

City of Jacksonville

*117 W. Duval Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202*



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 10, 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 - Excused
CM Matt Carlucci, Alternate
Jon Michael Barker
Robert Birtalan - Excused
General Public Rep - Vacant
Representative Kiyan Michael - Excused
Mark Devereaux
Andrew Fraden
Marc Hardesty
Richard Hartley
Richard J. Redick - Late Arrival (9:42 a.m.)
Jill Haskell - General Public Rep - Absent
Charles Garrison, 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.

1 Meeting Convened: 9:30 a.m. Meeting Adjourned: 10:08 a.m.

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 and August meeting were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Approval of June 12, 2025, JWC Meeting Minutes

Approval of August 13, 2025, JWC Meeting Minutes

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

Contact:

Dr. Gerard Pinto

Jacksonville University

Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University, reported that river conditions are stabilizing as fall approaches. Salinity levels are normal but declining due to recent rainfall. Water temperatures are around 83-84°F, and water levels are slightly above normal with the recent full moon. Rainfall is slightly above average for the year. Microcystis algae blooms were observed from Shands Bridge to Doctors Lake, with low-level toxin detection in Doctors Lake but below harmful levels. Manatee deaths remain unchanged since last month, with a total of 14 in Duval County, including one watercraft-related death. Statewide, there are 525 manatee deaths, 80 of which are watercraft-related, higher than last year's totals at this time. The August aerial survey counted 15 manatees in the area, reflecting a seasonal decline as they migrate.

Chair Amaro asked whether algae blooms would improve with cooler temperatures. Dr. Pinto confirmed that cooler conditions generally reduce algae growth.

6. Public Comment

John Nooney spoke about the importance of taking accurate minutes.

7. New Business

2025-0685 ORD Approp \$112,962.00 in Fund Balance from the Environmental Protection Fund to Provide Funding for the 18th State of the River Report for the Lower St. Johns River Basin; Prov for Waiver of Sec 111.755 (Environmental Protection Fund), Pt 7 (Environment & Conservation), Ch 111 (Special Revenue & Trust Accounts), Ord Code, to Authorize Utilization of Funds from the Fund to Continue Funding the Annual State of the River Report; Prov for Waiver of Sec 360.602 (Uses of Fund), Pt 6 (Environmental Protection Fund), Ch 360 (Environmental Regulation), Ord Code, to Allow for the Utilization of Funds from the Fund to Continue Funding the Annual State of the River Report; Apv, & Auth the Mayor, or Her Desig, & the Corp Sec to Execute & Deliver an Agrmt btwn the City & JU for the Proj; Invoking the Exemption in 126.108(g) (Exemptions from Competitive Solicitation), Subpt a (General Regulations), Pt 1 (General Regulations; Ethics & Transparency in Public Contracting), Ch 126 (Procurement Code), Ord Code, to Direct Contract with JU for the Proj; Waiving Sec 118.107 (Nonprofits to Receive Funding through a Competitive Evaluated Award Process), Pt 1 (General Provisions), Ch 118 (City Grants), Ord Code, to Allow a Direct Contract with JU; Prov for Carryover of Funds into FY 25-26; Prov for Oversight by the Neighborhoods Dept, Environmental Quality Div; Requiring Annual Reports (B.T. 25-117) (Dillard) (Req of Mayor) (JWC Apv) 9/9/25 CO Introduced: R, TEU, F, JWC
Public Hearing Pursuant to Ch 166, F.S. & CR 3.601 - 9/23/25

Contact:

James A. Richardson, II

James Richardson, Environmental Protection Board, explained that the ordinance appropriates funding for the 18th annual State of the River Report, which provides a snapshot of the river's health and tracks impacts of projects initiated under the River Accord. He requested the Commission's support as the legislation moves through the appropriation process.

Chair Amaro asked about future funding sources. Mr. Richardson noted he is developing a strategy based on prior suggestions. Chair Amaro emphasized the importance of the report, noting that after 18 years it remains critical for monitoring the health of the city's river.

8. Old Business**George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park**

Contact:

Council Member Gay

Council Member Gay reported on a noticed meeting attended by state senators, a state representative, and Nassau County commissioners, along with DEP. DEP restored water service and replaced a bait table at the site, which the community appreciated. Future meetings will continue to address next steps, including DEP analysis, grant opportunities, and coordinated planning to move efforts forward.

Council Member Gay spoke about a resolution urging FWC to bypass additional studies and immediately implement a no-wake zone at Shad Creek due to impacts from FDOT's bridge project. Chair Amaro supported moving forward, Ms. MacGillis, Office of General Counsel, explained the options for adopting a resolution. A motion was made by Council Member Amaro and seconded to conceptually approve the resolution.

Commissioner Fraden asked about distance, and Capt. Suber raised enforcement and cost concerns. After further discussion, including recommendations from Ms. MacGillis to draft a written resolution with clear alternatives and details, the motion was withdrawn. Commissioners agreed the item will be returned at the next meeting in written form for consideration.

Subcommittees & Task Forces - Updates

FIND Subcommittee - Brief Discussion of Process

Contact:

Brian Burket

Waterfront Project Manager

Brian Burket reported that FIND award notifications for 2025 projects are expected within weeks. Once received, staff will prepare preliminary recommendations for 2026 projects, to be reviewed by the subcommittee. Commissioner Barker has chaired the subcommittee in recent years. Mr. Burket noted a tentative meeting date of October 22, pending confirmation, and committed to distributing a project list in advance. He stated finalized recommendations depend on updated cost estimates for two projects currently in design, due by October 15. Commissioner Barker requested that information be circulated at least a week prior to the meeting, which Burkett agreed to provide.

Shoaling & Artificial Reef Task Force

Contact:

Commissioner Hardesty, Chair

Commissioner Hardesty reported that safety buoys placed at the shoaling area remain in place and appear effective, with fewer vessel groundings observed. However, progress on long-term solutions is stalled due to lack of action from the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies.

Commissioner Hardesty noted a meeting with shrimpers on August 28 to identify “snag” areas within state waters that could be considered for future reef sites. Jacksonville Offshore Sport Fishing Club has taken an active role working closely with the task force.

River Accord Task Force

Contact:

Council Member Peluso, Chair

Derelict Vessel Task Force

Contact:

Commissioner Barker, Chair

Commissioner Barker reported that legislation addressing derelict vessels has been passed and now requires implementation. He asked Ms. MacGillis to coordinate introductions with JSO to begin planning. Chair Amaro noted the extensive work Ms. MacGillis put into the effort.

Ms. MacGillis added that, as part of the task force duties, Chapter 388 now allows a local administrative review process for vessels declared derelict or at risk. She has been working with James Richardson to draft rules for the Environmental Protection Board to support this process, which will be presented to the EPB Water Committee in the coming weeks.

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Barker reported a significant sewage spill into the canal in McGirts Creek, possibly linked to recurring issues at JEA’s Ringhaver Park wastewater treatment plant. He asked for guidance on how to follow up. Ms. MacGillis advised she would connect with him off-channel to recommend which departments or entities to contact.

Chair Amaro closed the meeting with roll call, confirming seven members present.

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Minutes: Nayeli Jimenez- Council Research Division

njimenez1@coj.net

904-255-5140 Posted 09/11/2025 5:00 PM