

Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager, Jaime D. Perkins, March 4, 2025

Transcript

Narrator:

You've tuned into another edition of. The Break Room. A weekly conversation about how the city of St. Augustine works from those who to work every day, hosted by the city of. St. Augustine 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 Wissel:

Welcome to The Break Room Thanks for tuning in this week. In studio we are catching up with Jaime D Perkins neighborhood Services and CRA manager. Last time we were here, it was big projects are underway and this time it's big projects have been launched. Welcome back, Jaime.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Thank you for having me, Melissa.

Melissa Wissel:

So, we talk a lot about things that are upcoming, things that are in progress, But you have a big check mark for Eddie Vickers. Park sports courts. Let's talk about it is a great event.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yes. It was so wonderful. So amazing. So we recently did the grand reopening of the Eddie Vickers Park sports courts. We have six brand new pickleball courts and two full regulation basketball courts down at Eddie Vickers Park. Those most people know that it. A basketball court system that was out there for many years. Just kind of. Needed maintenance

Melissa Wissel:

Was sad.

Jaime D. Perkins:

It was it. It was dilapidated and I know the community is so happy with what's there now, so such an impressive park space. So, we hosted a grand reopening what I call a very friendly. It really gave a city staff versus residents, and it was just an amazing time. So many people showed.

Melissa Wissel:

Yes.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Up and I know that the community was just extremely excited to be out there enjoying the space, the.

Melissa Wissel:

The basketball I'm going to I'm going to give kudos to our community folks because Commissioner Springfield told me over at the Gallimore we had another little thing there too. I'll come back to that. But Commissioner Springfield kind of said, yeah, I lost three times. So, staff team of three lost, right? Good job to the community. You had some other community folks show up though.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Lots of the residents were out, so shout out to Murray Middle school girls basketball team. They came yesterday to play basketball. With our staff. There were tons of pickleball people out there. Its serious those pickleball people.

Melissa Wissel:

Very, very serious.

Jaime D. Perkins:

And so, I think they fared pretty well too the residents versus City staff, I don't think we won any games you know.

Melissa Wissel:

You've had. Who else? Ketterlinus was there as well?

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yeah. Ketterlinus showed up many. Actually, I believe one of their students Brandon. Shout out to Brandon if you're listening. Thank you so much for everything you did at the grand reopening. He actually helped. Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline with our inaugural serve of the pickleball. And, Commissioner, Springfield did our inaugural jump shot, and I think it actually ended up being a layup.

Melissa Wissel:

Took a few shots. But that's OK.

Jaime D. Perkins:

But it worked out great!

Melissa Wissel:

That's what it's all about!

Jaime D. Perkins:

It's what it's all about we gave out some branded pickleball paddles with the Lincolnville, CRA logo, basketballs with the Lincolnville CRA logo. It was just an amazing time, and I will say, you know, it really those moments and being at the grand reopening, seeing the residents and Stakeholders just enjoying the space. It's kind of what we. work so diligently for, you know, because there's a lot of work, a lot of effort, so much time that goes into getting these projects off the ground from concept to completion. So, to get that final, you know that momentous occasion done and seeing everybody actually enjoying your efforts and hard Work as city staff is really, really. It's just a great feeling.

Melissa Wissel:

It was great! And Tell me a little. Well, we've still got some. To do out there, we're not done yet.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Right, right. So, if those of you who don't know, there's a master plan for the improvement of not only Eddie Vickers Park, but Doctor Robert B. Hayling park as well. And in the master plan, it calls for several elements of improvements. We recently got funded. To get some grant funding to improve and add the kayak launch that we've been talking about for many, many years. So, we're dusting those design plans off the shelf and we're going to add the kayak launch at Eddie Vickers Park. There's also going to be a dog park. Additional seating We're improving on the green space. There will be a family reunion Plaza so families can get together there, so it's just it's just going to be great. Well, once it's done, you know, it's a process it's you got to get through each step. But as we. Check boxes that we move on to the next element. So, I'm looking forward to getting the dog park done here very soon, and the kayak launch which everyone 's been waiting on.

