

City of Jacksonville

1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street



Meeting Minutes Wake Zone Committee

Wednesday, April 7, 2021
9:00 AM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall & Virtual

Jacksonville Waterways Commission

CM Al Ferraro, Chair
CM Randy White, Vice Chair
CM Aaron Bowman
CM Terrance Freeman, Alternate
Jon Michael Barker
Robert Birtalan
Lindsey Brock
Lane Burnett
State Rep. Cord Byrd
Mark Devereaux
Andrew Fraden
Marc Hardesty, Excused Absence
Jill D. Haskell
Raymond S. Pringle, Jr.
Marshall Adkison, Ex-Officio
Adam Hoyles, Ex-Officio

Vonya Balogh & Jessica Smith, Legislative Assistants
Susan Grandin, Asst. General Counsel
Dr. Quinton White, Jacksonville University
Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University
Richard Distel, Research Assistant
Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator

Meeting Convened: 9:04 am Meeting Adjourned: 10:16 am

Attendance:

Commissioners Haskell, Barker and Brock; Council Member DeFoor; Waterways Coordinator Jim Suber

Also: Susan Grandin (Zoom), Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting, such person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

RULE 4.505 DISRUPTION OF MEETING

No member of the audience shall applaud nor make any noise or remarks that are audible to the Committee that would indicate approval or disapproval of anything being discussed. Any disregard of this rule may result in removal by the Sergeant at Arms.

REQUEST TO SPEAK:

1. Fill out a speaker card.
2. Sign it if you are going to speak.
3. Read the rules on the back of the card.
4. Place card in tray.

PARKING: If you park in the Library Garage (Entry on Duval St, W of Main St), please see the Legislative Assistant for ticket validation.

MEETING TIME: 9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

Physical Location: Council Chambers

City Hall

117 W. Duval Street

Jacksonville, Florida 32202

(If attending virtually, please join the meeting by 8:45 A.M.)

Meeting ID: 972 2079 9930

Meeting Password: 080187

Council Members, City staff and the public may attend the meeting at the physical location-Council Chambers, but CDC guidelines will be adhered to due to COVID-19. A mandatory mask requirement is in place for all public buildings pursuant to the COJ Emergency Executive Proclamation 2020-005, as extended.

The public will be encouraged to share general comments with individual council members by email or telephone. Public hearings and public participation are required by state statute for specific legislation. We will conduct these hearings as required by state law. CCMeeting04132021@coj.net is the designated email for general comments to be including as a part of this meeting.

Call To Order**Roll Call****Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2021**

The commissioners unanimously approved the minutes from the January 22, 2021 meeting.

New Business

Commissioner Haskell reviewed the presentation from the January meeting, regarding recommendations on potential slow speed/minimum wake zone sites. According to that presentation, the Ortega River location was described as congested, vulnerable, un-enforced and lacking sufficient marking. The Ortega River Landing reports over \$100,000 in floating dock damage in the past 36 months from wave action; liveboards experience severe rocking at all hours of the day and night; alcohol related incident that hit bridge and ran onto shore last year; large boats have reportedly crashed into concrete docks because of wakes from passing vessels.

Captain Suber provided details about the bridges in the Clapboard Creek area by Palms Fish Camp. The previous meeting presentation portrayed the Ft. George location as dangerous, congested, unpredictable and needing at least seasonal restrictions. Specific issues in that area include: Operator safety issues; Alcohol a common factor Vessel damage occurring; Collisions between vessels and fixed objects are common; Jet Ski falls cited. Florida Statute 327.46 allows slow wake zones to be designated within 500 feet of a boat ramp, and there is a ramp in that area.

Old Business

- Discussion of Potential Bridge Safety Zones
- Discussion of Ortega Area Wake Zone Issues

CM DeFoor shared that she had numerous conversations with Ortega River residents, marina operators and business owners all of whom opposed the slow wake zones being proposed. The opposition is due to the presence of slow speed zones already in the area that are not enforced, and particularly local concerns that more slow speed zones will encourage anchored/derelect vessels in the river. Captain Suber agreed that waterways enforcement is an ongoing issue. Ms. Haskell suggested another subcommittee to work with law enforcement on enforcement issues. Ms. Haskell also said that she will work with CM DeFoor to identify existing signage that needs to be updated/replaced.

Commissioner Haskell thanked Commissioner Haskell for her hard work and research on this topic. He went on to explain the correlation between more slow speed zones and long term anchored vessels, and agreed that enforcement is problematic because JSO simply lacks the resources. Mr. Barker shared a personal story about a boat anchored near his home's dock for many years and the challenges associated with derelect vessel removal.

CM DeFoor mentioned a line item in this year's budget for \$100,000 to go toward addressing the derelect boat problem. Captain Suber indicated that the funds are housed in the Neighborhoods Department and also said that state funding for such projects will be available soon. Commissioner Brock spoke about the difficulty in legally remedying dock damage, and lamented about the state taking over elements of policy previously under local control. Susan Grandin, OGC, talked about local legislation about floating structures and how it could be expanded to include regulations for liveaboards and derelect/abandoned vessels. Ms. Grandin also mentioned the logistical obstacle of impounding vessels with no impound lot/marina for storage afterwards.

Public Comment

There were several attendees from the Ortega River area present to speak in opposition to the slow wake zones near the Ortega Bridge. One attendee said the real problem is anchored vessels in the river, and he asked about the permissibility of anchored commercial vessels. One attendee said that the vehicle traffic would increase on the bridge if slow speed zones were put in place. One attendee said he opposed the slow speed zones and mentioned the recurring issue of enforcement. Two other attendees agreed and spoke about the derelict vessel issue. One attendee criticized the jet ski rental company for not properly training those who rent there.

Another attendee spoke about the years long presence of derelict vessels and anchored liveaboards in the river - he said that there are cars that park overnight in a nearby park and that a boater is shuttling folks from the parking lot to the anchored boats off shore. It was agreed that there should be more parking enforcement in those parks where the prohibition of overnight stays is posted.

Commissioner Haskell proposed designing a flyer to be distributed in the area with law enforcement resources and contacts on it. Commissioner Haskell also said that she will revise the report on slow speed zone recommendations to remove the Ortega Bridge area, but retain the Clapboard Creek area. She will also pursue the creation of the law enforcement resources flyer and look into options regarding the enforcement of overnight vehicle parking in the area.

Adjournment

Pursuant to the American with Disabilities Act, accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. Please allow 1-2 business days notification to process; last minute requests will be accepted; but may not be possible to fulfill. Please contact Disabled Services Division at: V 904-255-5466, TTY-904-255-5476, or email your request to KaraT@coj.net.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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