

City of Jacksonville

117 W. Duval Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 12, 2025

2:00 PM

Council Chamber,
1st Floor, City Hall

Jacksonville Waterways Commission

CM Mike Gay, Chair

CM Ken Amaro, Vice Chair

CM Jimmy Peluso

CM Tyrona Clark-Murray, Alternate

Jon Michael Barker

Robert Birtalan

General Public Rep - Vacant

Representative Kiyon Michael

Mark Devereaux

Andrew Fraden

Marc Hardesty

Richard Hartley

Richard J. Redick

Jill Haskell - General Public Rep - Absent

Jack Meeks, Ex-Officio

Adam Hoyles, Ex-Officio

Rebecca Bolton, Legislative Assistant

Shannon MacGillis, Office of General Counsel

Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University

Nayeli Jimenez, Council Research

Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator

Meeting Convened: 2:02 PM**Meeting Adjourned: 3:28 PM****1. Call To Order****2. Roll Call****3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Mike Gay called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees to the Waterways Commission meeting. Members introduced themselves and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May meeting were unanimously approved by voice vote.

5. St. Johns River Status Report on Water Quality & Manatees

Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University, reported that water level and salinity are generally normal, with Buckman slightly above average. Temperatures are around 80° F, and rainfall is a few inches above normal. Algae blooms containing microcystin have been detected, though most sites showed no toxins. Doctor's Lake showed concerning levels at two sites. A new algae species was identified at Rose Creek, but no toxin was present. Manatee deaths remain at nine, including one due to watercraft. A May 23 flight survey was conducted and counted 42 manatees, similar to April's count of 46, but lower than previous years. Statewide, there have been 47 watercraft related manatee deaths out of 390 total.

6. Public Comment

Jimmy Tomazinis- against 2025-322

Blake Retterbush- Mr. Retterbush expressed ongoing concerns about the St. Johns River Boat Ramp, where he has been advocating for improvements over the past five years. He specifically requested exclusive boar trailer parking under the I-95 underpass near the ramp and advanced funding for dredging, as the ramp is unusable at low tide. He also noted the need to extend the ramp and install floating docks for proper staging.

John Nooney- Mr. Nooney expressed frustration over unfulfilled public records requests related to speaker cards, sign-in sheets, and meeting summaries. He cited a past incident where his participation was omitted from the minutes and had to be corrected. He reiterated the importance of transparency and public trust, especially concerning access to the waterways.

7. New Business

2025-0307

ORD Transmitting to the State of FL's Various Agencies for Review, a Proposed Large-Scale Revision to the FLUM Series of the 2045 Comp Plan at 0, 4150, 4282, 4300, 4518, 4534, 4536, 4560, & 4600 Yellow Water Rd, North of Normandy Blvd - (190.29± Acres) - AGR & RR in the Rural Dev Area to LDR in the Suburban Dev Area - John Benton as Trustee of the Yellow Water Land Trust, Kelli W. Davis, Our Choice Investments, LLC, Lawrence C. & Tammy Howell, Kenneth Monroe, Jr., William King, Justin & Elaina Williamson, Josh R. Crews, & Edward K. & Laura A. Rhoden (R.E. # 002272-0010, 002272-0020, 002272-0030, 002272-0040, 002272-0045, 002272-0070, 002272-0100, 002275-0020, 002275-0034, 002275-0115, 002275-0510 & 002275-0515) (Appl # L-5989-24A) (Dist. 12-White) (Read) (LUZ) (PD & PC Apv) (JWC Apv)
5/13/25 CO Introduced: LUZ, JWC
5/20/25 LUZ Read 2nd & Rerefer
5/27/25 CO Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/10/25 CO PH Addnt'l 6/24/25
LUZ PH - 6/17/25
Public Hearing Pursuant to Sec 163.3187, F.S. & Ch 650, Pt 4, Ord Code - 6/10/25 & 6/24/25

Ed Lukacovic, presented a large-scale land use amendment for 190.29 acres on Yellow Water Road. The current land use is Agricultural and Rural Residential, and the proposal seeks to change it to Low Density Residential. The property contains approximately 50.6 acres of wetlands and is located in the Moore's Creek and Yellow Creek drainage basins. He stated that development is limited to 94 single family units due to lack of sanitary sewer infrastructure and the proposed amendment would allow up to 950 units if sewer and water lines are extended from Normandy Boulevard, approximately 4,400 feet away. He stated some wetlands particularly in the northern area buffering Moore's Creek are Category II and of environmental concern and portions of the site lie within FEMA flood zone A and additional undocumented flood prone areas.

Council Member Amaro asked how much development could occur within the Category II wetland area. Mr. Lukacovic responded that the area includes 6.34 acres of wetlands, which ideally should not be developed and if development is pursued mitigation through the nearby Loblolly Mitigation Bank would be required. He noted that a road crossing may be necessary to access upland areas but reiterated that development should avoid the wetlands.

Commissioner Fraden asked whether retention ponds would be required and whether drainage would impact Moore's Creek. Mr. Lukacovic confirmed retention ponds would likely be placed near but not within the wetlands to prevent runoff into Moore's Creek or Yellow Water Creek. Mr. Fraden expressed concern about pollutants settling in the non-flowing creek. Mr. Lukacovic responded that with proper erosion and sediment control during development, runoff should be minimized. He added that while wetlands provide natural flood control and pollution absorption, stormwater systems would still be necessary to manage excess flow.

Chair Gay asked if the sensitive northern wetlands could remain undeveloped due to contamination concerns. Cyndy Trimmer confirmed they are avoiding that area in preliminary plans and will cluster development outside wetlands, though all acreage is included in the land use amendment.

The bill was approved by voice vote.

2025-0374 ORD Approp \$200,000, Including \$100,000 in Grant Funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), & \$100,000 from the Resiliency Infrastructure Improvements - DM Other Construction Costs Acct for the Required City Match, to Fund the NFWF Green Infrastructure Proj; Amend the 25-29 5-Yr Capital Improvement Plan Appvd by Ord 2024-505-E to Reflect this Approp of Funds; Prov for City Oversight by the Planning & Dev Dept, Office of Resiliency (B.T. 25-073) (Dillard) (Req of Mayor) (JWC Apv)
5/27/25 CO Introduced: NCSPHS, F, JWC
6/2/25 NCSPHS Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/3/25 F Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/10/25 CO PH Read 2nd & Rerefer
Public Hearing Pursuant to Ch 166, F.S. & C.R. 3.601 - 6/10/25

Ms. MacGillis stated that the bill was filed at the request of the Mayor and the Office of Resiliency. She noted that OGC is working to have someone from the Office of Resiliency speak before the commission, though timing is uncertain.

Council Member Peluso stated the bill involves a \$100,000 federal grant with a \$100,000 City match. Council Member Gay supported moving the bill forward for a vote.

The bill was approved by voice vote.

2025-0404 ORD Approp \$106,000.00 in Fund Bal from the Environmental Protection Trust Fund to St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc. for an Environmental Quality Assessment of the Ribault River & Moncrief Creek Watersheds; Waiving Sec 110.112 (Advance of City Funds; Prohibition Against), Pt 1 (the City Treasury), Ch 110 (City Treasury), Jax Ord Code, to Allow for a Partial Advance Payment to St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc.; Waiving Sec 118.107 (Nonprofits to Receive Funding Through a Competitive Evaluated Award Process), Pt 1 (General Provisions), Ch 118 (City Grants), Jax Ord Code, to Allow for a Direct Contract with St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc.; Invoking the Exemption in Sec 126.108(g) (Exemptions From Competitive Solicitation), Subpt A (General Regulations), Pt 1 (General Regulations; Ethics & Transparency in Public Contracting), Ch 126 (Procurement Code), Jax Ord Code, to Allow for a Direct Contract with St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc.; Apv & Auth the Mayor, or His Desig, & the Corp Sec to Execute & Deliver that Certain Funding Agrmt btwn the City & St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc.; Prov for Carryover of Funds Into FY 28-29; Prov for City Oversight by the Office of Admin Svcs; Requiring a Report to the Jax Environmental Protection Brd (B.T. 25-085) (Smith) (Req of Mayor) (JWC Apv) 5/27/25 CO Introduced: NCSPHS, R, F, JWC
6/2/25 NCSPHS Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/2/25 R Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/3/25 F Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/10/25 CO PH Read 2nd & Rerefer
Public Hearing Pursuant to Ch 166, F.S. & C.R. 3.601 - 6/10/25

Dr. Lucy Sonnenberg explained the bill. Commissioner Hoyles stated that he could speak on behalf of the Environmental Protection Board. Council Member Amaro asked if ash site remediation would be considered. Commissioner Hoyles confirmed the study will gather baseline data to assess impacts and guide solutions. Commissioner Barker and Representative Michael inquired about funding, which is from the Environmental Protection Board Trust Fund. Dr. Sonnenberg emphasized the project is part of a broader Ribault Creek initiative. Commissioner Devereaux asked about the scope and urgency of the project. Mr. Hoyles noted the 9.7 square miles watershed is residential, impaired, and in need of data to address pollution sources and that the study will last two years.

The bill was approved by voice vote.

