

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Jacksonville Waterways Commission

117 W. Duval Street, Suite 425, Jacksonville, Florida 32202

June 14, 2016

5:00 PM

**FINAL REPORT**

**TO:** John Crescimbeni, Chair

Jacksonville Waterways Commission

**FROM:** Jill Haskell, Chair

Adaptive Programming Subcommittee

**RE:** Final Report of the Subcommittee on Adaptive Programming

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OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

March 9, 2016

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Jacksonville Waterways Commission Members

FROM: The Honorable John R. Crescimbeni

Chairman, Jacksonville Waterways Commission

SUBJECT: Jacksonville Waterways Commission Adaptive Programming Subcommittee

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I am hereby appointing a Jacksonville Waterways Commission Adaptive Programming subcommittee. The

subcommittee will have a charge of conducting a thorough review of adaptive programming options which could

make Jacksonville's waterways more accessible to persons with mobility deficits, children with developmental

delays and individuals with visual impairments. Following their review, the subcommittee will develop and submit

a report to the full Commission on their findings (by no later than the Jacksonville Waterways Commission

meeting of June 2016), including a prioritized list of programming recommendations - if any

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**CHARGE:** 1) Conduct a thorough review of adaptive programming options which could make

Jacksonville's Waterways more accessible to persons with mobility deficits, children with developmental delays and individuals with visual impairments.

2) Following the review, we will develop and submit a report to the full commission which will include a prioritized list of programming recommendations.

**MEMBERS:** Jill Haskell, Chair

Lane Burnett, Vice Chair

Ray Pringle

Stephen Swann

Captain Jim Suber, Ex-Officio

**CONCLUSIONS:**

As Chair of the Subcommittee on Adaptive Programming, it is my honor to report that the Committee has concluded its review of the subject of adaptive programming options for the City of Jacksonville's Waterways. As this Commission is well aware, our City has a wealth of marine resources. However, the access of our waterways has been lacking for those citizens with mobility deficits.

Our main goals were to:

1. Identify waterfront activities that could be adapted for participation of individuals with physical limitations

2. Identify places where such activities could occur and potential alterations of these places

3. Identify possible funding sources for these programs, including private sector donations

4. Identify a private sector partner who could share their resources, personnel and clients to make an adaptive program work efficiently.

The Subcommittee believes that the following recommendations should be expounded upon and incorporated into future improvements of access to Jacksonville's waterways:

