

[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 Breakroom 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] Thanks for tuning in and welcome to The Breakroom. I'm

Melissa Wissel, communications director for the City of Saint

Augustine. This week, I'm sharing the studio with City

Commissioner Springfield. We

have a lot of hot topics going

on in the city right now. We've

got parking ordinance updates,

King Street Construction,

Traffic Circle at the Base of

the Bridge of Lions. Lots of

that commissioner, welcome

back. [Jim] Thank you. I'm glad to be

here. [Melissa] Uh we're going to talk a

little bit of business but I

also want to talk about some of

the fun things that you and I

talked about. You've had some

fun travel recently. We've got

some things to look forward to

later this year with our Sister

City so I want to. [Jim] Oh yeah. [Melissa] I

want to talk about the fun

stuff. So, real quick. Let's

Let's do a little bit of a
recap. Uh right now, we've got

the parking ordinance updates.

We're still looking for folks

to give us feedback. What can
you give us a quick update?

[Jim] Well, I'm getting good feedback
but I but the more feedback I

get, I I have not I don't have
any idea which way I'm going to

vote. So, if the feedback does
help me a lot and I think that

we've delayed it enough so that
people can get feedback. I know

that Reuben is going to have
some meetings with the Abbott

Track people and I I know
people on Riberia real well.

Yeah. Uh MME I'm sorry on

Roadie and so I've gotten

feedback but the more feedback

we can get the better. So

please contact the

commissioners or or do your

research and look into it. [Melissa] So

we have I'm going to give a

shout out to our new website.

Our new web redesign. If you go

to CityStAug. com we have

a new section called popular

resources and right there it

says parking code update and

then the other piece of it is

CityStAug.com forward

slash parking code update. So

do Commissioner Springfield

said, do your homework, check

it out, get the information off

our website. The landing page

when you go to that parking

code update page, there's a

link right there to send an

Email to let staff know how

you're feeling. I want to ask

you a question, are you getting

feedback that people just are

digging their heels in or do

they have questions and you

feel like you're having really

good conversations? [Jim] I I think

there's a cry for help. [Melissa] Okay.

[Jim] Yeah and and I I don't know

that everybody understands the

purpose of doing this or not

and I and I I do kind of

understand it. I mean, we we

don't have a hardware store

except way down San Marco. We

don't have a a drug store. You

have to get on San Marco. You

have to go down out to US one

and we don't have a little

grocery store. We have a minute

market but by allowing this

zoning change, that's possible.

[Melissa] Okay. [Jim] It's not just bars and

restaurants which is what

people are most concerned about

but if we could get a little a

little tiny Publix. [Melissa] Yeah.

[Jim] Somewhere downtown. I I started

daydreaming about a two-story

Publix. You know, like. Yeah.

Yeah. Like. Why couldn't we put

one where the Dairy Queen is?

Uh there's just a lot of things

that are possible if the
parking is not a restriction

that would help those
neighbors. [Melissa] Got it. [Jim] So I think

if they saw all those pictures
they might be willing to do

some different but we have to
stop the parking problem on

those streets. [Melissa] Right. Well and
Amy was in here and talked

about things like for the
residents. So I'll just remind

folks if you're in a
neighborhood and you can get

your neighbors together to
rally about getting that

residential parking on those
streets in your neighborhood

that's also a way to help. So,
it's not it's not just these

ordinance changes but it's also
educating our residents and how

they can make their own
changes, changing other

people's behavior of the way
they park and walk or not park

and walk. [Jim] Right, right and I
want to be partly creative on

on the west side of San Marco
that their alleys there and we

might be able to add some
residential parking in the

alley part, you know, if we
just sort of look at it

creatively. [Melissa] Yeah, that I know
several years and this was up

for discussion on the the
through lane that we were

talking about with the trolley

and the transport

transportation lane. Uh I think
people didn't recognize or

realize that the designs
actually did use to your point

some of those back alleys and
those there's like on certain

corners on the very next parcel
behind the business that's on

the corner. There is parking
and so there were discussions

of turning those into little
parking lot. Right. So. Right.