Melissa Wissel:

With so many dog walkers over there in Lincolnville So these are public spaces. Mm. I do want to mention a shoutout to Cori and Chuck and the team and general services. We. Also had a little ribbon cutting Commissioner Garris gave some remarks. At the Gallimore. Now that's a different I do want you to tell us a little bit. The funding right? The Gallimore was a true capital improvement project. So, it was our general funding out of general services. I think. And but the monies and the projects that you do, they can be considered improvement projects, but that funding is different.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Right.

Melissa Wissel:

Give us a reminder of that because it's so important.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Right. So, they, they are capital improvement projects, but just through the redevelopment fund because most of these projects obviously are projects that we're completing on city owned government owned property. So, but the funding is separate. So, a lot of times people get confused because they see things happening in a special district like Lincolnville and they think all of it is CRA funded because it's, you know, within that special district. But there are many projects that can occur within a special district that are not necessarily CRA projects, and that a great example of that is the Gallimore Center. And like you said, shout out to our colleagues over in General Services, they did an excellent job of improving that Space and just a shameful plug here. If you are looking for.

Melissa Wissel:

It's not shameful, it's a good plug!

Jaime D. Perkins:

It's a great, you know, if you're looking for a place, inexpensive, affordable place to have a party or you need a venue space for something, the Gallimore Center is where you need to go. I mean it's. They did an excellent job of improving this space.

Melissa Wissel:

There's a room you can rent. There's a kitchen there you can bring in for catering. Actually, a conference room in. If You need a meeting space. And just give us a call for that.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yeah. Yeah, I told Cori. Cori Niles Our events coordinator, did she? We have roundtables now and I know how important that is to so many events, especially like weddings and, you know, formal parties. Everyone loves a nice round table sitting. So. So I love those tables. It was great.

Melissa Wissel:

Yeah. So, if you're just now tuning in, you're listening to the break room. I Have Jaime D Perkins in studio She is our neighborhood services and CRA manager. Let's talk about. CRA, we always talk about CRA agencies, CRA area and you are celebrating not you but the agency twenty-five years we are celebrating you.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Right, we. So, the agency is the governing body, which is our Commission. The areas are the special. Area. So, we have the historic area CRA which is our very first Community redevelopment area in the city, Lincolnville CRA and the West City CRA now, which was recently established in April of twenty-four. And because of our very first CRA, which is the historic area which was established in two thousand with the. Historic parking garage and visitors Information Center that's been this year twenty-five years ago. So, we are looking forward to celebrating this really just the investment back into the city in our special districts for twenty-five years, we've been doing this redevelopment projects and investing in this way. We're going to be celebrating April. Will be in West City In July, will be in

Lincolnville and we're going to wrap up the redevelopment twenty-five with the historic area in October.

Melissa Wissel:

We don't know what those are yet, but they're going to be a party, kind of like a block party celebrating those areas.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Some type of way to just you know in, in, engage the public and.

Melissa Wissel:

And anybody welcome anybody is welcome.

Jaime D. Perkins:

It's a city effort, so one of the things I like to say sometimes, you know, we get really homed in on, oh, this is a special district. Is the CRA and yes, we break and yes, we do fund.

Melissa Wissel:

I was thinking though, oh, it's yeah.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Very special projects, but anytime we are improving any area, it's an improvement for everybody in the city. And we want everyone to be impacted by that and come out and enjoy it so.

Melissa Wissel:

I'm excited about West cities. A shameless plug. Just because I live over there. But West King Street is a really great chunk of space.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yes.

Melissa Wissel:

There's a lot going on over there, so I'm excited for what you're doing. You know, just.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Me too.

Melissa Wissel:

It it's a great vibe and I guess I would say that was what I picked up. At the. Reopening at Eddie Vickers was just the energy. Weather, of course, was couldn't have better weather.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Couldn't have asked for better weather. Nope.

Melissa Wissel:

Kids were there, families. I think we had some people in over. The beach. Everyone it was. You got. It's going to be a little a little more. Going to be a big known, big kept secret.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yeah. Well, and that's what I love so much to just circling back to the sports courts. I love that It's just an open. Free play sports court system, where people can come. And play, you know, without having to reserve it, not having to worry about, you know, events happening there and then they can't get opportunity to play. I'd love the idea of us keeping it as a free play space where people can come in. We have our park rules, so you know if you're out there and you've been on the court for an hour, you know, let your let your fellow. Resident community member take a have a shot at a swing or jump shot on the courts. Because, you know, we just want the residents to be able to enjoy the space. We encourage users to, you

know, find other spaces where you can make reservations for those sports. At our. Our newly improved Eddie Vickers Park sports courts, we want to keep them open and free play.

