

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how the City of Saint Augustine

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

City of Saint 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. Thanks for tuning

in. This week I've invited back Barry Fox, the city's code

enforcement manager to talk about code Enforcement. Last

time Barry was here, we got

knee deep in all of great

things. Homelessness Solutions,

City Property at 207, Saint

Johns County, the sheriff's

office. Barry, welcome back.

[Barry] Well, thank you but but you

said we were going to talk

about short-term rentals [Melissa] Oh,

we're going to talk about

short-term rentals. [Barry] That's what

you said. So, introduce

short-term rental manager.

Other hat. Manager. [Melissa] Okay, put

your hat on. Which hat do you

want to have on right now?

[Barry] Let's do short-term rentals.

[Melissa] Okay, let's talk short term

rentals. [Barry] And I'll then I'll

talk about the office, yeah.

[Melissa] Okay. [Barry] Yeah. [Melissa] So, tell me about short-term rentals. [Barry] So, we'll

do again. We just entered into another registration period.

October well it actually opens September 3rd first. [Melissa] Okay. [Barry] But

we run it for about two months but the registrations are due

October first. So we're in a we're in a new registration

period. Um so the city has about 6,000 plus residential

units in it. Okay. The short term rental wise we have about

752 that registered. Um we have identified about you know I

don't know. Somewhere between 60 and 80 that we that the

system kind of says hey you may
want to look at these that we

kind of chase around. Um I just
met the board of realtors this

morning and we did a
presentation in reference to

the board of realtor or the
real estate agents for selling

and buying agents in reference
to the the issues associated

with our ordinance in reference
to what they need to know when

they have buyers and investors
wanting to buy properties, what

they need to know before they
close the deal so that there's

at least they know that yes, it
can be a short-term rental. No,

you're going to have problems,
you know, things like that. [Melissa] I'm

really glad to hear that. I

think that's something that

residents, I'm going to guess.

[Barry] Mm hmm. [Melissa] Residents probably

think. [Barry] Yeah. [Melissa] We don't do. [Barry] No,
yeah. [Melissa] So, I'm glad to hear that

you're meeting with realtors.

[Barry] Yup. [Melissa] And sort of maybe call it

setting the record straight a
little bit. [Barry] Well. [Melissa] Or just clarifying

really [Barry] yeah not really setting
the record straight so I was

joined by mister Timmons from
Saint Augustine Beach and

mister Potter from Saint Johns
County because you know the

three of us have run our own
three different codes in

reference to short term rentals

kind of crossover and for for

some it it some things the the
the spine of the programs are

probably pretty the same
registration things like that

but the branches are a little
different one you know has a

little more branches than the
other the beach is probably

more you know a less because
they have a a maximum number

that can exist. [Melissa] Okay so they
have a cap. [Barry] Yeah they have a

cap. Um and and then the county
of course only does the

registrations for the ones east
of the intercoastal. [Melissa] Okay. [Barry] Um

so we're citywide so. [Melissa] Okay. [Barry] Um
so you know we're we're we're

involved in that. Um so the
really interesting part and I

want to get back to it is is
the presentation to the real

estate the realtors board at
the Board of Realtors this

morning was to to registered
agents in reference to selling

a buying agents and there could
have been some property

managers in there for
short-term rentals how they're

doing their but it was really
more about you know the

educating them in reference to
the the pitfalls from the

ordinances because someone it
maybe trying to sell their

house and say well it can be a
short term rental too. Well

it's not always true based on

can you how many bedrooms do

you have? [Melissa] Yeah. [Barry] Um do you have

enough parking? Can you you

know there's certain things

that have to be met too or if

it's actually a habitable space

and not something someone built

over the weekend you know we've

got you know four things like

that where we've had to say

yeah now you can't that's not

even that's not even a

habitable space where where did

it even come from [Melissa] right [Barry] and

then you go back and look and

it was once a boat barn with no

sides and no you know it was

just a overhang and someone has

turned it into this building

and you know we catch those
things and we have to deal with

them because once once catch
'em in the short-term rental

process, we have to flip to the
building code side and the code

enforcement side and start
really trying to help 'em work

it out so. [Melissa] What's the, what,
I'm going to put you on the

spot. What do you feel like of
the many challenges? What would

you say are the top challenges
that your team, biggest

complaints, biggest offenses.

[Barry] So, the biggest complaints are

are going to be about parking
and that we could have a

conversation about that for. [Melissa] A long time. [Barry] A long time. Um the

the biggest thing that we see

will be you know we've got we've we've got that 30 day

limit and that seven day limit and the and the and the

conversations around that and the occupancy limitations.