Like you said creative there's
some options yeah great King

Street let's get on to that one
so we talk about King Street

there's three different phases
I'm going to give the our

listeners the the website spiel
again homepage of the city

website CityStAug. com you go
to the popular resources

section King Street
Improvements and it's going to

drop you right over to the MLH
hub. com there's concepts to

review there's buttons for
sending Emails but it also ties

into the base of the bridge of lions.
Give us give us the [Jim] the

backstory is that we've never
owned King Street and we now

are going to be in a position
where we can own it and we can

do something. So hiding
utilities and making it

pedestrian friendlier are
options we have now and I I

went to a presentation this
morning where they have an an A

and a B model which are on the
website and they they do a good

description of what their
vision is and it's been not

only beautification but also
increasing the the pedestrian

and the broudy Garage is
going to come in and that's

going to be critical for for
all this to happen so I think

that King Street which goes
from Malaga all the way down to

the bridge has options there
for around the plaza that are

contingent on what happens with
the dump off of the Bridge of

Lions coming west and there's

no decision been made and I've

only seen a brief presentation
about it so obviously we don't

have opinions yet but that's
another input that we really

need and the mayor mentioned at
one of our meetings that we are

under construction overload and
I agree but sometimes we just

have to bite the bullet and get
things done but this is still

years away. [Melissa] Right. [Jim] Uh King
Street Revision is 4 years

away. The bridge at the the the
Broudy Garage is two years away

and I don't know the timeline
for the Bridge of Lions but I'm

sure it's three or four years
away and it it will take a long

time to do. [Melissa] Right and and
patience. Right. I know we all

feel like that and then of
course we're looking down this

summer the start of the
Sebastian River. [Jim] Correct. [Melissa] On

the other end of King Street
which is still a part of that

whole project. [Jim] A project. [Melissa] Seems
like we've been talking about

it for a long time [Jim] and DOT is
going to do the bridge and then

we'll get actually control of
King Street and so there's a

lot that can happen and we we
went through this on May

Street but I live in North City
and I drive that intersection

all the time. It was a pain in
the neck when it was before it

was done. It was a pain in the
neck when it's done but boy,

it's a beauty now. It works. I
can I can pretty much count on

being able to slide through
there or turn to go out May

Street almost anytime without
much of a delay. [Melissa] Right and I

think that you just hit it.

It's it take it's the

transition. It's it's getting
through it and then seeing the

benefits of it at the end and I
know everybody likes to call

that the peanut and then the
joke is that this thing this

thing that we're talking about
at the other end is the

pretzel. [Jim] Pretzel yeah. [Melissa] So you

know we'll. [Jim] That's okay. That's

okay. You call it whatever you
want but if it works it works.

[Melissa] Exactly. Call it what you will.

I agree with that on that.

[Jim] Yeah. It's like investing. You
know you put your money in

there and you gotta wait for it
to pay off and that's what

they're going to find to do.

[Melissa] Right. Well if you're just now

tuning into the break room. I
have Jim Springfield or he has

our city commissioner on with
us this week. Uh we've we're

just trying to get our
residents to think about those

things that we need their on
regardless they are changes and

they are coming and I want to
move on to a different topic

commissioner about Sister
Cities. You are the liaison for

the commission with the Sister
Cities, Saint Augustine Sister

Cities Association which is a
little bit different. So what

I'd like to talk about is how
the city of Saint Augustine and

the Sister City Relationship is
playing out this year. It's a

big year. [Jim] It's a big year. [Melissa] And we do. And we
just went to Spain [Jim] Right and

there's a lot of excitement
behind the scenes for this and

we hope that people will get
involved with it as well and

that is that we're celebrating
the 100th year of when a

contingent from Saint Augustine
when in 19 to 29 twenty-four to

Aviles and it was the first
American diplomatic trip after

the Spanish American War. So,
Avalies accepted these people

with open arms and and great
things happen from that

including Spain getting their
telephones. [Melissa] Yeah. [Jim] And we're

going to hear about that when
when Roman comes. Alvarez Ramon

Alvarez comes in May. Uh he's
coming for the historical he's

going to speak a couple of
times and it's really worth

coming and listening to him to
understand the value of our

relationship and I spoke to the

business association this

morning and mention that that
you know who knows what can

happen. I know that we met with
a wine dealer over there trying

to work out a deal to get some
Aviles Wine moved here. So

things happen on the business
side. It's also cultural. It's

also historical. Which exactly
what we should be promoting. So

we had a great trip to Spain
[Melissa] yeah they they I think what

people don't realize on our end
of things they they truly truly

think the world of us I mean
they really [Jim] right and I I

didn't realize that until I met
them but also when we had the

floats in the parade they had
two floats in the El Bollo

Festival [Melissa] so this was on Easter
[Jim] Monday after Easter and it's a

it's a huge festival over there
it's always been it's not

anything to do with Saint
Augustine a hundredth year, but

they had two floats
representing Saint Augustine's

trip right and also the Aviles
Arch Aviles Street Arch which

was just moving to see that. [Melissa] It
really was incredible. The if

any of our listeners heard the
pipe band that was here as well

for Saint Patrick's Day, they
were in the parade as well and

played America the Beautiful.
[Jim] God bless America. [Melissa] God bless

America. [Jim] Right, right. And It
was moving. [Melissa] It was it was

incredible to be in Spain and
see our Avalies Street March

like Arch like you just said.

