the trees and buildings at the 10th Street plazas on the east side of the Boulevard to see how well the lights look and to be a demonstration to the public of these energy-efficient lights.



CHANGES TO CITY'S GARBAGE/TRASH COLLECTION SCHEDULE BECAUSE OF HOLIDAY

The holiday is Thursday, January 1, 2009, New Year's Day. It will change the City's garbage/trash collection as follows:

Monday, December 29:	Regular pickup of household wastes.
Tuesday, December 30:	Regular pickup of household wastes.
Wednesday, December 31:	Residents scheduled for pickup on Thursday will have pickup on WEDNESDAY. THERE'LL BE NO PICKUP OF YARD TRASH/SPECIAL WASTES.
Thursday, January 1:	NEW YEAR'S DAY. CITY OFFICES CLOSED. NO PICKUP OF HOUSEHOLD WASTES.
Friday, January 2:	Regular pickup of household wastes.

The recycling pickup schedule for the week of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day will be normal. Recycling crews will provide service on Wednesday, December 31st, and on Thursday, January 1st.

REMINDERS

1. City Offices Closed Because of Holidays. During the next three months, the City will observe the following holidays. City offices will be closed on those days: Thursday, January 1, 2009 (New Year's Day); Monday, January 19 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), and Monday, February 16 (Presidents' Day). Please note that, except for New Year's Day, City Public Works personnel will pick up household wastes on each holiday (January 19 and February 16), and will pick up yard trash and special wastes on the Wednesday of the week when each holiday occurs. Also, the recycling pickup schedule will be normal for the week of each holiday.
2. Information for City Meetings Online. Information that the City staff prepares for City Commission meetings and regular meetings of the Planning Board is available for the public to read on the City's website. For Commission meetings, the information is usually available online the Wednesday before the Commission meeting, which is usually the first Monday of the month. For the Planning Board, the information is available the Thursday or Friday before the Board's meeting, which is usually the third Tuesday of the month.

PROJECTS

1. Acquisition of Maratea Subdivision. Maratea is an 18-acre tract of vacant land on the east side of A1A Beach Boulevard between the Sea Colony and Bermuda Run subdivisions. The developers have deeded to the City two acres for conservation and

beach access purposes. In 2005, the City Commission approved a planned unit development of 72 clustered residential units on the property. In 2008, the Commission extended the approval for the development for five years. However, because of the downturn in the housing market, the owners of the property are willing to sell the subdivision's 16 acres to the City in two phases: phase one would be for 11 acres; phase two would be for the final five acres located on the ocean in the northeast corner of the subdivision. For phase one, the City's voters at the August 2008 primary election agreed to allow themselves to be taxed up to half a mill in property taxes to pay the long-term debt to acquire the 11 acres. To determine the value of the property, the City hired an appraiser in October 2008. Once a final draft of the appraisal is done, a meeting will be held with the property's owners to discuss it and what the next steps will be. In the meantime, City staff members will meet with staffers from the Florida League of Cities to discuss possible financing for the purchase of the 11 acres through the League's municipal bond program.

2. Maratea Beach Access Walkway. The Maratea developers have donated a strip of land 15-feet wide along the subdivision's south border with Sea Colony. The strip will be the location of a 1600-foot-long beach walkway from A1A Beach Boulevard. The City has been awarded a \$200,000 State grant with a \$200,000 match requirement. This makes \$400,000 available for this project. Plans and specifications have been prepared, and the City is now advertising for bids. The bids will be opened at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2009. The City Commission will be asked at its February 2nd meeting to award the bid. Because of the start of the sea turtle season in May, the contractor will likely build the beach section of the walkway first.

3. Beach Restoration. In November 2009, the County informed the City that \$7 million had been allocated by the Federal government to renourish the section of beach that had been eroded by Tropical Storm Faye in August 2008. This section includes the area of beach by the County pier and northwards into the State Park. The County also told City officials that South Ponte Vedra and Vilano Beach residents had asked the Florida Department of Environmental Protection not to approve a permit to use the ebb shoal by the St. Augustine Inlet entrance as a source of sand for the renourishment project. The residents claim that past dredging of sand from the shoal is the cause of the erosion to their beach. They asked the DEP to require the County and Corps of Engineers to find another sand source. Mayor O'Brien wrote to the DEP requesting that the permit be issued with the requirement that the Corps and the County will do a study as to whether the cause of the erosion is the taking of sand from the shoal. If the DEP issues the permit, then the renourishment of the beach in the Park and the City will have to be done before the sea turtle season begins in May 2009.

4. Sewer System Improvements. In several of the City's older subdivisions, the residents use individual septic systems for sewage treatment. The County's Utility Department provides sewage collection and treatment services to other subdivisions. The Department has proposed that sewer mains be constructed in those subdivisions that lack them. The cost would be over \$13 million. To pay the cost, the Utility Department was planning to use state grant money, as well as money from a state loan program. However, because of the economic downturn that's affecting the entire country, money may not be available from the loan program. After the Florida Legislature begins its 2009 session in February, the County may know whether the Legislature will appropriate money for the loan program. County Utility Department representatives will be asked to provide an update report to the City Commission at its March 2, 2009 meeting.

