

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another edition of The Break Room. A

weekly conversation about how the City of St Augustine

works from those who do the work every day. Hosted by the

City of St Augustine's Communications Director Melissa

Wissel. The Break Room offers a closer look at the different

City departments and provides updates on current and upcoming

projects and events and now your host, Melissa Wissel.

MELISSA: Welcome to The Break Room. I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications

Director for the City of St Augustine. Thanks for

listening. May is Historic Preservation Month, so what

better time to invite the

City's Historic Preservation

Officer, Julie Courtney, to join

us. It's Julie's first time in

studio, so we'll take it easy on

her today. Julie, Thanks for

stopping by. JULIE: Thanks for having

me. MELISSA: You have been working for

the city for about two and a

half years, so you're not new to

the division. You were

promoted to Historic

Preservation Officer, so

congratulations. You always

have stuff going on. You really

picked right up where Jenny

left off. Tell us about what

all continues to happen in

Historic Preservation. JULIE: Well,

thank you. Jenny did leave a

really solid basis for us to
work off of. And she was very

forward thinking and had a lot
going on after she left in

October with being in the city
for 10 years. We're working

on updating our architectural
guidelines for historic

preservation. Those haven't
been updated since about 2011. And they
are the recommendations that

building owners need to look at
and refer to when they're

changing the exterior of their
building or their property,

especially if they are in the HP1
through 5 zones. We're

trying to make them more user
friendly and update them with

more styles, including
mid-century modern buildings

that we see especially in Davis
Shores. We're also

working on the partial
demolition ordinance that has

been a process that we've
worked with through with the

Historic Architectural Review
Board. And then the

Planning and Zoning Board. And
we're looking at trying to

refine the language of our
demolition ordinance to include

things that affect buildings. A
lot of building owners want to

change their buildings over
time and just removing a porch

or taking off a chimney. Those

types of things really alter

the building's historic
architectural integrity. And so,

we want to like work with the
homeowners to think about those

changes. MELISSA: So I can't just go
take my porch off? Well, if I

live in a historic district. JULIE: It
would need to go before our

Historic Architectural Review
Board. But we're trying to

refine the language and talk
about some things that can be

done with
administrative approval. MELISSA: Okay,

and just to touch on this
architectural guidelines for

historic preservation. It
sounds kind of dry. I will, I

will admit, but it's really
important. I mean, those are the

things that that's what keeps
us authentic. JULIE: Right. I mean

St Augustine has such a rich
and varied historic

architectural inventory and
we're just trying to make those

buildings maintain their
architectural integrity and

stay unique. That's why so many
people come to visit our

downtown. And that's why
properties owners often pick

their house or the neighborhood
that they lived in. MELISSA: Right. So I

don't want to go make my nice
beautiful Spanish style into a

mid-century modern, necessarily.
There's a couple of those

around. JULIE: Right. We want to maintain that important sense

of place that we really enjoy in our city. MELISSA: Right and that's

really what historic preservation is all about.

And we also have these National Register Historic Districts.

Throughout. Does that, so it's something that, once we get

that nomination, once we get that check in the box, does it

just stay always? JULIE: No, not really. We have seven

historic district through the National Register of Historic

Places. And we're in the process of updating three of those,

Lincolnvile, Abbot Tract, and

the Model Land Company.

Things evolve over time and
we haven't really had those

looked at or surveyed since the
1980s and early

1990s. So, those are
being looked at and updated.

MELISSA: Again, going back to this
change of place or the change

of the field, those
neighborhoods. If too much has

changed, it may lose its charm,
or we have to make sure that it

maintains its, I say, charm, but
that historic value. JULIE: The

designation could be lost,
especially if too many

buildings have been altered. And
individually contributing

buildings, if they've been altered significantly, or of

course if they've been demolished, they will no longer

be considered designated. MELISSA: Okay.

So it's really an ongoing

thing. It's not like once you get that designation, you just

move on to something else. JULIE:

Right. It always evolves and

we're trying to update them to reflect the period of

significance, especially Lincolnville that has some very

important civil rights history.

