

**LYNETTE SELF, CHAIR**  
OFFICE (904) 630-1392  
FAX (904) 630-2906  
E-MAIL: [LSelf@coj.net](mailto:LSelf@coj.net)



117 W. Duval Street, Suite 425  
4<sup>TH</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

**JACKSONVILLE  
WATERWAYS  
COMMISSION**

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JACKSONVILLE WATERWAYS COMMISSION  
December 4, 2003  
9:00 a.m.

The monthly meeting of the Jacksonville Waterways Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, December 4, 2003 in the City Council Chamber, by the Chair, Council Member Lynette Self.

The minutes of the October 2, 2003 meeting of the Commission were approved and the Chair requested that the minutes be posted on the City's website.

A lengthy discussion ensued on boater safety zones in the Cedar River. Ordinance 2001-457-E had established a boating safety zone throughout the Cedar River from the San Juan Bridge to the headwaters of the Cedar River. Owing to the sunset provision of the legislation, the discussion centered on what action/recommendation the Commission wanted to make. The Chair opened the public hearing to enable the Cedar River area residents present to air their views. Mr. Eric Schultz made a presentation opposed to any further restrictions on boater and recreational uses of the river. Dr. Quinton White observed that originally, the Manatee Protection Plan did not include the St. Johns River's tributaries. After ten years of surveying and compiling data on mother-calf relationships, the Cedar River became a concern because of a high number of perinatal deaths in the river. Dr. White concluded that the Cedar River was a calving area. This assessment resulted in the recommendation and implementation of a boater safety zone.

While the safety zone was in effect, Dr. White observed that there have been few perinatal mishaps. Dr. White recommended keeping the boater safety zone, that a slow speed zone in the river is needed. Commissioner Jim Bailey and Council Member Art Graham pointed out that if restrictions were removed with subsequent manatee deaths on the Cedar River, there was the likelihood that either the state or federal government could impose measures on the Cedar and other tributaries. Commissioner Carter Bryan

wanted speakers to distinguish whether they were against the boater safety zone for the Cedar River or fearful that restrictions would be applied to other tributaries such as the Ortega River. Commissioner Bryan indicated that it was not the intention of the Commission to recommend restrictions for other tributaries. On a 6 to 3 vote, the Commission voted to continue to study conditions of the river for a year and to take actions, as needed. The Commission Chair, C/M Self, will meet with Assistant General Counsel Greg Radlinks, Dr. White and others and come back to the Commission at its next meeting with recommendations.

Dr. Anne Keller provided the Commission with an update on the work of the St. Johns River Alliance. The Alliance was formed following the Mayor's River Summit to work in conjunction with the American Heritage Rivers Initiative on plans for the St. Johns River's use. The Alliance consists of the twelve counties through which the St. Johns River flows, along with representatives of the Department of Environmental Protection and the St. Johns River Water Management District. The goals of the Alliance are to engage citizens in expanding on the work generated by the summit to develop a plan for the river's use.

Captain Bob Donnelly of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission provided the Commission with an update on the Joint Marine Task Force. The Joint Task Force, initially mandated to coordinate surrounding waterways homeland security, has added coordinating the manatee speed zone issue to its mission.

Commissioner Gary Anderson updated the Commission on the Run-Off & Water Quality Subcommittee and that body's focus on sediment flowing into our waterways as a result of construction projects. The run-off issue was generated by the presentation of Mr. Rod Morris at the Commission's August meeting. At that meeting, Mr. Morris had documented considerable run-off into Fishing Creek emanating from a FDOT road construction project on Timuquana Road. Commissioner Anderson said that the problem could be solved if everyone---developers, the State, contractors, etc---did a better job of communicating.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of Ordinance 2003-1428 (Southbank Riverwalk dredging project); Ordinance 2003-1429 (Stockton Park waterfront plaza project); Ordinance 2003-1430 (Stinson Park canoe launch project); 2003-1431 (Arlington River dredging project); 2003-1434 (Sisters Creek Marina project); and voted to defer Ordinance 2003-1132 (making the manatee motorboat speed zones seasonal, rather than year-round).

Commissioner Anderson updated the Commission on the preparations underway for Sail Jacksonville 2004. The dates for Sail Jacksonville are June 10-14<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Jacksonville will be the first host city in the United States for the *Tenacious* from the United Kingdom. The ship was built by the disabled, is totally accessible to the disabled and can be sailed by the disabled. The Coast Guard's bark *Eagle* will participate. And, the *Baltimore* will be returning.

In his monthly Manatee update, Dr. Quinton White distributed copies of the Annual Update, 2002-2003, Duval County Manatee Protection Plan Population Inventory and Analysis prepared by Jacksonville University for the Waterways Commission. Dr. White reported sighting 29 manatees in the river on a November 11<sup>th</sup> flight, most of who were south of the Fuller Warren Bridge to the Buckman Bridge. None were sighted in the Intracoastal Waterway. No deaths were reported in either October or November. Fewer and fewer manatees have been sighted owing to the weather, which urges the manatees

to move southward.

The Chair, C/M Self, reported on the recent Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission Conference in Key West. She reported that other counties were impressed with Jacksonville's work and successful efforts in the compiling data.

Commissioner Bronson Lamb, Jr. suggested that the Commission look into the Ortega River situation where more and more sailboats are anchoring in the channel; many of these boats have no lights at night. 1800 slips in Jacksonville will be disappearing in the next two years and the situation on the Ortega River merited the Commission's attention. Greg Radlinski, Office of General Counsel, will look into the matter and report back to the Commission.

John J. Jackson  
Council Research Division