

City of Jacksonville

*1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street*



Meeting Minutes

Arlington River Speed Zone Sub-Committee

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

3:30 PM

Lynwood Roberts Rm, 1st Floor, City Hall

Jacksonville Waterways Commission

CM Nick Howland, Chair

CM Randy DeFoor, Vice Chair

CM LeAnna Cumber

CM Tyrona Clark-Murray, Alternate

Jon Michael Barker

Robert Birtalan

Lane Burnett

Representative Kiyann Michael

Mark Devereaux

Andrew Fraden

Marc Hardesty

Richard Hartley

General Public Rep. (Vacant)

Marshall Adkison, Ex-Officio

Adam Hoyles, Ex-Officio

Barbara Ireland Hobson, Legislative Assistant

Rita Mairs, Office of General Counsel

Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University

Jeff Clements, Chief of Research

Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator

Meeting convened: 3:31 pm Meeting adjourned: 4:35 pm

Attendance: Council Members Howland and Morgan; Subcommittee Members Richard Hartley (Chair), Andrew Fraden and Adam Hoyles (ex officio)

Absent: Mark Devereaux

Also: Rita Mairs - Office of General Counsel; Jim Suber - Waterways Coordinator; Brian Burket - Parks Department; Colleen Hampsey - Council Research Division

Call To Order

Chairman Hartley convened the meeting and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

New Business

Commissioner Hartley mentioned a recent accident in the Arlington River, wherein someone in a tube being towed behind a jet ski was injured.

1. Discussion: Arlington River Speed Zone

CM Howland provided a review of the history of potential speed restrictions in the river near the Cesary Boulevard bridge, and Resolution 2022-463 introduced by CM Ferraro last year that was ultimately withdrawn. Resolution 2022-463 aimed to establish a boating speed restricted area in the Arlington River through the Cesary and University Boulevard bridges due to the blind spot created when the river creates a narrow flow channel around a sharp bend. Due to strong sentiment on both sides of the issue, local boaters and rowing clubs, CM Ferraro withdrew the bill. At the February 2023 JWC meeting, the jet ski accident was discussed and the members decided to reconsider speed restrictions.

There was a discussion about the installation of non-regulatory informational signage such as "Caution - Rowers Ahead", instead of regulatory signs. The members talked about the benefits of speed restrictions and where they should be located. CM Morgan said she was disappointed that Resolution 2022-463 was withdrawn, and that she is hopeful to reach consensus on this issue.

Brian Burket, Parks Department, explained the state statute related to a restricted speed zone within 300 feet of certain bridges. Mr. Burket said that, if approved, a resolution for speed restrictions near the Cesary bridge would be attached to a permit application to the relevant agencies, and then signage could be installed. He mentioned a signage estimate from a few years ago for \$30,000 for 2 signs on pilings, but said that for the Cesary area 4 signs would be more appropriate which could be roughly \$50,000. CM Howland's assistant Amber Lehman said that, according to the Auditor's Office, there is funding available.

Mr. Fraden talked about non-regulatory warning signs affixed to the bridge, which would need FDOT approval. There was discussion of one directional channels for boaters and rowers, and time sensitive speed restrictions.

Public Comment

Davis Bales spoke in support of the speed restrictions, noting the accident risks.

Lisa Almeida spoke in opposition of the restrictions, and about government overreach. She talked about dredging, silt accumulation from slow boat speeds, and personal responsibility.

Mike Murphy spoke in opposition, asked if the signs would be lit at night, and he suggested speed restrictions at certain times of day. (The signage would be equipped with reflectors not lights)

Donnie Oulten spoke in opposition, and talked about silt in the area.

Joe Lawhon asked who will be responsible for future dredging. (Dredging in this area was paid for several years ago through FIND grant funds, but those funds will not be available for future dredging)

Azi Yavari spoke in support of restrictions, noting that it is a safety issue for everyone on the river not just rowers.

Travis Slaughter spoke in opposition, and he said that there is already a no wake policy for boats passing non-motorized vessels. He talked about government overreach and the timing of the meeting making it difficult for interested parties to attend.

CM Howland listed the possible next steps, wherein if agreed upon by the subcommittee it would go before JWC for a vote. If passed by JWC, legislation would be introduced at council and assigned to go through the committee process, and then back to council for a vote.

There was a motion and second to proceed with establishing a 300 ft speed restricted zone adjacent to the Cesary bridge, which was approved 3-0 (Hartley, Fraden and Hoyes in the affirmative).

Adjournment

With no further business, CM Howland adjourned the meeting.

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Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151

Posted: 3.10.23 5:00 pm