Right. Um it really was our

arch with American flags and
span flag. [Jim] Right. Right. [Melissa] Um and

yes Roman Alvarez is coming to
talk about that historic

relationship. We will be having
festivities in September. So we

want to make sure folks keep
their eyes out for that. And

we're also bringing the
Cultural Council is working

with Sister Cities Association
to bring in Tejador which is a

Spanish bagpipe. [Jim] Um which I

learned on the trip that it is

a Celtic State. [Melissa] It is a Celtic.

[Jim] Asutria is a Celtic State so

that's why there's bagpipes

there. There Uh. [Melissa] So tell me a

little bit about you've got one

other you've got another

project that you're working on

that is somewhat near and dear

to your heart because it's a

gift. [Jim] Correct. [Melissa] But it's a gift

that you're working on to give

to Aviles from our our

business and residential

community. [Jim] Correct. Correct.

[Melissa] And tell us about that. [Jim] Well

the history has been that we

have exchanged pretty major

gifts over time. There's a

statue of ponds right in front
of the Lightner Museum that is

a gift from Aviles and there
is an bliss that's in Spain

that's a gift from Saint
Augustine and it's a monument

it's and it's in their
constitution plaza and it's

beautiful and then we also have
the faces of the fountain right

which was a very historic spot
in Aviles is a very historic

spot it's hundreds and hundreds
of years old and so we've done

major gifts this is a gift that
is a a painting that was done

for the 450th it was asked by
Elise Brady from the Art

Association for it to be
painted Lisa O'Neill took on

the challenge. Took her three

years. She used local

reenactors to act and to be the

the characters in the painting

and there are eight characters

in the painting and it's a it's

a depiction of Ponce landing

and struggling with a cart

pulling the bell. Right. That

was going to be the bell for

the church and it's nine feet

by six feet and so we're

raising money to try to send

that as a gift not using

taxpayer money necessarily but

trying to give taxpayers to

donate a little bit more.

[Melissa] Right. [Jim] And and we've started

that fund and it's going to be

a process through the Sister

City 501 Association. [Melissa] Right.

So, Sister Cities is partnering

with us. They are the Saint

Augustine Sister Cities

Association. Um historically,

they've hosted a student

exchange program and so they're

very active with the folks in

Aviles and the painting is is

beautiful. We'll put we'll put

your presentation on our

website so that folks can see

what what the painting looks

like and I'm going to offer you

up that if anybody is

interested, your business, your

neighborhood, as a community

organization, anything that you

may belong to in the community,
if this relationship with

Aviles is important to you or
you want to have a say in

this gift, reach out to
Commissioner Springfield. You

can find his information on the
website. You can reach out to

me and we're looking to get
gifted and you're right.

They're they are significant
gifts. This isn't a lapel pen

and a key to the city. [Jim] Correct.
[Melissa] These are substantial. [Jim] And the

Cultural Council's also doing
an art exchange which is I just

stopped on Cuna Street and
talked to an Opair artist and

he had heard about it and he
had lived in Spain for six

years and painted. So, it's

it's kind of ironic when he's

living here now. Uh so, it's

it's it that also is a great

exchange but that is a that's

it's a minor. I don't want to

talk about it as s it not being

major but it is not the same

thing as it's painting. It's a

that's our token gift. It's a

way of us to show appreciation.

[Melissa] Correct. Yeah and the artist

exchange will be taking an

artist with us in August. [Jim] And I

was so excited when I went down

to the plaza and I saw the

plaque and there's Earl Jones

and there's Don. Yeah. Yeah

there's yeah those people's

names are right there on the
plaque of course. [Melissa] In Aviles. [Jim] In
Aviles. And of course the

description was in Spanish so
we had to have it interpreted.

But it was just a a wonderful
thing. Its nice and so there'll

be a plaque associated with
this painting as well. [Melissa] And so

we're just looking for the next
1hundred years. [Jim] That's right.

That's right. [Melissa] Well we I told
you we run we'd run through

this very quickly. We are out
of time. Thank you for coming.

And we'll look forward to
having you keep us posted on on

Sister Cities activities and
we'll make sure we get our

residents out there sending
feedback. Give you some good

input. [Jim] Yeah thank you. [Melissa] You can
now find us on your favorite

podcasting app if you missed
any part of this episode and

want to go back from the
beginning, you can catch it at

CityStAugRadio. com or on
your favorite podcasting app. A

list of those apps is also
available at CityStAug

Radio. com. We want to keep you
informed about what's happening

in and around the city. Be sure
to follow us on social media.

You'll find us on Facebook,
Instagram, and X formerly known
as Twitter at CityStAug.
Until next time, thanks for

tuning in. [Narrator] You've been

listening to The Breakroom, a

weekly program addressing

projects and programs offered

by the City of Saint Augustine.

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. See

you at this time next week for

another edition of The Break

Room.