

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: Welcome to The Breakroom.

Thanks for tuning in. I'm

Melissa Wissel, Communications

Director for the City of St.

Augustine. It's Historic

Preservation Month and time to

get ready for the St

Augustine History Festival. As

the Nation's Oldest City, we

pride ourselves on

authenticity, our cultural

heritage, and protecting our

historic resources. It's a

great time to talk about it and

I've invited Julie Courtney

back to The Break Room. She is

the City's Historic

Preservation Officer. Julie,

welcome back. JULIE: Thank you. It's

great to be here. MELISSA: Festival

is right around the corner.

Tell us about it. JULIE: Well, this is

the second year of the festival

that was created and conceived

by the University of Florida  
Historic St Augustine and the

Lastinger Family Foundation  
to generate excitement and

showcase every era of St  
Augustine's long and storied

history, from our founding in  
1565 to modern day. And we hope

locals will come out and enjoy  
the weekend of... The City has

scheduled an event on Saturday,  
May 13th that will really

appeal to many of our resident,  
residents and property owners

who own an older building or  
home, and want to learn

more about their historic  
windows. Because those can be

made to be energy efficient,  
hurricane ready, and an

important way to maintain the integrity of your historic

property. This will be held at our Historic Water Works

building. And the workshop is being led by Austin Historical.

We are hosting the public open house, as well, of this beautiful

building, that is now home to the St Johns Cultural

Council. And you can learn more about it on the History

Festival's website, [StAugustineHistoryFestival.com](http://StAugustineHistoryFestival.com), along with over 20 historic properties in St Augustine.

that you can visit and tour. Many are showcasing

special events that weekend.

MELISSA: Yeah. So, let's go back. So,

our workshop is a window

workshop, which you kind of got

a window workshop. But there's a  
lot of people who own historic

buildings, structures, homes, in  
you name it. If it's historic

and it needs a new window. You  
can't just go put in a pillar

window. JULIE: Right. It makes a big  
difference. They say the

windows are the eyes of the  
soul to the building and newer windows

just do not look the same. MELISSA: I  
was actually with some friends

looking at an older home over  
the weekend and they have that

marbly. JULIE: The wavy glass. MELISSA: The  
wavy glass. JULIE: This is not

replicated in newer windows.

The profiles, the shadow

lines that fall when you look  
at the historic windows, are

just very unique and  
distinctive. MELISSA: And the gentleman

who's coming, he's not from  
St, he's not in St

Augustine. We were bringing him  
in. He's a professional. Can

you tell us a little bit about  
what he does? JULIE: Well, Austin

Historical is the leading  
resource in the state of

Florida for window restoration.  
And they have done a lot

of research on the importance  
of keeping historic windows and

know a lot of tips on how to  
work with yours. MELISSA: And bringing

someone in, when you want to go  
to restore your windows, you

you were mentioning, you can  
keep the old windows.

And still be energy efficient  
and those are also some of the

things that he can explain?

JULIE: Yes, for sure. He has a lot of

resources that they've studied  
and ways to improve your

historic window. These windows  
have lasted some, on some houses

or homes, buildings, for over  
100 years. So, they're clearly

built to last. MELISSA: Right. But I  
don't, I'm not necessarily

coming to this workshop to  
repair or redo my window.

This isn't like a this  
isn't a DIY. Bring your window

with you. Bring your window and

your frame with you and you're

going to have a glue and all  
that kind of stuff. JULIE: Not this

time around. We've done that in  
the past and we might do it in

the future, but this time is  
just learning more about the

importance of saving them. So  
what you can do. MELISSA: Even if I

don't have that historic  
structure, it could be an

interesting workshop, if I'm  
interested in historic

preservation and in these  
beautiful old buildings that we

have in town. JULIE: For sure and  
it's a great way to see our

Water Works Building from the  
inside and out and just enjoy



that building as well. MELISSA:

Before, so, and that's another

part of the session that we

have. If you want to come and

you're not necessarily

interested in the historic

window piece of it. I can

come and tour the building?