1. There are two activities which can be easily adapted for those with mobility deficits. They are kayaking and sailing. There is an immediate demand for an offering of kayaking and a sailing program should be formed at a later date.
2. After an in depth review, Mandarin Park (14780 Mandarin Rd., see exhibit A) and Bethesda Park (10790 Key Haven Blvd., see exhibit B) have been chosen as the best sites for our proposed activities. These places would require the least amount of alteration, but still provide the most potential for expansion. These two sites would provide for a geographical spread to our initial adaptive programming offering in the City.
   1. As regarding Mandarin Park; there is an existing kayak launch that is located to the east of the boat ramp. It is a very small and steep cut from the side walk to the shoreline. This is clearly not adequate for our purposes. (see exhibit C) It is advised that another Universal Design access point be made a few yards east of the existing launch which would be more accessible for persons with disabilities. This new launch should include wider, smoother side walks connecting the waterfront with the existing disabled parking. It should also include a small ramp connecting the shoreline to a small set of floating docks which are illustrated in the pictures provided by Commissioner Swann. (see exhibit D)
   2. The potential expansion of the site should include another Universal Design floating dock installation just west of the boat ramp. Presently, kayakers are using this side of the ramp for a launch which provides for congestion and safety issues for traffic on the boat ramp by motorized vessels. (see exhibit E) The surface of the ramp is often very slippery as well. To alleviate this issue, there is a strip of trees on the shoreline that can be removed and this area improved to accommodate all paddle sport enthusiasts, including those with disabilities.
   3. This newly claimed waterfront should include more facilities of the same nature as those on the east side of the existing ramp. This would provide for ideal conditions for direct access to waters that are friendly to our purpose.
   4. As regarding Bethesda Park; it is a unique location that is a joint venture between Jax Parks, US Fish and Wildlife and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. It is has been specifically designed to be Accessible. However it is reported to the subcommittee that there is a perimeter road around the lake that should be continued to entirely circle Bethesda Lake in order to make the site easier to egress. The park is already in use by Brooks for some activities as a part of a therapeutic program. Lake Bethesda is managed and stocked with fish by FWC, but the City of Jacksonville owns the park and retains the right to alter the facilities. Furthermore, there is already a substantial concrete dock in place that would easily accommodate the same installation of floating docks and ports that we suggest for the Mandarin Park location. Lake Bethesda is 16 acres large and provides for calm waters.
3. There are a number of funding sources that can be found for both initial start-up grants as well as some monies for programs that have a proven record of success. These sources include FIND, US Sailing and private sector donations. The boating industry is also an excellent source for seed money for new programs. All of these sources of funding are publicized and should be explored further.
   1. Currently, there are some immediate offers to the city to provide equipment for adaptation. There are three small sailing vessels in the possession of the Boy Scouts of America. They are currently located at the River Base on Doctor's Lake. At this time, they are offered as a donation to be used by the public. There is also an offer of private donation the restore these vessels to sailing condition, as they have been in storage and need some work. (exhibit F)
   2. Most importantly, there is also a strong desire among the sailing community to volunteer for adaptive programming activities. These volunteers would include instructors, tandem sailors and any other role that the program would need to succeed. Mr. Rick Kirkwood, Director of Aquatic Activities for the Boy Scouts has been and would continue to be a tremendously valuable resource to an adaptive sailing program. He should be recognized for his contribution to this effort. His involvement would also ensure that children with disabilities would be included in our adaptive programming options.
   3. Another valuable resource available to an adaptive program in our city is the volunteer base found in the local boating community. This committee has been assured that maritime organizations, such as the United States Power Squadron and other local Cruising Clubs, would be willing to provide services such as safety boats and fill other on-water roles.
4. Lastly, we must consider the necessity of a private sector partner in an adaptive programming venture. Personnel from Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital have been included in the subcommittee meetings. However, they are not able to commit to a partnership for adaptive programming at this time. As the process continues and more facts are gathered in order to effect these recommendations, Brooks Rehabilitation should be included in all discussions. Brooks has already hosted a variety of aquatic adaptive programs with a public aspect.

* 1. A major impediment for any program of this nature is the liability issue laid upon the City. This exposure to risk for the City would be minimized by the insurance coverage provided by an establishment like Brooks Rehabilitation. Ms. Alice Krause from Brooks has stated that their insurance policy is adequate and would be primary on any activities in which they are a part.
  2. Client registration, transportation issues, volunteer training, assistance with developing Essential Eligibility Criteria for participants, expertise for dealing with persons with disabilities and medical knowledge are all components of a successful adaptive program that a strong private partner should provide. Brooks Rehabilitation possesses all of these. However, if Brooks finds that they cannot commit the resources to partner with us, we should look at other enterprises such as Mayo Clinic, Shands/UF Hospital, and Jacksonville Orthopedic Institute.
  3. Regardless of any current commitment of a public-private partnership, the Committee has concluded that the plans for the improvements needed to make Mandarin Park and Bethesda Park more accessible should commence. They are much needed and will improve access to our waterways for every citizen.

I would like to thank the Chair for the opportunity to explore this subject with an array of talented and knowledgeable people. The information included in this report was gleaned from a consensus of our subcommittee members.Those who have made significant progress to further the formation of an adaptive program include Commissioners Lane, Swann and Pringle. Also the Department of Parks and Recreation, COJ Disabled Services Division, Mr. John Jackson of Council Research Division, Jessica Morales, Legislative Assistant, Paige Johnston of the Office of General Council and the Marine Resources Department have all been invaluable in this endeavor. And I especially appreciate the expertise that Captain Jim Suber has brought to our discussions. I hope that our effort to show that an Adaptive Program for the waterways of Jacksonville is not only very possible; but it is a critical component for ensuring waterways access to all of our residents.

Jill Haskell, Chair

City Council Commissioner

JWC-Adaptive Programming Subcommittee

JH/jm

Cc: Council Members/Staff

          Cheryl L. Brown, Director/Council Secretary

Dana Farris, Chief – Legislative Services Division

Carol Owens, Assistant Chief – Legislative Services Division

           Jeff Clements, Chief – Research Division

          Kristi Sikes, Chief – Administrative Services Division

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