

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 everyday. 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: Hello and thanks for tuning in.
You're listening to The

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

City of St Augustine. Every
year, the City Commission

recognizes individuals for
outstanding service and

contributions to the City by
ways of presenting awards.

These awards are the deAviles
Award, the Adelaide Sanchez

Award, and the Order of La
Florida. The awards were

created over many years and
each award carries with it

distinct criteria for which
recipients must meet. The

recipients are nominated by a
City Commissioner confirmed by

a unanimous vote of the entire
commission, and then the awards

are presented at a time that
coincides with an occasion or a

milestone in the City's

history. So, coinciding with the

February birthday anniversary
of our City's founder Pedro

Menendez deAviles, the City
Commission presented the 2023

deAviles Award to Paul Weaver,
recognizing his years of

tireless dedication and
honorable service to the people

of St Augustine. So this
week in studio, it is my honor

to share with Mr, Paul
Weaver, the 2023 recipient of

the deAviles award. PAUL: Well, thank you. MELISSA: I
think I think I got all that in

there. PAUL: No, good morning. It's
great to be here. Melissa: So,

congratulations. Welcome to The
Break Room. What an honor. PAUL: No,

it really was an honor.

Totally unexpected, but

certainly appreciated. And I was

nominated by Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, who in addition to being

my Mayor, has been a friend for

about 30 years I met her

when she she was I believe on

the board of the old Historic

St Augustine Preservation

Board and we immediately clicked because

she's a planner and basically,

I'm a planner too. What

I do is identify, evaluate,

designate, preserve, and

protect historic sites. It's

kind of become a part of

comprehensive planning, not only

in the City of St Augustine,

but really in the state of

Florida and throughout the

country. MELISSA: So, you're talking

about the your your background
of the historic planning. You,

your company, and the work that
you do, you're actually sort of

a pioneer in that industry. I
mean, it's a thing now, but

I imagine, I'm going to say back
in the day, it wasn't a thing.

It wasn't something that people
really gave much thought to.

PAUL: No, it wasn't. The joke I
always tell is I started out

working for the state of
Florida. I work for the Bureau

of Historic Preservation. I
worked, I mentioned the old

St Augustine Historic
Preservation Board. And the joke

we told was the state of
Florida is a great place to

work if your parents can afford
it. So, I got in with

Dr Bill Adams, who was a
Director, I mentioned the St

Augustine Preservation Board,
but then I think you might know,

worked as a Director of the St
George St Operation for

many years for the City of
St Augustine. And what

happened was he mainly,
initially was getting calls

from individuals and the local
governments, other cities,

historical organizations,
preservation groups and asking

them to help, you know, in
consulting services. So, that's

why he started Historic
Property Associates. Initially,

it was a partnership, started in
1980 with him, Dr Michael

Scardeville, Bob Steinbeck, who
all worked for the Preservation

Board. I was really, I guess,
their first employee. I started

out as an employee and then in
1984, they

incorporated a company, and
I became a partner with Doctor

Adams. And it was basically
Doctor Adams and myself

probably for the next 20 years. And then he had the opportunity

to go back and actually work
for the City of St

Augustine. That might have been
I know a lot of people in the

City know him. And so he
got out of the consulting

business and I pretty much took
over the operation. But yeah, it,

there was a time when I'd say
I'm a Preservation Planner and

people would say what's that?
We really... MELISSA: What does

that mean? PAUL: We really, you know
again, I give credit to Dr

Adams. But both of us together
created kind of a new business,

and we style ourselves as the
oldest cultural resource

management firm in in Florida.

There have been a lot of

archaeological companies, but we
dealt mainly with standing

structures. MELISSA: Well, and I was, I

was actually, I was thinking

archaeology, too, because we also
are one of very few states in

the nation that have a
dedicated staff archaeologist.

PAUL: Well the city is. MELISSA: The City is, yes so. Right.

