

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



JEFFREY R. CLEMENTS
Chief of Research
(904) 255-5137

117 West Duval Street
City Hall, Suite 425
Jacksonville, FL 32202
FAX (904) 255-5229

Bill Type and Number: Ordinance 2023-351

Introducer/Sponsor(s): Council President at the request of the Mayor

Date of Introduction: May 23, 2023

Committee(s) of Reference: NCSPHS, R, F

Date of Analysis: May 25, 2023

Type of Action: Authorization to execute property sale agreement; Ordinance Code waiver; designation of oversight agency; amendment of prior ordinance

Bill Summary: The bill authorizes a purchase and sale agreement between the City and Harbour Waterway Special District (HWSD) by which HWSD will acquire 77.7 acres of the Reed Island Park property from the City in exchange for a swap of 13 acres of salt marsh and wetlands in order to expand the district's dredge spoil disposal site and to construct a new navigable canal and various recreational improvements on the property which will be available to the general public. It waives a provision of Ordinance Code Chapter 122 – Public Property – to waive the requirement that notice of the sale be provided to all adjacent property owners since HWSD is the owner of all the adjacent property. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department is designated as the City's oversight agency for the project. The bill amends previously-approved Ordinance 2010-725-E, as amended by Ordinance Nos. 2015-233-E and 2020-267-E, to add to the HWSD's powers the ability to maintain and operate public park facilities.

Background Information: A portion of Reed Island, lying between Mill Cove and the main channel of the St. Johns River in Arlington, has been in the Parks Department's inventory since 1976 but no recreational facilities have been developed apart from some informal trails. In Fall 2018 the City received a Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) grant to design park facilities including a boat dock, picnic shelters and a formal nature trail. In Fall 2021 the City received another FIND grant for construction of the facilities, but work has not yet begun. In April 2019 the City sold HWSD 44 acres of the island to use as a dredge spoil disposal site and the sale agreement contained a provision that HWSD would assist the City with certain park improvements and maintenance, which they have done.

The district now proposes to purchase the remaining 77.7 acres of the island from the City to expand the district's area and construct a new canal extension through the site to provide direct access for homeowners to the St. Johns River. The agreement also provides that the district will dedicate 13 acres of salt marsh and wetlands that it owns as part of the public park area which will be open to the public during daylight hours, accessible only via the water. HWSD also agrees to construct and perpetually maintain at its expense a floating dock, two picnic pavilions and marked nature trails.

Since HWSD would take over responsibility for construction of the recreational improvements, the City would no longer be eligible to receive the full 50% reimbursement grant it received from FIND for the design of the improvements and would need to return those funds to FIND. That reimbursement would be made from a portion of the \$450,000 the City has set aside as the match for the FIND construction grant, which will no longer be needed. After \$39,618.59 of the design grant is returned to FIND, the Parks Department recommends that the remaining match balance of \$410,381.41 be allocated to a new CIP project to design and build a new fishing pier at

Joe Carlucci Boat Ramp at Sisters Creek, which is also located in Council District 2 as is Reed Island. Those financial transactions are not included in this bill and will require further legislation.

Policy Impact Area: Park development

Fiscal Impact: No direct impact in this ordinance, although further legislation will be required to refund the FIND development grant and to reallocate the unneeded FIND construction grant match

Analyst: Clements