And know that the buildings now

are 50 years old so that they can be looked at and included

within that update. MELISSA: Do you have..

I'm going to I'm going to ask

you a question that may catch
you off guard and I don't know.

So just answer honestly. I
know Jamie Perkins our CRA

Administrator has been doing a
lot of work with the design

standards. Is that so that
you're involved with or it's

similar to what you're doing?

JULIE: Well, it's something that's

important to us and we do need
to work together to make sure

that the standards are kept and
that the design and

architectural significance is
maintained. MELISSA: Okay. Same same

idea though. Making sure that
we're not putting modern

looking buildings over in

Lincolnville. JULIE: Right. MELISSA: Okay and

we have historic landmarks. I

know you've got two under

review right now. Can you touch

on those? JULIE: Those were actually

designated recently, and that's

exciting because when you think

about it in the Historic

Architectural Review Board's

past, there has only been three

properties or buildings that

were designated as local

historic landmarks. And

just since October, our HARB

Board did designate 307 Menorca

Avenue and 2 Tremerton Place

as local historical landmarks.

And they recognized the

importance of these buildings

and they're thinking about the
importance of doing more of

those designations. MELISSA: Can you
tell us what made, what was

behind the two of them, just a
little bit? JULIE: Sure. 307 Menorca

Avenue was actually a
certificate, certificate of

demolition application that was
being reviewed and in our

research we found that that was
one of the 11 original houses

on Davis Shores. And it
also had in a very important

person that was attributed to
living there. The person

that helped Doctor Davis
develop Davis Shores and keep

that development going. MELISSA: So,
that's where that demolition,

you have to go to before the
review board. You can't just go

in and kind of slide that paper
under the.. Under the

desk and say hey can you sign
this for me? JULIE: Any building

within their city that's 50
years or older does have to

look be looked at by the
Historic Architectural Review Board. MELISSA;

That's fantastic. Yes. And 2
Tremerton. JULIE: 2 Tremerton Place.

The building owner was actually
really forward thinking and

just wanting to think about his
very significant bungalow style

a house. It's very intact and
beautiful and he wanted to make

sure that when he moved on that

the next building owner

couldn't just demolish it and
build something completely

different. MELISSA: So he's trying to
save it for posterity? For

the future. JULIE: So it's very
exciting for him to come

forward with that. MELISSA: That's
really, that also says a lot

about the person living there
that it was important for its

own value for the future of the
city. That's great. If

you're just now tuning in,
you're listening to The break

Room. I'm Melissa Wissel,
Communications Director for the

City of St Augustine. This
week, we're talking about

historic preservation since
it's May and Historic

Preservation Month. I've
invited Julie Courtney to join

us. She is the city's new
Historic Preservation Officer.

Before we go, we do have a few
more minutes. We've got an

upcoming history event. The
first ever St Augustine

History Festival. What can you
tell about that? JULIE: Well, it's

exciting to be part of the
city's participating. It was

created and conceived by the
University of Florida, historic

St Augustine and also the
Lastinger Family Foundation,

to generate excitement about
our history and the nation's

oldest city. So, we're
going to try to showcase every

era of St Augustine's long
and storied past from our

founding, in 1565 to modern day.
And there's many different

venues that are going to
participate and highlight some of

their collections or their
resources. And we are going to,

as staff, participate in a
presentation on Saturday, May

14th, starting at 11 AM.

Jessica Beach, the Resilience

Officer and I will do a
presentation on resilient

heritage, why preservation and
resilience is important for the

residents of St Augustine.

And our City Archaeologist, Dr.

Andrea White, will do a
presentation at one o'clock and

she'll cover the history
beneath our feet and how St

Augustine's heritage through
archaeology is being discovered.

And so that's very exciting
because it's going to be held

in the Waterworks Building,
which is a great example of
preservation and rehabilitation
and action, which is now going
to be used by the public.

MELISSA: That's that's like, the is, like

the pinnacle example of, I don't
know if pinnacle is the right

word to use, but it is the true
example of historic, like you

just said, historic preservation
in action. JULIE: Yes, an adaptive

use. So, it was used as a water
works building originally. And

now, it's going to have many
different exciting uses. MELISSA: Now,

before we go, I'm going to say
this.. Andrea, if you've ever, I

know you've heard Andrea and you
know Andrea very well. I've

never seen, I don't I don't
know a lot of archaeologists.

