

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

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Bill Type and Number: Ordinance 2019-555

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

Date of Introduction: August 13, 2019

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

Date of Analysis: August 15, 2019

Type of Action: Appropriation; authorization to execute grant termination agreement

Bill Summary: The bill appropriates \$1,725,422.19 from General Fund – General Service District Fund Balance to the General Fund – Miscellaneous Non-Departmental Expenditures account in order to provide funding to pay that amount to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as reimbursement for a grant previously received to assist with the purchase of the Metropolitan Park property along the St. Johns River near Commodore’s Point. The bill authorizes the Mayor to execute a grant termination document and any other documentation necessary to facilitate the return of the funds to the state and the release of the grant’s conditions for use of the property.

Background Information: In January 1981 the City received a \$1,725,422.19 National Park Service grant via the state to assist in the development of a project known as the St. Johns River Esplanade, a public promenade on the riverfront adjacent to the then-Civic Auditorium (now the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts). When that project did not come to fruition the City requested and the state approved re-use of the grant funds to assist in the purchase and development of the riverfront property near Commodore’s Point now known as Metropolitan Park. The original grant agreement required the City, as a condition of receiving the federal funds, to reserve the property for public recreational use in perpetuity. If at any time in the future the land ceased to be used for public recreational purposes, the City was required to provide a replacement property of comparable quality and size to the property converted from public recreation to another use. Since the City is interested in having private developers redevelop the Metropolitan Park and Jacksonville Shipyards properties, it has been negotiating with the National Park Service regarding the provision of a replacement property for the grant-funded property that will be converted to private development. After nearly 2 years of unsuccessful negotiations with the Park Service over the actual property boundaries and a comparable replacement site, the City has determined that it will repay the grant in order to have the use restrictions on the property lifted. This bill appropriates the funds for that grant repayment.

Policy Impact Area: Metropolitan Park use restrictions.

Fiscal Impact: The bill appropriates \$1,725,422.19 from General Fund – General Service District Fund Balance to the Miscellaneous Non-Departmental Expenditures account to make the grant repayment.

Analyst: Clements