JULIE: Yes, that will be open from

9 to 12 as well. So, we

really invite the public to

come out and we have a

self-guided tour flyer that you

can take. And to see the

different important aspects of

the building. MELISSA: That yeah, the

building was restored two. Two

years ago? Yeah. It took about

10 years. JULIE: It was a long process

and it opened up to the public

again two years ago. MELISSA: And if  
you're not sure what the Water

Works Building is, it's that  
building that sits right behind

the library on San Marco, and so  
come by. The History Festival

itself, just to give that a  
quick plug, because you

mentioned [StAugustineHistoryFestival.com](http://StAugustineHistoryFestival.com) is the

website. And I'm going to throw  
out just a few because, we have

over twenty. I have a list, but  
I'm not going to read them all.

But of course, you've got the  
Colonial Quarter, The Mission,

The Shrine, the Ponce Hotel,  
Fort Mose, the churches, all

the churches. It seems all the  
historic churches are on the

list this year, Pena Peck  
House, The Lighthouse, and

more. So, come on downtown.  
Look around town. There's all

kinds of cool stuff to do. JULIE: It  
is and it's really geared for

the locals. It's not a tourist  
event. So, I think families and

individuals, retirees, anyone  
would enjoy all the different

options. MELISSA: Things to do in St  
Augustine. And feel like a

tourist but be a local. JULIE: There's  
so much to see. MELISSA: And I'm looking

for I'm excited to hear how  
things go for. I'm not able to

attend myself, but I am excited  
about the program that we've

put together this year. JULIE: It is

exciting. It's very relevant

because there's a lot of push  
from the window industry that

old windows are no good. They  
need to be replaced and they

just can't be energy efficient  
or ready for a hurricane, and we

beg to differ. MELISSA: And we're  
going to prove them wrong.

That's right. Excellent. Well,  
we have more to talk about. If

you're just now tuning in. You  
are listening to The Break

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

City of St Augustine and  
Julie Courtney is in studio

with us this week. She is our  
City's Historic Preservation

Officer. We're talking about  
the History Festival. Don't

forget that's May 11th through  
the 14th. But we also

want to talk about, not just the  
activities and stuff that we do,

but the people who help us with  
our historic preservation, and

that's HARB, our Historic  
Architectural Review Board.

We're actually going to do a  
campaign this year in our Face

of the City that we do on  
social media. Cindy's got that

going. Tell us a little bit  
about the people of HARB that

we're going to meet in that  
campaign this month. Yes, we're

really excited to highlight  
these individuals, because each

of them bring a depth of  
knowledge on historic architecture

and how buildings have been  
constructed over time. They

also bring a unique perspective  
from the work that they do each

day. It is not easy being  
responsible to review the many

applications that come in each  
month, and they do not always

agree, but they work hard to  
apply our architectural

guidelines for historic  
preservation, which are the

standards that they have to use  
to consider in their review. And

they are, work hard to be fair  
and reasonable, as well. So

Catherine Duncan is our Chair.

She was a long-term downtown

resident of the city. She's

a licensed architect. Gaere

McDonald is the Vice Chair and

the certified general

contractor. Jon Benoit is a

president of a custom home

building company. Brad Beach is

our newest member, but is also a

local architect. And last but

not least, Paul Weaver, who

recently received the De Aviles

Award from the City Commission.

He has been on our board for

over fifth, or over 19 years, and

is a historic preservation

consultant. And as we look at

these individuals who work so

hard to preserve what is

special and the authenticity of  
our City, our Preservation

Month is a good time to  
acknowledge the many others who

work tirelessly to do the same  
for St Augustine. And one of

those is Dr Leslee Keys, who  
will be receiving the Adelaide

Sanchez Award this month. And people  
like Ken Smith, architect who

is hoping to retire soon. I  
just talked to him on the

phone. He's such a great  
resource for these big

preservation projects that you  
see going on around the City.

All of our local architects,  
contractors, and trades people

whose knowledge is really  
irreplaceable. MELISSA: We have to have



HARB in place in order to keep  
the City looking the way it

looks. Yes. If we didn't have  
that, who knows what our

downtown area would look like.