5. Scenic Overlook. A1A Beach Boulevard is a segment of the County's Scenic and Historic A1A that goes from the County's boundary with Duval County south to the County's boundary with Flagler County. In 2005, the County had a scenic highway master plan developed by interested residents under the guidance of a professional planner. The plan suggests a number of improvements, such as signs, landscaping, roundabouts, and designs for crosswalks and intersections. For St. Augustine Beach, a key project was a scenic overlook at the east end of Pope Road where it ends at the beach. The City received a scenic highway grant of \$120,000, with a \$30,000 match, to pay the constructions costs. However, as the grant is from the Federal Highway Administration, the City isn't certified to spend the money. As the County is certified, it will take over the implementation of the project. A survey recently done of the north right-of-way boundary of Pope Road showed that there's sufficient space north of the existing sand fence to construct the overlook. This location would not take any space at the east end of Pope Road that is needed by the Corps of Engineers when it does beach restoration projects. The County's Public Works Director, Mr. Joe Stephenson, asked the County's Scenic Highway Coordinator, Ms. Vickie Renna, to coordinate with the County Engineering Division the preparation of documents so that the project could move forward.

6. Drainage. Since 1992, the City has done an estimated \$3 million-plus in drainage improvements. While the main projects in the master plan approved in 2003 by the City Commission have been done, several other projects could be done, if money is available. These include piping the 2nd Avenue ditch and the drainage improvements for 9th and 1st Streets and on 2nd Avenue between A and B Streets. The piping of the ditch will be done in conjunction with the new Courtyard by Marriott Hotel that's to be built between 5th and 8th Streets. The hotel's owner is paying about two-thirds of the cost to pipe the ditch. Other projects include D and F Streets. The Commission has approved the City's civil engineering consultant doing a study of the drainage problems on these two streets. Whether improvements can be made later in 2009 or 2010 will depend on whether the City has money for them. The Public Works Director at the Commission's January or February meeting will provide an update report on upcoming drainage projects.

CITY'S 50TH BIRTHDAY

In 2009, the City of St. Augustine Beach will be 50 years old. To mark the occasion, the City Commission has approved the hiring of an events coordinator, City Gate Productions. It is being guided by a small committee of citizens, along with Vice Mayor Helhoski. To date, the following events are planned in 2009 to celebrate the City's half century of existence: A Twist and Shout dance at the Holiday Inn on Saturday, March 7th; a history gallery of the City at the Cultural Center on Saturday, September 12th; a surfing contest from October 19th through the 25th; cake and refreshments after the City Commission meeting on Monday, November 2nd; a sand sculpting contest on the beach from November 4th through the 7th; and a 50th anniversary party at the County pier pavilion on Saturday November 7th.

During 2009, there'll be three other events sponsored by non-city organizations that will be part of the yearly events to celebrate the City's 50th birthday. These are A Taste of St. Augustine Beach, sponsored by the Civic Association, on May 16-17, 2009; Party at the

Pier on August 8 or 9, 2009, sponsored by the County Parks and Recreation Department; and the chili cook-off/fireworks show sponsored by the South Beaches Area Council of the Chamber of Commerce and the City on December 31, 2009.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN.....

During the past three months, the Commission made the following decisions, among many:

1. Approved the following ordinances:
 - to adopt the natural gas franchise agreement with Teco Peoples Gas Company.
 - to establish a business tax receipt category for transient rentals.
 - to establish regulations for the use of the City's logo.
 - to amend Ordinance 07-14 to provide additional regulations concerning the development of property in the overlay district east of A1A Beach Boulevard between 16th and F Streets.
 - to regulate illegal discharges into the City's stormwater system.
 - to amend the Comprehensive Plan by adopting the five-year capital improvements plan.
2. Approved the following resolutions:
 - to declare October 2008 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
 - to amend the City's Personnel Manual to change bereavement leave for City employees from two days to three days.
 - to have the canvassing and certification of absentee ballots cast in the November 4, 2008 general election done by the Supervisor of Elections and the County Canvassing Board.
 - to amend the City's Personnel Manual concerning employment by the City of relatives of City employees.
 - to adopt a policy concerning the absence of alternates from meetings of City boards and committees.
 - to support the Florida League of Cities' initiative "Building Citizenship in the Community: Back to the Basics."
 - to adopt policies for the use/rental of City buildings.
3. Made the following miscellaneous decisions:

- made the following appointments: a) to the Tree/Board Beautification Advisory Committee: Ms. Ann Palmquist as an alternate; re-appointed to three year terms the following regular members: Ms. Tanya Frantzen, Ms. Hester Longstreet, Ms. Dora Lovell, Ms. Mary McCarthy, Ms. Robin Nadeau, and Ms. Jeanette Smith. b) to the Planning and Zoning Board: Mr. Greg Crum as a regular member, and Mr. Daniel Stewart and Mr. Steve Mitherz as alternates.
- approved the following special events permits: for the Sertoma Club's Charity Dodgeball Tournament at the County pier pavilion on October 26th; for the Christian Surfers Association's surf contest on November 15th and 16th on the beach at 10th Street; for the Civic Association's Surf Illumination Event on Saturday, December 6, 2008; for TNT Productions' arts and crafts show at the County pier pavilion on February 21 and February 22, 2009; for the American Diabetes Association's "Tour de Cure" at the County pier pavilion on Saturday and Sunday, May 30 and 31, 2009.
- approved the extension of the six-month permit to allow a massage therapist at the Wednesday farmers' market.
- approved the interlocal agreement with the County for the payment of \$114,000 by the County to the City as the County's share of the costs to construct the A Street restrooms and paved plazas.
- approved a conditional use permit to allow outside serving/consumption of food and beverages on a patio at Zaharias Restaurant, 3945 A1A South.
- approved the Police Chief's request to spend money from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund to purchase off-duty firearms, accessories, and ammunition.
- approved the City Attorney defending the City in a lawsuit concerning an agreement that certain owners of transient rental properties want the Commission to approve.
- approved the Finance Director's request to purchase updated software that will help her to more efficiently do certain tasks related to the City's financial operations.
- approved the Civic Association's request to construct a small office in the former Police Department garage located next to the Cultural Council building at the County pier park.

WHERE WE'RE GOING.....

During the next three months, here are some of the major actions/projects the Commission will be working on:

1. Swearing in of Mr. Rich O'Brien and Ms. Andrea Samuels for Commission Seats 1 and 2. They won their seats in the November 4th general election, and each will be sworn into office for a four-year term at the Commission's January 5th meeting.
2. Election of Mayor and Vice Mayor for 2009. Each year from its members, the five-member City Commission elects the City's Mayor and Vice Mayor for a one-year term. Commissioner Rich O'Brien was the Mayor for 2008. The Commissioners at their January 5th meeting will decide who is to be the Mayor and Vice Mayor for 2008.
3. Review of A1A Beach Boulevard Vision Plan. In 2005-07, a vision plan for the Boulevard was developed by interested citizens, the Planning Board, and the City Commission, with the help of a professional planning firm. Several features of the plan were adopted, such as the mixed use (residential/commercial) concept and changes to the Land Development Code for architectural features, setbacks, etc. Now the Planning Board has undertaken a detailed review of the vision plan so that it can be updated and improved. After several workshops, the Board has identified six broad topics and a number of subsidiary topics: aesthetics (streetscape, landscaping, utilities, architectural features); facilities (e.g., plazas, the pier, restrooms, beach facilities); traffic circulation (alleys, use of one-way streets, traffic calming, re-opening of closed streets, roundabouts); parking (on-street parking, use of plazas for parking, shared parking for commercial uses, and easing on-site requirements for parking for businesses); pedestrian and bicycle facilities (bike lanes and width of sidewalks along the Boulevard, shared bicycle/pedestrian facilities, where sidewalk/bike facilities needed); commercial viability (whether more commercial development is needed, roadblocks to commercial development, mixed residential and commercial uses, issues related to the closeness of commercial areas to residential areas). The Planning Board has completed its review of aesthetics and facilities. The Board will next discuss traffic circulation at its workshop meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission meeting room at city hall.
4. Public Hearings on Several Ordinances. The hearings are scheduled for the Commission's January 5th meeting. The ordinances are: a. to allow package stores of a certain size (less than 8,000 square feet) only in shopping centers with 15,000 or more square feet. In addition, the ordinance allows restaurants with a certain type of alcoholic beverage license to sell package alcoholic beverages. This ordinance will have a public hearing at the Commission's January 5th meeting.
5. Review of City's Budget. The 2009 fiscal year began on October 1, 2008 and will end on September 30, 2009. The total projected revenues and expenditures for FY 09 are \$8,466.434. Because of the economic difficulties in the nation, the City will have to reduce expenditures for Fiscal Year 2010. The City administration will ask the Commission at its February 2nd meeting to schedule a date for a special meeting to review projected revenues and expenditures for FY 2010 and to see what expenditures may have to be cut in order to match the reduction in revenues.
6. Change of Land Use for Hammock Dunes Park. The Park is a 6.1-acre tract located on the west side of A1A Beach Boulevard north of the Anastasia Shopping Plaza. The County has purchased it for \$2.5 million, and the City is reimbursing the County over a period of years for half of the purchase price. Some residents have expressed concern that the County might use the property for purposes other than for recreation and open space. To allay these concerns, the City is changing the property's land use and zoning designations from commercial to parks and recreation. A public

hearing on the two ordinances is scheduled for the City Commission's January 5th meeting.

7. Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report. Every seven years, Florida cities and counties must evaluate their respective comprehensive plans. The City's Planning and Zoning Board spent a year working on the Comp Plan's evaluation and appraisal report under the guidance of a professional planning consultant. The City Commission has sent the report to the Florida Department of Community Affairs for review and acceptance. The DCA will inform the City in February as to whether it has found the report "sufficient." If it is sufficient, then the next step in 2009 is for the Planning Board to begin the writing of Comp Plan amendments that will address the issues raised in the evaluation and appraisal report.

8. Use of Renewable Energy. At its January 5th meeting, the City Commission will discuss Vice Mayor Helhoski's suggestion that the City look into the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels.