

# City of Jacksonville

*117 W. Duval Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202*



## Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, August 13, 2025**

**9:30 AM**

**Council Chamber,  
1st Floor, City Hall**

### **Jacksonville Waterways Commission**

*CM Ken Amaro, Chair  
CM Mike Gay, Vice Chair  
CM Jimmy Peluso, 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*

*Barbara Ireland Hobson, Legislative Assistant II*

*Shannon MacGillis, Office of General Counsel*

*Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University*

*Nayeli Jimenez, Council Research*

*Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator*

**COUNCIL RULE 4.505 DISRUPTION OF MEETING**

Any person who disrupts a regular meeting of the City Council, standing committees, special or select committees, sub-committees or any other public meeting presided over by a City Council Member may be forthwith barred, removed, or otherwise ejected, in the discretion of the presiding officer, from further attendance at that meeting. If necessary, due to the nature of the disruption, the audience may be cleared from the Council Chambers or meeting location in the discretion of the presiding officer.

Any person who refuses to leave the City Council Chamber may be subject to arrest.

Disruption of a meeting includes the following types of behaviors:

- 1) Any form of political campaigning or electioneering regarding a specific candidate or group of candidates in City elections;
- 2) Impeding the orderly progress of the meeting by shouting, yelling, whistling, chanting, singing, dancing, clapping, foot stomping, snapping fingers, cheering, jeering, using artificial noise makers or musical instruments, waving signs of any size, or engaging in any other display of excessive noise, sounds, or movement;
- 3) Displaying or waving signs of any sort, except where used to support the speaker's presentation at the podium, and only where the sign is 21 inches by 21 inches or smaller in size and cannot be displayed in a manner which unreasonably obstructs the view of the dais for any member of the audience, regardless of message;
- 4) Audible noise from cellphones or other electronic devices;
- 5) Consumption of alcohol or controlled substances;
- 6) Making vulgar or offensive remarks or gestures, or using threatening language or gestures, including but not limited to pantomiming discharging a firearm, choking, or throat-cutting;
- 7) Refusing to stop speaking when his or her time has expired or is otherwise directed by the presiding officer to do so due to disruptive behavior as described herein;
- 8) Returning to the meeting after having been removed or ejected, or attempting to do so.

**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. Return the card to the Legislative Assistant.

**Meeting Convened: 9:31 A.M.      Meeting Adjourned: 10:33 A.M.**

**1.      Call To Order**

**2.      Roll Call**

**3.      Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Ken Amaro 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 June meeting were deferred to the next commission meeting due lack of quorum.

**5.      St Johns River Status Report on Water Quality and Manatees**

Contact:

Dr. Gerard Pinto

Jacksonville University

Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University, reported slightly lower salinity at Mayport (18-22 ppt) due to above-normal rainfall, with normal levels further south. High temperatures and rain created conditions for algae blooms, though toxin levels remained low and none were detected in Duval County upstream of the Shands Bridge. Since June, five additional manatee deaths have occurred, totaling 14, including three perinatal, one undetermined, and one flood lock-related death at Queens Harbor. Statewide, 73 manatee deaths have been recorded, 62 from watercraft. A June survey counted about 40 manatees locally, with migration south expected to continue into November as temperatures remain warm.

Chair Amaro asked about increasing vigilance at the Queens Harbor channel lock. Dr. Pinto said the facility is manned, federally permitted, and generally attentive, though incidents can still occur.

Commissioner Fraden asked about Vibrio ("flesh-eating" bacteria) risks to humans and manatees. Dr. Pinto said it is common year-round, more active in warm months, and can infect those with wounds or weakened immune systems; manatees could be susceptible if injured.

Commissioner Hoyles asked about manatee diet given seagrass loss. Dr. Pinto reported some regrowth of tape grass and other vegetation he stated manatees also eat spike rush, Juncus, Spartina, and occasionally leaves.

**6.      Public Comment**

Leatrices Bell- Spoke about the George Crady Fishing Bridge.

Tommie Rodall- Spoke about the George Crady Fishing Bridge.

Johnie Turner- Spoke about the George Crady Fishing Bridge.

John Nooney- Mr. Nooney recognized the Parks Department and commissioners for work on Florida Inland Navigation District projects.

## **7. Sunshine Law Refresh**

Shannon MacGillis, Office of General Counsel, reviewed Sunshine Law requirements, emphasizing that two members of the same board or commission may not discuss matters likely to come before the body outside of a publicly noticed meeting. Communications covered include in-person, phone, text, and email. Members should avoid information between members and consult OGC if uncertain. She referred members to the Sunshine Law primer and ethics resources on the Jacksonville.gov Boards and Commissions webpage, noting ethics training is required at least once every four years, with upcoming sessions on September 18 (in-person) and November 20 (Zoom).

## **8. New Business**

### **George Crady Fishing Bridge**

Council Member Gay reported on efforts with state representatives to address deteriorating conditions at the George Crady Bridge, noting the City contributes \$35,000 annually and Nassau County \$15,000 under an agreement requiring the State to maintain the bridge. He stated the State has not fulfilled its maintenance obligation since 2003, resulting in a current \$15 million restoration estimate, and called for a phased funding plan to reopen the Duval side.

Representative Michael expressed concern upon learning of the issue and committed to visiting the site and offering assistance.

Leatrices Bell described long-term community use of the bridge, closure of the Duval side, lack of maintenance, and questions regarding use of past funding. She urged restoration and transparency.

Commissioner Barker explained prior FIND Subcommittee reviews concluded the cost to repair under FDOT standards was prohibitive, and past funding was for cleaning and safety, not structural maintenance. Council Member Gay reiterated that the State is contractually obligated to maintain the bridge.

Commissioner Redick noted the bridge's designation on the A1A Ocean Islands Trail and the Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway could support restoration advocacy. Commissioners Barker and Hoyles supported collaborative discussions to explore solutions, with Mr. Hoyles noting the site's fishing value and potential for alternative designs.

## **9. Subcommittees & Task Forces**

Shoaling & Artificial Reef Task Force

River Accord Task Force

Derelict Vessel Task Force

FIND Subcommittee

Chair Amaro noted the standing subcommittees and said current chairs may remain in their roles if they wish, as he preferred, they continue given their experience. Ms. MacGillis confirmed chairs are appointed by the Commission Chair and said she was verifying current assignments. Commissioner Hoyles expressed interest in continuing as an advisor to the task forces and raised the possibility of including funding for the annual River Report in the City budget, noting it has been funded by the Environmental Protection Board for over 17 years. Chair Amaro agreed to discuss the matter further and determine next steps.

Council Member Gay reported on discussions with FWC regarding the Shad Creek no wake zone, noting FDOT did not conduct a boater study when raising the bridge, resulting in increased large vessel traffic. He said FWC is considering expanding the zone northward, citing a nearby private boat ramp and similar reviews near Kingsley Plantation, and suggested the commission request a resolution to support the expansion. Commissioner Hoyles confirmed the current zone extends 300 feet from the bridge and noted the proposed change would lengthen it. Ms. MacGillis advised that a vote could not be taken without a quorum and suggested bringing the resolution for consideration at the September 10 meeting.

## **10. Adjournment**

Chair Amaro 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.**

Minutes: Nayeli Jimenez- Council Research Division  
njimenez1@coj.net  
904-255-5140 Posted 08/15/2025 10:00 AM