JULIE: And that was set up as part of

our ordinance. It's, our City  
Commissioners appoint this five

member board. The members  
meet monthly and review

applications for different  
things. If you are looking to

make changes to your building,  
especially if you're in the

historic preservation zones one  
through five, or facing HP one

through three. Any exterior  
changes to your building or

property modifications have to

possibly have approval first by

our our board. And they also  
look at City wide, any building

that is going to be demolished  
that is 50 years or older, or

any partial demolition as well.

MELISSA: That goes to like we were just

talking about windows, porches,  
roofs, chimneys. Anything like

that. And there's a  
guideline. You've talked about

the guidelines before. There  
are guidelines. Things like

paint color. JULIE: Yes. That applies to  
different, the different HP

zones especially. They are  
important because that is the

way we've been able to to  
maintain, as you said, that

unique authenticity of the  
City. MELISSA: The integrity. It's

what people come here for.

JULIE: That's right. I mean, the

tourists are definitely drawn  
to Florida for many different

reasons. But St. Augustine, you  
hear time and time again, of how

beautiful of a City it is. The  
old historic buildings. That

sense of place that is so  
unique. It's just so different

than anywhere else in the  
country. MELISSA: Yeah and without it,

we we're not historic. JULIE: Right  
and for the residents who own a

building, they are able to  
enjoy that sense of place as

well with their unique building  
that they own themselves. And I

think a lot of them who  
consider keeping it more

historic are happy they've done  
so. MELISSA: And do we have any major,

I'm putting you on the spot  
here a little bit. What are

some of the things, examples you  
can give. I mean, we were

talking about roof lines and  
windows. Do we have something

that we're working on it... that's  
I know ,we did tha,t well the

water works would be an example  
of a historic structure.

We couldn't just go in there  
and replace the brick with new

brick. JULIE: Right and they are  
actually carefully restoring

the windows currently. Those,

they considered, you know, some

people thought, oh we should  
just replace these old windows.

But they've been taken out and  
are actually in the workshop

being restored. And the actual,  
you know, the wood, if there's

rotten, just the areas of other  
rotten are being removed and

replaced with new wood. MELISSA: The  
floors were another thing in

there. You can't just go in  
there and. JULIE: Well, for for HARB

and for our pure view, it's  
only on the exterior of the

building. But yes, there  
are many different houses and

buildings, that even our City  
Hall, is a constant challenge

that the City has really been  
committed to preserving the

building that's very unique and  
special. MELISSA: And I'm going to wrap

up with one last thing that's,  
that people don't really think

about, is signage. JULIE: Yes, that's  
always a source of contention.

But we try to make  
especially our HP zones, our

downtown core, the signs have  
to comply with standards. And

there's a sign ordinance and a  
sign permit process. MELISSA: And we

have to abide by those two.

JULIE: That's right. MELISSA: The City does. We

can't just put up any kind of  
sign around St George

Street. JULIE: So our staff works hard. We have a small staff. I, we

work with Candice, Seymour  
Preservation Planner that I

think you'll be talking to in  
the next few weeks. Hoping to

get more on here this morning.

Yes, and our City Archaeologist

team Andrea White and Katherine

Sims. Yeah. MELISSA: So it's great work.

JULIE: Thank you. MELISSA: It's constant. JULIE: Yes

it's never ending. MELISSA: Well, thank

you for taking time to come and  
speak with us this week.

Again, the History Festival this  
weekend, May 11th through the

14th. Come check it out.

Lots to do, lots to see, and

most especially, come by the  
Historic Water Works Building.

Go for a walk Saturday morning.

Come by the Water Works. Do the

self-guided tour. Check out how  
you learn about historic window

preservation and come visit the  
City. JULIE: Thank you Melissa. MELISSA: If you

missed part of this broadcast  
and want to go back and listen

from the beginning, you can  
find us on your favorite

podcast app. Get a listing of  
all of those podcasting

platforms at [CityStAugRadio.com](http://CityStAugRadio.com). We're on Spotify, Apple

Podcast, Spreaker, and more. 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.

Follow us on our social media



platforms. You'll find us this month especially talking about

Historic Preservation Month and our HARB members. Find us on

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. All of those

channels are @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.