2025-0409 ORD Apv, & Auth the Mayor & Corp Sec to Execute & Deliver, for & on Behalf of the City, that Certain Sovereignty Submerged Lands Lease Renewal (Bot File No. 160336982) btwn the City, Palms Fish Camp Restaurant LLC, & the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of FL, for the Purpose of Operating a 21-Slip Commercial Docking Facility, an Existing Boat Ramp, a Canoe/Kayak Launch, & an Add'l Boat Ramp with Boardwalks on Either Side of the Ramp, for a 10 Yr Initial Term Commencing 8/30/24, with an Initial Annual Lease Fee of \$5,445.91, Plus Sales Tax, Subj to Annual Adjustments to the Lease Fee thereafter in Accordance with 18-21.011, FL Admin Code; Prov for Oversight of Acquisition, Execution & Recording of the Lease by the Real Estate Div, Public Works Dept, & Oversight of the Lease & Docking Facility by the Parks, Recreation & Community Svcs Dept (Wilson) (Req of Mayor) (JWC Apv)
5/27/25 CO Introduced: NCSPHS, F, JWC
6/2/25 NCSPHS Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/3/25 F Read 2nd & Rerefer
6/10/25 CO PH Read 2nd & Rerefer
Public Hearing Pursuant to Ch 166, F.S. & C.R. 3.601 - 6/10/25

Renee Hunter, Public Works, Chief of Real Estate, explained the bill. Commissioner Devereaux stated that he will be abstaining from voting due to being the owner of the restaurant. The bill was approved by voice vote.

2025-0432 ORD-MC re Watercraft Regulation; Amend Pt 1 (Watercraft Regulations), Ch 388 (Boats & Waterways), Ord Code, to Update Findings & Legislative Intent, Clarify & Update Definitions, Consolidate Into 1 Pt the Administrative Procedures that Apply Across the Ch & Clarify Enforcement Authority; Repealing Pt 2 (Enforcement Authority), Ch 388 (Boats & Waterways), Ord Code, in Its Entirety; Creating a New Pt 2 (Floating Structures), Ch 388 (Boats & Waterways), Ord Code, to Consolidate the Provisions Pertaining to Floating Structures Into 1 Pt, Specify Notification & Citation Procedures, Clarify Penalties for Violations, Clarify Removal Procedures & Prov Procedures for Disposal of Lost or Abandoned Floating Structures; Repealing Pt 3 (Violations, Penalties & Enforcement), Ch 388 (Boats & Waterways)...(MacGillis) (Introduced by CMs Gay, Peluso, & Amaro) (JWC Apv)
6/10/25 CO Introduced: NCSPHS, R, TEU, JWC
Public Hearing Pursuant to Ch 166, F.S. & C.R. 3.601 - 6/24/25

Ms. Shannon MacGillis, Office of General Counsel, explained the bill. She stated that it contains only minimal changes and noted that an earlier version had incorrect numerical dates for committee appointments, though the days were accurate. She confirmed the bill reflects what the commission previously approved.

Council Member Amaro asked how the bill would enhance enforcement and address derelict vessels. Ms. MacGillis responded that the bill formally outlines procedures for dealing with derelict vessels, vessels at risk, and a new category – abandoned vessels – separate from general abandoned property. She stated that it includes timelines, notice requirements, citation procedures, and post citations actions, allowing the City to recover costs related to environmental and physical remediation.

Chair Gay thanked everyone that was involved in the creation of the bill, noting that the bill will provide long overdue support for improving waterway safety and removing hazardous vessels.

The bill was approved by voice vote.

8. Old Business

St. Johns River Accord Task Force

Council Member Peluso stated there were no updates.

Shoaling and Artificial Reef Task Force

Commissioner Hardesty provided an update on a prior meeting concerning artificial reefs and shoaling in the St. Johns River. He emphasized the need for a qualified coordinator due to the technical requirements of artificial reef development. The next subcommittee meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 5. Discussion shifted to shoaling east of Clapboard Creek, attributed to dredging efforts behind Palms Fish Camp. Captain Suber recounted a recent Army Corps meeting, where it was stated a study found the shoaling material did not originate from the spoil site. This claim raised concerns among the commission, as the study had not been shared with the city or commission.

Chair Gay and Commissioners Birtalan, and Devereaux expressed skepticism, citing the previously mentioned \$3 million study and advocating for a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Mr. Hardesty suggested the Office of General Counsel draft the FOIA petition. Council Member Amaro noted the study, if provided to the city, should already be a public record. Council Member Gay agreed and committed to working with OGC to verify and obtain the document. He stressed that this issue should remain a priority under future commission leadership and reaffirmed his ongoing interest, even if no longer serving on the commission.

Commissioner Gay also announced that FWC is reversing course on the Pumpkin Hill shrimping restrictions and considering additional relief for local shrimpers. He invited Brian Burkett from Parks to address concerns raised about the St. Johns Marina boat ramp. Burkett explained the ramp had reopened following repairs and that dredging is pending funding and permits, with expected construction in 2027. He also addressed boat trailer parking concerns, stating that efforts are underway to increase capacity under the Acosta Bridge through flexible parking solutions. Mr. Burkett clarified Parks is not involved in the Deep Bottom Creek dredging project.

9. Adjournment

Chair Gay adjourned the meeting.

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.

Nayeli Jimenez- Council Research Division
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