[Melissa] Okay. [Barry] And that's a real concern for us. We really try

to look into that and make sure that that you know everybody's

doing it right. [Melissa] Right. [Barry] Um in reference of those days. Um but

I think the biggest concern that I have is is the the

streetscapes and how they're changing in the neighborhoods

because people are trying to to
meet these park requirements so

their front yards are really
starting to change. [Melissa] Okay.

[Barry] Because they gotta stabilize
these parking spaces [Melissa] so explain

explain that a little bit so
what if I'm if I'm a listener I

don't really know what the
significance of the parking is.

[Barry] So if you were a four if you
were a four bedroom house and

you had a ribbon strip or
driveway that held two cars

stackable. [Melissa] Mm hmm. [Barry] And then you
say well I'm going to sell it

and someone buys and says I
want to I want to be a short

term rental. Well it's a four
bedroom house so it's required

to provide four parking spots.

Um so you gotta find two more

parking spots and a lot of
people are finding any grassy

area and putting down and
impervious surface whether it

be rock or ribbon or pavers or
concrete and it's changing that

you know that streetscape a
little bit. [Melissa] You don't have a

front yard anymore. You got a
parking lot. [Barry] Um. [Melissa] Basically.

[Barry] Yeah and then and then you get
into the fact that the city has

a 70% rule. [Melissa] Right. [Barry] Where you
can't have more than 70% of

your lot covered. So sometimes
we're able to say okay that

that's a that's appropriate

other times we have to look at

them and go yeah you can't do
that because you don't have the

30% required so and then they
have to go the other routes of

parking which is 400 feet
commercial parking garage

things like that so yeah [Melissa] if
you're just now tuning in you

are listening to the break room
I'm Melissa Whistle

communications director I have
Barry Fox in studio we are

talking about short-term
rentals a little bit about code

enforcement as well you got a
lot of changes going on in your

office [Barry] we do We have so we're
we're bringing on Bobby Van

Merriup. A lot of lot of our
citizens will know Bobby

because he's been here forever.

Um he has retired and so we're

replacing him. Um I am bringing
on a the home the homeless

outreach the outreach part not
enforcement stuff but the

outreach part has been shifted
from the police department to

my office so we're and that
coincides with the vision of

the service center that we
talked about earlier. Um and

that that individual's coming
on. Our young lady name of

Jessica Rojas. [Melissa] Nice. [Barry] Very she's
very excited. I think she's

going to be a really going to
be a benefit to the program and

and. [Melissa] Tell me how that is
going to look because I know

we've talked about it and this
is honestly the first time I'm

hearing that we actually have a
person ready to get started.

Tell me a little bit about
that. Tell our listeners. ||

think it's exciting. [Barry] So so out
the door you know once she

comes on there'll be a lot of
relationship building she's

going to have to do. She you
know she's going to have to get

herself introduced. We're
going to go out and get her

introduction to continuous
care. Then she'll have to learn

about all the different service

providers which probably would

not be hard because when she
came for her interview she had

a notebook and she had already
done her her research on all

the different service providers
and as much information as she

could print all she had already
updated. She's she's educated

at Rutgers and she's very she
got involved in in services

service providing in college
for the needy and the homeless

and things like that and it's
just been I guess a calling for

her. So she really is a really
great fit. A very

knowledgeable, very educated,
very smart young lady. Um so

her day is going to be first is
going to be building those

relationships, getting
introduced, continuum of care,

different service providers. Um
and then I'm going to

transition the the city's
vision plan to her because I

need someone to really start
looking at that so we can get

that accomplished and
completed. And and then set her

down and we're going to go over
the the facility. [Melissa] Yeah. [Barry] And and

what that looks like for the
city. And then she'll be picking up the

homeless the family
reunification program so she'll

be working with the police
department I'm working out a a

a plan with the police
department from their referrals

they just do all their needs
and then send us an Email this

person meets all the
requirements and then when

they'll come in and meet with
her on like 1 o'clock on every

afternoon and she'll purchase
the tickets and and get them

where they need to be to catch
that bus and then she'll come

back she'll open the facility
at South Dixie once we get it

prepared for her home again and
a dining with dignity she'll

open that facility and she'll
be there [Melissa] great [Barry] with that

program to handle any issues

associated with the site or the

if you know if there's a
problem with any of the clients

then you know she can call law
enforcement and and just kind

of work with them on that and
be there making sure that if

anybody comes up to her and
says hey you know I've been on

the street and I just I feel
like I need I want to go to

rehab she can at that night or
the next day she can start

finding a rehab where if with
some empty space and be able to

get them taken [Melissa] somebody at the
door basically to see. [Barry] Yeah.