You know it it kind of goes

hand in hand. But what we don't
realize and I'm going to talk

I'm going to talk a little bit
about what the significance is.

One example of one of the
pieces of work that you did had

to do with the St Augustine
Town Plan Historic District. Can

you explain our what our Town
Plan is, what the Historic

District is? Because I don't
know if people understand that.

And then I want to make sure we
talk about some of the things

that you've done. It's really
cool the work you've done. But I

don't think people realize just
how significant St George

Street and the downtown
district is. From a

historic preservation and
planning. PAUL: Right, I think it's

one of the things that that
most people particularly people

that are born in the United
States don't understand, but

St Augustine has a colonial
town, a Spanish colonial town

plan I should say. and if you go
to Puerto Rico, if you go to

Mexico, if you go to Cuba, any
place in the new world

typically, Cities of that had
over a a thousand residents had

this formal town plan. Was that
consist of the downtown plaza,

the most important buildings in
the case of St Augustine, we

have government house, which was
the, where the Spanish

Governor's residence was. And we
have what was originally the

Parish Church, the Catholic Parish
Church is now the Cathedral of

of St Augustine. And all the
main primarily commercial

buildings lining around
downtown. And from downtown, the

town spreads out into more
residential areas, it decreases

in scale. There's

smaller buildings. But that town

plan was promulgated in 1597 by
Spanish Governor Menendez Canso.

And along with the Castillo de
San Marcos, the Cathedral, the

Gonzales Alvarez, known as The
Oldest House and the Llambias

House. Those are national
historic landmarks.

Those are, those are properties
that are of of national

significance. But, what I did,
getting back to this Colonial

City, or the the Colonial City
Historic District. When I came

here in 1978, there were
literally only about 40

buildings in the entire City
that were considered historic.

Those were the colonial
buildings within that district,

about 40 of them as I said, the
Castillo de San Marcos

National Historic Landmark, and
the Ponce and the Alcazar.

Everything else had not been
designated either locally, by

the state of Florida by... MELISSA: Nobody
thought they were important, or

historic. PAUL: Post 1821. MELISSA: Gotcha. PAUL: So,
what I did, I came in and

actually worked for local
architect Howard Davis, who

owned the, what we call the
the Exchange Bank, the nine

story building here. And he was
doing a major and he wanted to

take advantage of some of the
federal incentives, a tax

credit, but his building didn't
qualify. It was built in the

mid 1920s. So, we hired
myself in particular, but

Historic Property Associates to
update our Town Plan, Historic

District. Okay. what I did
was, think about it. The

territorial buildings weren't
historic. The Flagler

Buildings weren't historic. The
Florida Buildings weren't

historic. So, I added all of
those buildings and made them

under the National Register
Program, historic up until 1935 when Government House was built.
So that was sort of the

benchmark from 1821 to 1935
was added to that district and

it was very important. One of
the main things I think I've

done, if anything, is the
recognition of so many of

these. This

particular district and then

Lincolntonville, if you want to
talk some about some of the

outline districts. I did the
Lincolntonville Historic District,

which.. MELISSA: Well, I've got a list.

We're going to come back

to the list because it's an
impressive list. If you're just

now tuning in, you're listening
to The Break Room. I've got

Paul Weaver in studio with us.

I'm Melissa Whistle,

Communications Director for the
City. Paul Weaver is the 2023

recipient of the City's
deAviles Award. The award is

presented, the criteria is that
the recipient be identified in

the field of public service,
elected, appointed, or employed,

or they are well known and
respected by the citizenry, and

have dedicated an honorable
service to the City of St Augustine and St Johns
County. Clearly the work that

you have done in getting our
buildings, structures recognized, changing that period of
significance, which is so