Melissa Wissel:

That's awesome. So, before we sign off, I want to talk about one other project you've got underway. Is Cordova street improvements? You recently did a walk by public engagement event.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

So, to speak I chuckled Because when you said, hey, we're going to have a public input event and I thought, OK, another meeting at City Hall and. Said no, no, no.

Jaime D. Perkins:

We're going to be in the field, yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

To out there underneath the tailgate tent with your signs people walking by. Tell me a little bit about what the idea is behind why you chose that method and then also what is what. Down the pipe for us at Cordova Street.

Jaime D. Perkins:

You know, to me it gives authenticity. Know you get that authentic data. From the people that are currently using the space. Sometimes, if you're like, right in it, you can really just get like that really authentic information. You know, there's a crack right here, you know, or, you know, there, you know. This is where I stop every day. And there's, you know, traffic and

I can't turn. I got to sit here for, you know, two minutes or whatever the time frame is, and you get that real, authentic data from the users that are using.

Jaime D. Perkins:

The street every single day. Cordova is such a special, special piece of our city. It holds such historic significance, and we want to make sure that we take really good care of the people that are impacted by that roadway, that street and so being. Out in the field, I call it in the field. Getting that authentic data boots on the ground, so to speak. Is why I kind of chose that as our public engagement method.

Melissa Wissel:

And it's an improvement. So, the idea behind something like a Cordova Street improvement is maybe sidewalk changes, curb changes, pavement changes, landscaping.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yeah, right. So, the exact the pedestrian connectivity, the walkability of it all, how can we keep people safe? You know the lighting. We talk a lot about lighting.

Melissa Wissel:

Oh, yeah. Yes, yes.

Jaime D. Perkins:

That's a big thing right now in this city, so we want to make sure that people can see when they're out at night and that, you know, bikes, people that travel on their bicycles. We have lots of bikers in the city of Saint Augustine. We want to take. Care of those people too.

Melissa Wissel:

And more increasing.

Jaime D. Perkins:

And that's kind of what it's about. You know, we want to make our streets safe for everyone who's using them, whether there's, you know, vehicular traffic, you know, multimodal or whatever it is, whatever your use of transportation is, if you're walking biking.

Melissa Wissel:

Handicap accessibility.

Jaime D. Perkins:

And hit. Yeah. ADA, we want to make sure that people are safe in that they're able to get to, you know, point A to point B without any significant challenges.

Melissa Wissel:

And time frame, I know you said you don't want to put it to everybody wants. Know when Everybody wants to see it fixed next month.

Jaime D. Perkins:

So, this is. This works so early in the in the phase. So, we're looking forward to doing additional, if you missed our first public engagement effort, please continue to monitor the website look. Read news and notes and news and notes.

Melissa Wissel:

There's notes.

Jaime D. Perkins:

A great. We put all the information in there be a part of our CRA blast so you can learn more about additional public engagement. Efforts, but we don't have a solid time frame on when we plan to be done because we want to really take our time because like I said, Cordova is so special. We want to make sure that we really take our time with this design. So, so no rush. No speed on this one.

Melissa Wissel:

And we're talking several months. We may do another. Street side engagement, it's the.

Jaime D. Perkins:

It's definitely possible we haven't decided on which way we're going to engage next, but it's definitely possible. You know, we'll see. We'll see. what's Next.

Melissa Wissel:

Good. Well, always exciting stuff going on. Love to have you down here. Thanks for coming to talk to us and we'll, we'll get you back when we've got any update.

Jaime D. Perkins:

Yeah. Thank you. Of course. Thank you so much, Melissa, for having me.

Melissa Wissel:

Thanks Jaime. If you miss part of this broadcast, I want to go back and listen from the beginning. You can find us on your favorite podcasting app. Look for us on Spotify, Apple podcasts, and more. You can find a complete listing of those podcasting platforms. A link to this episode and our past episodes at CityStAugRadio.com. Follow us on social you'll find us on Facebook, Instagram, and X. And our handle is at CityStAug. Thanks again and tune in next time.

Narrator:

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