[Melissa] Come in. How can we help you?

[Barry] You know, with the law

enforcement, they were going
out every day and they were

trying to, you know, and it was
a good program when I started

it at the police department and
it served a lot of good needs

but it's evolved. [Melissa] Yeah. [Barry] You
know, the service providing the

continuous care and everything
has evolved. So, that part of

it doesn't need to really be in
the police department anymore

[Melissa] That's great. [Barry] So, yeah. I mean,
I think it's going to be it's

going to be great and and then
she'll build upon it from

there. Yeah. [Melissa] And so before we
wrap up, you we were talking

about your staffing, you've
also got some new code

enforcement folks coming. Bobby
retired. [Barry] Yeah, Bobby retired.

So, we'll have we'll have a
gentleman. Uh I I need to go

back and make sure he accepted
but we'll have a gentleman the

the offer is out. [Melissa] Right. [Barry] Uh
Jessica's off accepted so I can

talk to her. Um I need to make
sure that he's accepted. Um

he's very excited about the
opportunity and then and then

of course I work for the
building official [Melissa] Yes. [Barry] So we

have a what Buddy needed. [Melissa] Yeah.
[Barry] Which was a floodplain manager

because as we go into these
grants and all to help people

assist in lifting their homes

and things. We're going to need

someone to manage all that and
and be educated. [Melissa] Buddy couldn't

do all that by himself? Come
on. [Barry] Yeah no buddy is Buddy's

it's time for Buddy to take a
hat off. [Melissa] Yeah. [Barry] You know and

pass one on. So so that's
going to be all that

responsibilities going to be
moving to the floodplain

manager and we've got some
Buddy an offer out to an

individual and I I don't know
if he's accepted so I won't.

Yeah but yeah. [Melissa] But lot lots of
changes in code enforcement but

great stuff happening and
between code enforcement,

short-term rentals, homeless,
and like you just mentioned the

floodplain, elevating houses,
our FMA programs. [Barry] Yup. [Melissa] We got a

lot going on. [Barry] There's a lot
going on. There's a lot going

on. Um luckily enough, the site
that we have for the homeless

program will be out of all of
that. So, we're not looking at,

you know, flood shoes or
anything like that so so yeah

it's going to be great it's
going to be a great couple of

years yeah [Melissa] well we're glad to
still have you [Barry] oh oh yeah right

yeah I know right [Melissa] you came
right back [Barry] I didn't I didn't

even take a week off I don't
think [Melissa] nope I think it was 4th of July [Barry] I retired on

Thursday

[Melissa] it was the fourth of July [Barry] I came in a did the announcements [Melissa] yeah didn't have to do you

didn't have to work but we put

you to work doing the

announcements and then you came

back yeah [Barry] so I came back and

did that and I've been doing

that I love that I love doing

that announcement [Melissa] and you

announce the concerts for us [Barry] I

do I do announce the concerts I

do that for Cori I walked down

on Thursday afternoon and I do

that [Melissa] yeah [Barry] so yeah this town. I

love the city. [Melissa] Well, it it

shows in the work that you do

and your dedication to to

seeing all of this through and

to making sure it's done right,
done well. [Barry] Yeah and you know,

[Melissa] people's needs are being
served. [Barry] I did get it pointed

out to me though that I do seem
to pick up all the jobs that

nobody else wants to do in the
city so. [Melissa] You and me. [Barry] Yeah.

Yeah. [Melissa] Other duties as assigned.
Mine aren't ones I that nobody

else wants. Mine are the ones
that they don't really fit in

any other department so they
go. Okay. Call Melissa. [Barry] Well, I

got that too. So, mine are
Pretty much the ones that

nobody wants to do and that
they need to be done for our

citizens and our the quality of
life for our citizens but you

know and I just hey you want

me to do it? I give it my best

shot and we'll pray for the best.

[Melissa] And again it's usually a

success so we appreciate that

and we're we're glad you're

still here. [Barry] Thank you. [Melissa] Well

we've run out of time so thanks

again for stopping by and we'll

get you back in when there's

lots more to continue talking

about. [Barry] Okay. [Melissa] If you missed any

part of this broadcast you can

find this and past broadcast at

CityStAug.com. You

can also find us on your

favorite podcasting app. Look

for us on Spotify, Apple

Podcast, and more. Again,

that's at CityStAugRadio.com You can follow us on our social media platforms. You'll

find us on Facebook, X formerly known as Twitter, and Instagram

at CityStAug and of course, all of this is on our

website at CityStAug.com.

Thanks again for tuning in.

Until next time. [Narrator] You've been listening to The Breakroom, 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 Breakroom.