Carl is a great, is a great
archaeologist as well, her

predecessor. I've never seen
anybody get so excited talk

about digging in the dirt. So,
her presentation, I'm sure, is

going to be fascinating. You
and Jessica though are coming

together. I'm really, I hope

that our listeners will

consider trying to come out, if

you're able to on Saturday of

the weekend, at the Waterworks

Building starting at eleven

o'clock. You're talking about

resilience and historic

preservation. I think our

residents often feel like they

don't really affect them as

residents. But you guys are

going to really try to apply

that to our residents. Why

that's important. Can you talk

just a little bit about that

before we? JULIE: Sure. I mean,

everybody's been affected by

the recent hurricanes, and also

sea level rise issues, and it

does really affect all building
owners. And so we're going to

talk about first what the city
is doing to deal with that.

They have received a lot of
grant money. So, Jessica will

really be going into that
further. And I'll be trying to

talk about what you as a
building owner can do to your

property. I mean, sometimes you
can't raise your house, so

there's other things that can
be done to help protect it.

MELISSA: From sea level right now.
And I think too, I think you and

I have talked about this, and
I'll give a nod to our

residents. I know our residents
get really frustrated because

as you have said to me, you know,
they all feel like all we ever

do is protect things for
tourists and that's not true.

We, yeah go ahead. JULIE: Well,
we do know that our tourists

are being drawn and we're, the
city, you know, that income is

income producing for the city,
and for business owners and

really for property owners,
because their property values

are higher because of that.

But the sense of place

that is so important to us, as
residents, really needs to be

maintained for us to have that
quality of life continue. And we

just want to make sure
everybody can protect their own

individual buildings because
the city can't do it all.

They're working very
hard to address the things that

can be addressed, but we as
individual building owners need

to do our part as well. MELISSA: Right.
And so that is on Saturday, May

14th at 11 o'clock. And this is
the first year you mentioned it

of the History Festival, so
hopefully everyone will get a

chance to come downtown. And
this is really pointed toward

our residents, just so people
understand. We're really

trying to keep this as a

resident activity. Of course, we

can't help the fact that I'm
sure our visitors going to hear

about it and want to
participate. And real quick

before we sign off, if our
listeners are still tuning in,

you've got things at the
Colonial Quarter ,you've got the

Castillo, Flagler College at the
Ponce Hotel, the Lighthouse

Museum is doing a presentation,
I think they found a button

that they're going to unveil,
the Pena Peck House, the

National Guard, and Fountain of
Youth, Fort Mose. So check it

out, the website is the, I
believe it is StAugustineHistoryFestival com. JULIE: And it
runs from May 11th through the

15th. And that's
really highlighting our

Historic Preservation Month.

We're going to have a

proclamation to celebrate that
and to celebrate people saving

places, which is the National
Trust for Historic

Preservations theme for this
year, to recognize everyone

doing the great work of Saving
Places, whether it's big or

small, and those who inspire
others to do the same.

MELISSA: Excellent. And that's a wrap.
Thanks for coming in. JULIE: Thank you

for having me. MELISSA: We'll have you
back. If you missed part of

this broadcast and want to go

back and listen from the

beginning, check us out at CityStAugRadio.com. We

want to keep you informed about

what's happening in and around

the city, and most importantly

that you hear it here from the

people doing the work and

making it happen every day.

Find us on our social media

platforms. You'll see us on

Facebook, Twitter, and

Instagram @CityStAug.

Thanks for tuning in. Until

next time. ANNOUNCER: You've been

listening to The Break Room, a

weekly program addressing and

programs offered by the City of

St Augustine. Join us each

week as the city's

Communications Director, Melissa

Wissel, has in-depth
conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet
the needs of our community. The

Break Room is produced by
Communication Specialist for

the City of St Augustine
Cindy Walker. See you at this

time next week for another
edition of The Break Room.