important. We, I don't
want to get into the comp plan,

because the comp plan isn't
quite as exciting. I'm

going to mention some of the
building structures that we've

talked about, so that folks
understand. But before we go, I

also want you to touch a little
bit on HARB. But before we get

into that Marineland, Alligator
Farm District, Lincolnville,

Horace Walker House, Sanchez
Homestead, the St Augustine

Record Building, North City
Historic District, Fullerwood

Historic District, Nel Marteras
Historic District. So, if you

live in those neighborhoods,
those are now significant and

registered. The Constitution
obelisk, the Mini Golf Course

on the Bayfront, and last but
not least, the Water Works

Building, which we've just

renovated. It's beautiful. It's

gorgeous. The Cultural Council
manages that for us. So,

thank you. For all of that, that
you have given to us. Let's

talk a little bit about HARB.

HARB is the Historic

Architectural Review Board.

Lots of people come before you.

You help keep us historically
accurate. PAUL: Yeah. Well, it's been,

it's been exciting to serve on
HARB. I will say the best experience for

serving on that board was
actually presenting to that and

other boards, because not to say
anything against HARB, but

sometimes you're treated
unfairly. So, it was a great

experience being a presenter.

And then I was honored, you know,

applied some of the, I think

it was actually, I don't know

whether it was Nancy Sikes-Kline,

but one of the, I know she

supported me recently. But one

of the City Commissioners asked

me to apply, and I did. And

it's just, it's been a great

experience, sitting on that side.

And I was talking I guess a

little bit earlier about my

approach to it. I really

appreciate the substantive

things I did. But I I hope I'm

recognized also for how I did

it. And I worked for the

state of Florida for a number

of years and I tried to be

what I call a civil servant. It's a pun. MELISSA: Sure. Sure.

PAUL: It's, you know, I I'm a civil
servant, but I also tried to be

civil to our constituents. In
this case, the City of St

Augustine, trying to be polite,
trying to obviously preserve

our historic resources, but most
importantly trying to be fair.

And I don't think
I've been perfect, but that's

really... MELISSA: Reasonable. Trying to be
reasonable. PAUL: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Trying to be reasonable with
the public and, you know,

those are wonderful things
you've mentioned, but I think

it's important to be recognized
for how you did things. MELISSA: Sure.

Sure. PAUL: And I really, you know,
I got I've gotten a lot of

positive feedback. I was, you
know, sort of flabbergasted at

how many people responded. I
put it on Facebook and got a

tremendous response. And I,
we had a full house at the

ceremony, which was extremely
flattering. And sometimes you

ask yourself, is anybody
watching? Does anybody care?

Yeah. A lot of people in St
Augustine care. MELISSA: That's

wonderful. Well, we are out of
time. I told you it would fly

by. But we'll have you come back. We
will, you know what, we will make

that I will make that an open
invitation to have you come

back. Clearly you have dedicated
decades of outstanding work,

personal commitment, you've made
things better for this City,

this precious precious place
that we call home. As the Mayor

said in her remarks, and I'm
going to quote her a little bit

here, we owe you a debt of
gratitude in preserving and

protecting our most precious
historic recesses, resources, and

for that we say thank you. PAUL: Well
thank you. Thank the Mayor.

Thank you Melissa and your
staff. It was, it was a great

ceremony and as I said, I'm
humbled and flattered to have

received it. I appreciate it

very much. MELISSA: Absolutely. We look

forward to being part of our
future in making history.

PAUL: Thanks. MELISSA: If you've missed part
of this broadcast and want to

go back and listen from the
beginning, you can now find us

on your favorite podcasting
apps. Look for us on Spotify,

Apple Podcast, Spreaker, and
more. You can find a complete

listing of those podcasting
forms at CityStAugRadio.com. We want to keep you
informed about what's happening

in and around the City and most
importantly that you hear hear

from the people doing the work
and making it happen every day.

You can follow us on all of our
social media platforms. You'll

see us on Facebook, Twitter,
and Instagram @CityStAug. Until next time, thanks
for tuning in. ANNOUNCER: You've been

listening to The Break Room, a
weekly program addressing

projects 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.